

**CABINET****19 October 2016****Minute Extract****331. STATION APPROACH – PROCUREMENT PROCESS UPDATE (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**

(Report CAB2852 refers)

Cabinet noted that the Report had been considered at The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 October 2016 where Members had generally supported the proposed way forward. The Committee had requested that the membership of the Evaluation Panel be extended to include at least one local Councillor.

During public participation, Kate Macintosh and Michael Carden addressed the meeting and their comments are summarised below.

The Chairman also noted a request from Chris Higgins to speak regarding this Report but, as participation was at the Chairman's discretion, declined to permit him to speak on this occasion.

Kate Macintosh expressed concern about the retention of the original Design Brief as she considered the Brief had been identified by all stakeholders, including the previous Design Jury and Architects as one of the reasons why the project had failed previously. A new Brief should take account on the currently ongoing Transport Assessment Study and not require as many car parking spaces previously put forward. The Council should undertake a public realm study as a starting point and extend the areas under consideration in the study to make it more meaningful. She welcomed the proposal to seek RIBA advice and highlighted this should include appointment of a Design Champion for the scheme and enable the Panel to have the final decision on the scheme.

In response to questions from the Chairman as to what should be changed in the Brief, Ms Macintosh stated it was not rational to concentrate so much parking on a site so close to a train station. However, the Chairman highlighted that the Brief stated that approximately the same level of parking as currently offered across the Carfax and Cattle Market sites should be retained and had the necessary flexibility to allow this number to be adjusted if required (including between the two sites).

Michael Carden (City of Winchester Trust) welcomed the Council's discussion proposals with RIBA and requested that the Trust be advised of the details of this. He had requested a meeting with the Council to seek reassurance on a number of points, including the following (other points had been made directly to the Chairman outside of the meeting):

- The Design Brief had been ignored in previous outcomes and in future proposals, the urban design requirements should be emphasised and observed;
- The capacity requirements were too prescriptive and could negatively impact on height and design;
- The Traffic Assessment Study should be completed before the design is developed. He asked that a revised version of the Design Brief be vetted by RIBA and issued for comment.

The Chairman confirmed that he would meet with Mr Carden to discuss further the Trust's points. However, he queried why the Trust now considered the Design Brief should be fundamentally changed? In response, Mr Carden acknowledged that the Brief did appear to enable flexibility and it might have been the previous process that had resulted in designs that were not considered to be suitable for Winchester. The Trust remained concerned that the restrictive capacity requirements and focus on economic viability could have a negative impact on design.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Thompson disputed that The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had generally supported the proposals and had continued to have a number of concerns regarding the way forward. She believed the Brief was confused as to whether it was a Development or a Design Brief. She acknowledged statements that the Brief was sufficiently flexible to take account of the Traffic Movement Study but this was based around the proposals from Bidder B in the previous process. She queried when it was proposed that the Cattle Market site be developed and whether parking spaces would be counted across both sites. She believed the model was high risk in the current economic climate and that the Report did not mention public engagement or consultation (which she believed had not been effective under the earlier process). Finally, she asked Cabinet to approve the inclusion of a local ward councillor in the Evaluation Panel.

The Chairman clarified that although the Traffic Assessment Study included reference to the increased parking spaces within the previous proposals, it also stated it would examine alternative parking arrangements. He emphasised that the new approach would allow complete flexibility to amend the Design Brief and the design which emerged, and this would involve consultation and engagement with all stakeholders. If any Councillors or stakeholders had any specific changes they wished to see to the Brief they should advise him accordingly.

The Chairman stated that it was not intended to develop both the Carfax and Cattle Market sites at the same time, in order to minimise disruption. It was proposed that the Carfax site be developed first. However, before development began it would be necessary to have a view as to how different elements of a scheme, including parking, could be allocated between the two sites.

During debate, a number of Cabinet Members spoke in support of the Design Brief (including the flexibility it allowed) and emphasised the considerable consultation that had taken place prior to its introduction. Members also highlighted the requirement for high class office development in Winchester and for development to proceed to assist with the Council's own financial plans. The requested improvements to the public realm around the Station area could also be achieved if the Council could access the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) grant.

With regard to The Overview and Scrutiny Committee request regarding the composition of the evaluation panel (Paragraph 8.9 of the Report refers), Cabinet agreed that this include one City Centre Ward Councillor. Cabinet also agreed that there was no requirement to include a senior Council officer on the panel.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

**RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT BUDGET PROVISION OF £1.5 MILLION BE MADE FOR THE COMMISSIONING OF THE NECESSARY DESIGN WORK AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO PROGRESS WORK ON STATION APPROACH, INCORPORATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CARFAX SITE AND THE PREPARATION OF A PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY.**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the details of the proposed procurement process outlined in the Report be noted.
2. That that a direction under Contract Procedure Rule 2.4a be made and the Assistant Director (Estates and Regeneration) be authorised to negotiate a contract with the RIBA Competitions Office (to assist in the procurement of a design team for the Station Approach redevelopment using the restricted procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015), at a cost as set out in Exempt Appendix 4 of the Report, to be funded from the Major Projects Station Approach Budget for 2016/17.
3. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director (Estates and Regeneration), in consultation with Leader, to agree the procurement process (with the assistance of the RIBA Competitions Office) for a design team to carry out architectural and design services as set out at paragraph 8.2 of the Report, including the options as detailed in paragraph 2.5, based on the restricted procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

4. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director (Estates and Regeneration) in consultation with Leader and with the agreement of the RIBA Competitions Office in accordance with the terms of their appointment to a) agree the criteria and method of assessment of the standard selection questionnaires, b) agree the criteria and methods of assessment of proposals, c) agree the composition of the selection panel, d) to draw up a shortlist of suitable firms to be invited to submit proposals and e) to recommend a design team for appointment.

5. That a payment of £3,000 each be agreed to all tenderers who complete an interview as per the recommendation of RIBA.

6. That the outcome of the procurement process be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet to authorise the appointment of a design team and the necessary fees.