

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

7 February 2017

Attendance:

Councillors:

Chairman: Weston (P)

Ashton (P)

Burns (P)

Elks (P)

Hutchison (P)

Izard (P)

Read (P)

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

Others in attendance:

Councillors: Bell, Berry, Gottlieb, Tait, and Weir.

Officers in Attendance:

Zoe James – Project Manager

Jenny Nell – Principal Planning Officer

Antonia Perkins – Head of Policy and Projects

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Gottlieb declared a personal and pecuniary interest in the St Clement's Surgery. He did not believe that it was a prejudicial interest but he would at the Chairman's discretion leave the room if there was a specific discussion about the property.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2017 (Report CAB2900 to be considered by Cabinet on 8 February 2017 refers) be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation Rodney Morgan-Giles, Julian English, Mike Woodhall and Councillor Berry addressed the meeting.

In summary, Rodney Morgan-Giles stated that he was a member of the City of Winchester Trust. He commented that an iconic museum building with a high rooftop garden, to see all parts of Winchester, was in his view not helpful and that the St John's Hall could be included as a possible building to be utilised. Mr. Lovell, representing the Hampshire Cultural Trust, replied that the garden represented an interesting consideration and that a new building would better lend itself to the electronics required for new technology, but the way forward was open to debate. The Chairman added that at present the IPG was looking at ideas and concepts in order that it could better understand the process.

In summary, Julian English asked whether the English Project would be part of an Anglo Saxon museum. Mr Lovell stated that it could be integrated and be approximately 10 – 12% of the total. The English Project represented an important part of the story and there would be a wish to include it.

Mike Woodhall asked how big the museum might be. Mr Lovell stated that it was premature to give this consideration, but he envisaged that it would not be too large and that it would be a special building.

In summary, Councillor Berry commented that the museum proposal was interesting and exciting and would put Winchester on the map as a destination for Anglo Saxon studies. She asked about the site of its possible location. Mr Lovell stated that a location on the Silver Hill site would be able to make use of the Anglo Saxon foundations, using a glass floor, as was used at the Jorvik centre in York to reveal the archaeology beneath.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated that the meeting of the Group to be held on 4 April 2017 would now commence at 6:45pm, rather than 6:00pm, and would be held in the King Charles Hall, Guildhall. Representatives of St. John's Winchester Charity would also be attending this meeting.

5. **PRESENTATION BY THE HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Alan Lovell, Chris Brandon and Janet Owen from the Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Mr Lovell stated in summary that an objective was to increase Winchester's International profile to establish it as a cultural and ecclesiastical City, which emphasised its prominence in the Anglo Saxon to medieval period between 870 to 1170; the 300 year span between Alfred the Great to Henry De Blois. There was no Anglo Saxon museum in the country and little from the late Anglo Saxon period was retained.

Norman period buildings had been constructed over much of Winchester's Anglo Saxon buildings, but signs of Anglo Saxon Winchester were retained, including its street plan. This included St Clements and St Georges Streets, which were rear supply streets to the shops facing the High Street.

Winchester was important in Anglo Saxon times:
The Royal Mint was established in Winchester in 890;
It was a place of royal burial;
A centre of scholarship (established by Alfred the Learned (later retitled Alfred the Great)), where English was established and books were written in the illustrated Winchester style, such as the Winchester Bible;
The place of the origin of law and order under Henry II, with Athelston establishing the law code for social justice, and;
a centre of evolution in healthcare, with Morn Hill having a leprosy hospital.

The artefacts from this period required a home. For example, a skeleton had been found at Morn Hill with a scallop shell, which was evidence that the person had visited Camino de Santiago. The English Project was also looking for a home.

Winchester University was establishing a Centre of English Identity, under John Denham, and a museum of the English would be complementary to this. Winchester had by the twelfth century 8000 inhabitants and the museum could focus on the story of ordinary people, displaying ordinary artefacts but linking to great buildings and the Winchester Bible. A fine museum would provide a walk through the Town, taking in its great sights and iconic buildings.

The four priorities would be to secure the academic high ground to learn about Anglo Saxons, including working with Winchester University; developing an education programme; completing the publication of the Winchester studies (which had been undertaken by Professor Biddle), and drawing up preliminary design concepts.

There was a revenue challenge. An example of a similar museum was the Jorvik centre in York, which was the national centre for Viking studies. The Jorvik centre had averaged 600,000 visitors per annum for 18 years. The operating costs for the Mary Rose museum in Portsmouth were £3.2mn per annum. To reach the stage prior to building it was estimated that the cost would require a £1.1mn budget, to be funded by individual donations, and organisations such as the University, Hampshire County Council and the City Council. For the capital cost there was an indication of supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Anglo Saxon museum offered an amazing opportunity which could be part located in an iconic building and also be a museum 'on the move'. The next steps were to investigate the possibility of a feasibility study; consider the economic and social impact; undertake preliminary design work and engage on a regular basis.

Mr Chris Brandon stated that he worked for a London architectural practice and had been behind the design of the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth.

His approach was for an 'inside out design' which would tell the Anglo Saxon story and be an exciting legacy. The concept was one that would be sensational, informative, authentic, educational, memorable and sustainable. It would focus on exploring the Anglo Saxon world and the origins of England. It would be exciting, immersive and appeal to a wide range of people of all ages, including tourists, young people and corporate clients.

As a museum on the move it would link to the other sites within Winchester, making a connection between the buildings so that as a visitor walked around with an iPad or similar device they could engage with the experience through interactive technologies.

The museum would not have high quality exhibits but would be about sharing knowledge and could be located in an iconic building and use exposed underground archaeological deposits in a similar way to the Jorvik centre.

Other examples of museums where new technology had been utilised was the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth which used projectors to project stories onto the hull of the ship and the excavation of Shakespeare's stage in Shoreditch which created connections with the past. An example was given of the Alleyns building in London which had a rooftop garden providing a vantage point to view all sites from the public realm. A similar building in Winchester would allow a fixed point to see all the sights across the Town for the museum on the move.

A museum utilising new technology would help to make Winchester a destination and attract visitors to stay to the benefits of hotels and restaurants, rather than passing through to other destinations such as Stonehenge.

The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Hampshire Cultural Trust for their presentation. The Council could not commit land or resources to the project and stated that it had good ideas that would become part of the process in considering a mixed use concept. This would be explored together with other ideas at the Community Planning Weekend on the 24 and 25 of March 2017.

In reply to Members' questions, representatives of the Trust stated that a good model for the intended Anglo Saxon museum was the Jorvik centre in York which focused on the Vikings. The museum could include reference to the story of the Roman period in Winchester, but the unique selling point would be the Anglo Saxons.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. **UPDATE FROM THE JTP TEAM.**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Charles Campion from JTP.

Mr Campion stated that since the last meeting of the Group he had been compiling a list of key stakeholders, landowners and operators. Members of the JTP team had held their first meetings with the Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) and with Andrew Rutter regarding his book.

Work was progressing towards the Community Planning Weekend, with the launch of the event taking place at lunchtime on Friday 10 February. Contact had been made with the press, with additional publicity and banners on the High Street to announce the launch.

There would also be a roadshow to raise awareness. Events would be held at Winchester Sunday Market on 5 March 2017 between 9:00am and 12.00pm; at Alresford Market on 9 March and also Winchester Station on the same day. A further visit would take place to Winchester Station on Thursday 10 March as well as Bishops Waltham. Over this time period the JPT teams would also be meeting with key stakeholders etc.

Prior to the Community Planning Weekend to be held in the Guildhall, Winchester on the 24/25 March, a pre-planning meeting would be held on Friday 23 March at the Cathedral to explain what would be happening and to gain understanding.

The Community Planning Weekend would comprise of workshops and walkabouts to understand the concept, to look at topic areas and to have 'hands on' planning. On Saturday there would be lunchtime presentations on retail and leisure and Nick Taylor, Scarborough Borough Council's Town Centre Manager, who had extensive experience of working with communities, would be present.

The event would be fun and also important in order to create a viable scheme that would work, and meet aspirations of a mix of uses with phasing over time. The outcomes of the Community Planning Weekend would be reported to the meeting of the Group on 4 April 2017, with a view to having the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) prepared by June 2017.

In answer to Member's questions it was explained that JTP now had a dedicated website at: centralwinchesterregen.co.uk. There would be links from the City Council's website to the JTP website. The JTP team would be attending the meeting of the Winchester Town Forum to be held on 8 March 2017.

Members of the public would be asked to register a statement of their interest in attending the Community Planning Weekend in advance order that sufficient provision could be made for those attending the events within the Guildhall. The purpose of the event was to generate dialogue with those attending and there would be ancillary events and further public consultation afterwards if members of the public were unable to attend the Community Planning Weekend.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

7. **UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS INCLUDING SUPPORTING TECHNICAL WORK.**

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) informed the meeting of the progress on the following technical works:

Topographical Study – this work was completed and would enable computer graphic modelling of the area.

Desk Top Contamination Study – this work was complete and had indicated a low to moderate risk, which could constitute a constraint. Bore holes would be required before any works started on site.

Flood Risk Assessment – work was ongoing to model water flows and capacity.

Ecological Study – initial work indicated that there might be bats within the area, but no exact location had been identified. There could be value in opening up the three water courses that ran beneath the site.

Archaeological Assessment – Patrick Ottaway had been appointed to work with Tracy Matthews (Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology)) on this topic.

Traffic Management and Buses – there was a proposal from WS Atkins for the immediate site, studying the requirements of buses, car parking, air quality and the movement of people and access issues in order to obtain information. Hampshire County Council was undertaking its transport study and were committing considerable resources into data collection to enable future options to be tested.

Retail Study - JTP had appointed its consultants on 23 January and their work would be ready for the Community Planning Weekend.

Housing needs – this work was still to be undertaken and was the subject of discussion with the JTP.

In answer to Members' questions, the Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) stated that following the completion of flood alleviation works to the north of Winchester, the Environment Agency would re-evaluate and remodel the flood risks to the regeneration area. The Environment Agency was also a statutory consultee. An outcome may be that buildings within the site would have to be raised, which would add to costs.

The opening up of the waterways within the site was supported by the Environment Agency and a Member commented that they could lend themselves to provide ancillary access for pedestrians and cycleways.

A Member commented that the transport study would be improved if it considered the whole of Winchester, and the Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) agreed that this was the aspiration.

All studies would be published on the Council's website for public view.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

8. **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 14 March 2017
6:45pm Tuesday 4 April 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 23 May 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 4 July 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 1 August 2017

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm and concluded at 7:35pm.

Chairman