

Birmingham City Centre Neighbourhood Forum

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Annual General Meeting, Saturday 28th Feb 2014

Venue: Soprano Room, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Broad Street @ 11am – 1pm

Attendees:

Please see attached signature sign in log.

Apologies:

Karen Caine
David Johnson
John Lord
Albert Bore

Guest speakers were:

Rob Groves, Senior Project Director, Argent
(Leading the Paradise Re-Development Project)
Jim Wilson, Project Delivery Manager, Birmingham CC
(Centenary Square Re-design completion and public consultation plans)

1. There were no outstanding matters from last year's minutes.
3. The Chairman's report (attached in PowerPoint Slide) was presented and received.
4. The Treasurer's report (attached in PowerPoint Slide) was presented and accepted.
5. The following were proposed and seconded to serve on the Management committee for the next year:

John McDermott
David Foster
Karen Caine
David Johnson
Lorna Lee

There being no other business the annual general meeting ended.

After the AGM presentations were held as per above mentioned speakers:

Questions arising from presentations and general discussions are noted as follows:

City Centre Neighbourhood Forum
Notes of public meeting – February 28, 2015

This was a well-attended meeting which filled the Soprano Room at the Hyatt hotel.

First there was a necessary formal Annual General meeting, which included a report on the past year's activities and achievements.

The main contents of the meeting were presentations on Paradise Forum and Centenary Square.

Rob Groves, from Argent, described the current status of the design work on the Paradise project and the developing ideas for the first two buildings for which full planning approval will be sought during this year.

The project is being managed so that the traffic changes around the site, the main pedestrian route through the centre of the site and the major public spaces in Chamberlain Square will be completed first. Demolition of the Central Library and associated buildings will be done in stages. The area where the old Library Theatre and Bebo/Woktastic restaurants stood will be cleared first so that the temporary pedestrian route can move to that side of the building. This will allow the rest of the Library to be demolished safely, before the pedestrian route is returned to the eventual street line. Detailed timing is not yet resolved as it depends on coordination with the management of vehicle traffic.

The meeting was very concerned that the traffic diverted temporarily into unfamiliar streets (Cambridge Street and Holliday Street in particular) was not being monitored. Speeds were too high so posed a danger to local residents who could not cross the roads safely. The Forum committee members undertook to use every available means to confront the relevant authorities with these dangers. There was also challenge to the initial concepts of the first two buildings. Rob Groves took note of these comments and emphasised that these ideas were very provisional and there will be scope for later comment and consultation.

Jim Wilson, from Birmingham City Council, then described the project to redesign Centenary Square. An outline budget of £8m has been allocated to allow for a major improvement to the appearance of the square, to respond to the major changes to much of the perimeter of the space. An open competition, managed by the RIBA, attracted 185 responses from 31 different countries. An internal City Council assessment reduced this to 35 entries which was examined by a 6-person panel of members which included local representatives (including the Neighbourhood Forum chair). They selected five of these for detailed development by their designers. Jim Wilson showed images of each of these. The proposals, which were very varied, attracted a great deal of interest; many included water in different ways.

The chosen five finalists will present their final versions by early May. They will be displayed in the Library in the week 16 – 22 May 2015 for public view and comment. A final decision, which will take all the public comments into account, will be made by early July. Construction work is expected to start January 2017 and finish summer 2018. This timing is designed both to coordinate with the Metro extension works in Centenary Square and also minimise the impact on Christmas attractions.

Questions from the meeting were focussed on:

- The impact of through traffic on the Broad Street edge of the square
- The proposals for Arena Central.
- The Neighbourhood Forum should aim to host a second meeting in 2015 to hear from Centro about the Metro extension works and the impact on Centenary Square, and from the Arena Central developers.
- Need for iconic buildings in 'Paradise' without detracting from the already great buildings such as the Town Hall / BMAG etc
- Impact on traffic at Sheepcote Street / Cambridge Street / Holliday Street, no crossings installed etc, despite the raise in traffic on these roads
- More green spaces required in planning consultations
- Good management of the new developments required
- Influx of homeless in the City Centre, knock on effects