

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

3 October 2016

Attendance:

Councillors:

Chairman: Weston (P)

Ashton (P)

Burns

Elks (P)

Hutchison (P)

Izard (P)

Read (P)

Officer: Andy Hickman - Assistant Director (Policy & Planning).

Others in attendance:

Councillors: Bell, Mather, Tait and Thompson.

Officers in Attendance:

Antonia Perkins – Head of Policy and Projects

Zoe James – Project Manager

1. **WORKSHOP TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR A PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting invitees to the public engagement workshop: City Councillors Mather, Tait and Thompson representing the Winchester Town Forum and Catherine Turness from Winchester Business Improvement District (BID), Christine Holloway from Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinAcc) and Michael Carden from the City of Winchester Trust. Four members of the public were also in attendance.

The officers provided a presentation on the aims of the project and workshop. The aim of the workshop was: 'to create a framework for a Public and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the Central Winchester Regeneration SPD/planning brief'.

Officers explained that the brief would be developed with input from the Winchester Town Forum and the Central Winchester Regeneration Informal Policy Group, with an engagement specialist commissioned to run the engagement process. Winchester Town Forum would oversee the delivery of the brief and act as 'client'. The results of the engagement processes would feed into the development of the supplementary planning documents (SPD) and the production of the final SPD.

The overarching principles of engagement were to be inclusive and representative, seeking input before making decisions and providing

different opportunities to allow everyone the chance to have their say, publicising the opportunities for engagement. There would be integrity in the process and clarity about the purpose for engagement; everyone would be kept informed and results would be reported back. The public/stakeholder engagement would be coordinated between the work strands; the internet and social media would be used to engage, and feedback would be used and provided effectively.

There were three strands of work: strand 1 would represent public engagement, strand 2 stakeholder engagement and strand 3 the commissioning of technical advice. Underpinning these three strands was a raft of existing policy documents and technical studies; together with the known constraints and viability considerations these set the background for the SPD/Planning Brief.

The engagement would consider policy WIN4 from the Local Plan Part 2 – Central Winchester mixed use site. Factors to consider within this were the appropriate mix of uses; respecting the historic context; providing appropriate car parking; providing a high quality landscape framework; improving conditions in the Broadway; providing high quality design; enhancing the public realm; improving pedestrian and cycle access and making a positive contribution towards protecting and enhancing the local character and special heritage of the area, and important historic views.

The workshop was asked to consider how to engage and which methods to use; which groups of society and stakeholders would be involved, what questions to ask, how to seek feedback and keep people informed and the use of a communication strategy.

Mr Hickman stated that at the inaugural meeting of the Group, it had been suggested that it would be of benefit if a public engagement specialist was commissioned. After further consideration, it was now proposed to engage an Urban Design Practice that would also undertake public consultation as part of its brief. However, the Council would still need to commission a brief for the appointed specialist.

A number of Members commented that the 2003 brief provided a sound starting point for consultation and a decision needed to be made on whether this was a suitable approach with consultation taking place on an updated document.

A Member also commented that she had been involved in the production of the Winnall Planning Framework, where an external urban design specialist (Parsons Brinkerhoff) had been engaged to undertake the design work and the community engagement, and that this had worked well. There was support from the Group for Mr Carden's comment that it would help the public's understanding if a glossary of terms was produced. Catherine Turness enquired if there was finance available to provide an update on retail issues as the present information was outdated. The Chairman responded that finance was available to give further consideration to retail.

Those present, including members of the public, were asked to record their suggestions for the production of a public engagement strategy onto flip charts and their responses together with suggestions raised during discussion are set out below:

Ideas on who to consult:

- Landowners.
- The Brooks Centre.
- Saint John's Winchester Charity.
- Hampshire Chamber of Commerce (with 900 members).
- Federation of Small Businesses.
- Media groups including Hampshire Chronicle and local magazines (Winchester Resident).
- Local property/commercial agents (to provide information on retail/business needs).
- Federation of small businesses.
- Hard to reach groups. Those in the 22 – 30 year age group as young people may have different aspirations for retail need, for example favouring large fashion modes over independent retailers.
- Build on existing digital networks: - use of 'street life', 'mums net'; 'We are Winchester' and 'Winchester Deserves Better'.
- The employees of major organisations in the town, many of whom use the High Street, for example the Hospital and Winnall businesses.
- Commuters to London and Southampton (as WinAcc would wish to encourage a live-work environment).
- The Council's officers, such as the Head of Tourism and those responsible for the public realm. These officers had considerable information that would be of use.
- Tourism companies, including hotels, Air BnB, Carnival Cruises.
- Community centres and their users.
- Students, including Winchester University, the School of Art and Peter Symonds College and secondary schools.
- Scouts and Guides
- Young mothers.
- Parish councils (including those surrounding Winchester, via Parish Connect).
- Community groups and associations.
- Users of community halls and facilities.
- The Rotary Club and Round Table.
- Transport providers, including network rail.
- Shopmobility.
- Bus users and operators
- Cultural organisations – artists, orchestras and bands.
- Disabled groups.
- Cultural networks – Museums.
- Enterprise M3 LEP.
- Cathedral.
- Housing Associations.

- The Winchester markets.
- Festival organisers, including the Hat Fair.
- Conference Winchester.
- Primary schools (which can offer feedback to parents).

The engagement process:

- Bring in multi-disciplinary practice.
- Don't reinvent the wheel!
- Use 2003 brief as a starting point – what's good, what needs to change, what's missing?
- Assessment of retail/business mix required.
- Set up a running glossary on the website to explain what is meant by some of the terms used (e.g. use of brief in this case).
- High Quality Places is an excellent broad brush guide, but something specifically for Winchester central area is needed.
- Clarify some fundamental questions that would be asked to receive more thought out answers, such as when an architect interviews a client to find out what they want.
- Using various techniques, including in a dedicated website, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, drop-in workshops; face to face meetings; exhibitions, publicity on buses, leaflets.
- Publicise the need to develop the site due to its poor condition.
- Coordinating feedback and make it easy to read.
- Providing publicity boards around the development site, such as those presently used at the Chesil Street Surface Car Park development.
- Engagement with people in the street.
- Capture views of communities outside Winchester Town Centre.
- Include fun events which will capture people's interest.
- Make sure information from emerging studies is used to send out correct messages.
- Set up media stakeholder group to engage with media.

Comments made by members of the public present

- Points that the Henderson scheme did not provide for:
 - A high quality performance space (say 300-400), bigger than Discovery Centre but smaller than the Cathedral.
 - Trees to absorb CO2 as well as to reflect the character of Winchester.
 - Open space(s) suitable for performances by buskers, Hat Fair, artists etc.
 - Make the archaeology visible (remains of buildings and artefacts);
 - Cut the various markets out of the High Street and into a purpose-designed square, perhaps covered.
 - Provide for tourist coaches and long-distance buses as well as local buses.

- Don't invite tenders only from commercial firms, consider people like CABI, Living Streets, Civic Voice, Planning for Real. Encourage consortium bid that include such groups.
- The Council must accept the role of leadership; will never please everyone although a good process generates consensus.
- The Council must be the spokesman for future generations otherwise short term interests will outweigh climate change and other future changes.

Conclusions and Actions

The Group gave further consideration to the appointment of an urban design specialist and it was agreed that the Council would seek to commission a company with relevant expertise to carry out both the public engagement work and the drafting of the SPD. Mr Carden commented that there were a number of such specialists that had provided successful schemes in other historic towns. He suggested that a visit to these towns to learn from their experience may be of benefit, such as York. Mr Hickman stated that the Council would build on best practice and it was aware of urban design specialists who had worked with developers to deliver other successful schemes including public engagement work and the drafting of SPD.

Mr Hickman added that following the workshop, it was intended to take a framework of the proposed Urban Design Specialist's brief to the next meeting of the Group on 18 October 2016. Advice would also be taken from the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the procurement process for the appointment of an urban design specialist, so that the process was transparent and received buy-in from the stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

1. That the workshop outcomes be noted and the conclusions and actions as set out above be agreed.
2. That the next meeting of the Group receive a framework of the proposed Urban Design Specialist's brief and presentations from Martin Biddle on archaeology and also a presentation on flooding.

2. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that future meetings of the IPG be held in the Walton Suite, Guildhall as follows:

- 6.00pm Tuesday 18 October 2016
- 6.00pm Tuesday 8 November 2016
- 6.00pm Tuesday 6 December 2016
- 6.00pm Wednesday 18 January 2017

The workshop and all meetings would be open to the public. Public Participation would be available at meetings from the 18 October inclusive.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 7.20pm