



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2006

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14(2)(b)

QUESTION 1

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Transport

“On the 28th February 2001 I asked a question in full Council regarding the lack of adequate signage in the High Street indicating the location of businesses in the “secondary” shopping areas i.e. Parchment Street, St Georges’ Street and the Square. Does the Portfolio Holder share my disappointment that other than the erection of the two information boards outside the Guildhall and the map outside Marks and Spencer there is virtually no other physical signage to direct visitors to the excellent establishments who trade from these streets and does he feel that it is time that we looked at signage again?”

Reply

“The subject of signage for secondary shopping areas was discussed by the Officer Signage Review Group in January 2005 at the suggestion of the City Centre Manager. It was agreed that much has been done in recent years by both the city centre partnership and tourism teams to promote the specialist and independent shops located in the side streets through national PR, local shopping guides, the annual visitor guide, the map outside Marks and Spencer and council events such as *Making Merry*. Whilst officers agreed that more localised signage could be helpful in terms of limiting the number of A boards and spontaneous street clutter, significant constraints included financial and conservation considerations.

The discussions about traffic flow in Parchment Street already taking place at that time provided a good opportunity to work with retailers on a pilot scheme for one such shopping street. However, it was rapidly established that retailers did not actually want signage, as such, but did believe that an artistic ‘feature’ of some kind – such as a Carnaby Street-style archway – would draw the attention of shoppers in the High Street. On this basis, officers are proceeding with a commission, details of which were circulated for comment in the form of a draft artist’s brief to Members of Cabinet last August and summarised in Report CAB1166(TP) in January 2006.

Officers have been working with the Hampshire Sculpture Trust to refine the short list of artists, and will shortly be at the stage of inviting outline concepts from two or three of those artists who have expressed interest. A further report to Cabinet will be submitted in due course to seek a capital allocation for the project.

Other streets which have been suggested for future initiatives are The Square and Great Minster Street, and St Thomas Street.”