

**MEETING:** Winchester Town Forum (St. Maurice's Covert) Informal Group Meeting  
**PROJECT:** St. Maurice's Covert Public Realm (SMC)  
**LOCATION** Board Room, West Wing, City Offices  
**DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016, 12:00pm  
**FILE REF:** 1632  
**PRESENT:** SWS- Alex Scott-Whitby (ASW) / (SWS)  
 SWS- Cherng-Min Teong (MT) / (SWS)  
 WCC- Eloise Appleby (EA)  
 WCC- Councillor Liz Hutchinson (LH)  
 WCC- Councillor Ian Tait (IT)  
 WCC- Councillor Fiona Mather (FM)  
 BID- Chris Turner (CT)  
 Debenhams- Fay Johnson (FJ)  
 Church Comissioners – Adrian Browning (AB)

REF	Item	ACTION
<b>1.00</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
1.01	Emma Williams, Manager, Greggs William McWilliam, General Manager, Mercure Winchester Wessex Hotel Councillor Tod	
<b>2.00</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN</b>	
2.01	LH to chair in EA's temporary absence	
<b>3.00</b>	<b>RESEARCH + CONSULTATION</b>	
3.01	SWS explained the consultation process to date, and highlighted the key issues within the space, both at a micro and macro level. ASW mentioned that whilst SMC is a tiny space the issues that come up in the covert are issues that are symptomatic of the whole of Winchester, and they had looked at solutions around this that could offer potential strategies city wide.	
3.02	SWS explained that they have met almost all the key stakeholders, with only historic environment team and urban planner to meet on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> August. They have also spoken to various members of the public, locals and tourists both in and around Winchester, and inside the Covert.	
3.03	MT ran through consultation findings book	
<b>4.00</b>	<b>KEY ISSUES + PRESENTATION OF IDEAS</b> <b>Market Lane</b>	

- 4.01 Trip Advisor quote of Market Lane an “unappealing alley”. SWS explained that this back alley feeling was prevalent in SMC and something that would have to be addressed in the proposals.

ASW explained that rooms overlooking the covert at the Mercure Wessex would therefore benefit from the improvement of the cover and potentially also Market Lane.

- 4.02 ASW explained that in Copenhagen after they pedestrianized the highstreet the next thing they had to do was address the back of house- how can we include the service lanes as part of a larger strategy for streetscaping?

- 4.03 SWS questioned the need for Market Lane to be two laned, and asked if there was a possibility of narrowing it, starting from the covert.

- 4.04 SWS showed Calle Remer, a space in Venice which is of similar scale and orientation- aspiration

#### 5.00 **Lack of Seating**

- 5.01 Lack of seating within the covert and also city wide, this is an opportunity to bring leisure back into the city

#### 6.00 **Key Issues and Opportunities (K+O)**

- 6.01 SWS highlighted the fact that all the ideas put forward were to gage the reaction from all about the scale of the engagement- cogniscant of the budget however also aware that it was important to explore the coverts full potential before scaling back.

Town Forum presentation will see both scales of proposal- on budget option, but also what could happen as well

#### 7.00 **K+O - Lack of unity of elements in covert**

SWS explained that many of the objects and clutter in the space were the responsibility of multiple stakeholders.

AB explained that the gravestones did not fall under the ownership of the CC

SWS also explained that the gravestones did not have bodies under, they were relocated from the Cathedral therefore it would not be so much of an issue to relocate them/display them in a different manner.

- 7.02 SWS offered the solution of a unifying strategy, through a shared surface or element. One option was to share the ground surface of the covert through to the Wessex Car Park- this could be raised and would slow traffic down. Cars could still park there, but during a festival, it could be used differently.

The other was a unifying strategy with materiality so that both the high street side of the covert and Market Lane felt like one space, and a space that would pull people through.

- 7.03 Group discussed maintenance of the car park space  
Group also discussed the feasibility of Wessex having a café space to open out onto car park however problems with current layout and plan of hotel means it is unlikely this would work .
- 7.04 Covert Toilets, SWS mentioned there was a possibility that these would be redeveloped to incorporate market offices..more reason for the space to become an information point. SWS to discuss with Kevin Warren about this SWS
- 8.00 K+O - Bins**
- 8.01 Bins are always in view, SWS noted that many key views to the cathedral were blocked by bins- this should be banned. WCC
- 8.02 SWS noted it was necessary to address the bin issue at high level FM recommended centralising the system – Westminster collection is every 2 hours- WCC to make visit to see this WCC
- 8.03 EA noted that currently there was no provision outside the contract for waste management- and this is something that would need to be changed as nothing was happening because there is no officer resource. WCC
- 8.04 Westminster City Council making money out of it too- WCC to follow? WCC
- 8.05 SWS explained there were ways of beautifully screening, and using this as a common shared element that could help unify not only the covert, but Market Lane and even the rest of Winchester. SWS to test screening further SWS
- 8.06 IT noted that there needed to be secured as there were fire hazards associated with them SWS
- 8.07 CT explained that it was a case of ownership of the space that care of the space would happen, and believed that the introduction of food and drink would start this process decluttering a space. SWS
- 9.00 K+O- People Flow and Wind Flow**
- 9.01 SWS explained the current situation of circulation through videos and diagrams and showed the first of a series of test to change this- moving the flower stall into the center of the columns to allow for views through the tower to the cathedral -
- 9.02 SWS highlighted Debenham's issues with frontages, and that currently the windows facing into the covert are classed as secondary and tertiary due to head office deeming the space to be not used much.
- 9.03 FJ explained that with previous conversations with MT, if it was possible to open up the frontage into the open space of the covert that would be desirable but the space would have to be changed

beforehand. She was happy with the idea of a mobile café moving to the space and temporary seating provided to test activity in the space.

- 9.04 FM noted that the current proportions of the space (openings, spaces between the columns) were not pleasing to the eye, and therefore not inviting. FM also noted that the high street side was much poorer than the tower side of the covert - SWS explained they had been testing sizes of openings both with organisation of flower stall and charity stalls
- 9.05 SWS suggested as a solution to organising the charity and flower stall, was to reorient their stall *into* the covert- so that their frontages formed a path through to the tower- Kingsgate used as an example.
- 9.06 All agreed with the idea, FM noted that it helped with the proportions of the openings, as it drew the eye into the covert.
- 9.07 Trestle Table Peril- CT noted that the type of tables and the temporary-ness led to a lack of care in the set up and aesthetic of the stalls, when really they should be celebrated.
- 9.08 -It was also noted that the configurations of the flower market and the charity stalls would have to be rethought, the design of elements for their stall.

#### **10.00 K+O- WHERE IS THE CATHEDRAL**

- 10.01 SWS explained that though the covert was a route to the cathedral, tourism currently sent people down where Monsoon used to be, on Market Street.  
SWS indicated that tower and covert were visible from the highstreet, both the flooring, and ceiling of the covert could be changed to attract people to it.
- 10.02 SWS showed an example of lighting and how it could pull people in- they noted that when thinking of these issues in terms of cost, it was not the initial upfront cost, but the maintenance cost that would need to be considered.
- 10.03 LH suggested SWS look at Peter Freeman and also the beacon at the Cathedral - + London light at the end of the tunnel SWS
- 10.04 SWS wondered if it was possible to test what the space felt like with the lights off- who was responsible. SWS  
It was clarified that the lighting under the covert was via Highways SWS to check with Highways whether they could turn it off in the day time to test what the space felt like.
- 10.05 IT noted that it was the responsibility of the councillors to allocate and resource the funds- We need to set the change-

- 10.06 CT- We need to find the levels of power that bring change.
- 11.00 K+O – A New Gateway**
- 11.01 SWS how can we make the covert act into a gateway- and how can we make a new porous screen that you could fit bins, bikes etc. How can you reinterpret Winchester's existing gateways and create a contemporary one that signals the current activities and city life of Winchester?
- 11.02 IT mentioned the Christmas Open Doors, by the Hat Fair- could this be tied in somehow? SWS to look at option SWS
- 11.03 IT noted that the current bike lock stands do not add anything to the city, so the work on these bike racks could be a lesson to other bike racks in the city.
- 11.04 CT agreed the gateway works, but how to work this idea with the other ideas presented so far will be a challenge, how to mediate between all the issues. SWS explained this was the challenge post this meeting.
- 11.05 LH emphasised that this was a real potential to narrow the street, and eventually pedestrianize it. SWS agreed that the covert was the perfect place to start this implementation.
- 11.06 SWS to issue out list of stakeholders consulted in next report. SWS
- 11.07 CT- Speak to someone in highways in order to make things happen. Simon Cramp? Bob Wallbridge- EA to e-connect EA
- 12.00 K+O – Tower -**
- 12.01 SWS explained that Winchester must be the only city where a medieval tower was used as a fire escape. Best example of a fire staircase is in Verona in Castelvechio. Questions to Debenhams about potential to activate the tower as something more but still be used a secondary means of escape.
- 12.02 SWS - Means of getting up to enjoy the view, or lighting the space? Therefore the tower becomes more of the attractors.
- 12.03 EA- asked FJ if people might be drawn up the tower to the café to Debenhams? How if it became a new public route? FJ explained that the fire escape was not desirable to use other than in an emergency
- 12.04 CT- really great idea however it will cost a lot of money – but good to show the possibility

- 12.05 SWS- once this space gets going, the tower is the real win, and give back to the city. And a significant opportunity as a revenue generator in the long term.
- 12.06 EA- We are getting some money from CIL (community infrastructure levy) so this would be a project that would be perfect for that. Possibility to look into this SWS to note this in the recommendations. SWS
- 12.07 CT people would also be very keen to crowd fund to raise money for a cause like that- SWS to also note this SWS
- 13.00 **K+O- Frontages**
- 13.01 SWS- The frontage of the public convenience is very informative, however it's not maintained very well- cleaning seems to be difficult and so the display is very dirty and dusty. The architect seemed to think that the exhibition was going to be changing
- 13.02 EA- The exhibition is managed by the Hampshire Cultural Trust but is a permanent exhibition as there is not funding for changing this exhibition. They come in once a year and clean it, but it's not meant to be a changing display. SWS to contact Ross Turle to discuss options of frontage. SWS
- 13.03 SWS perhaps the PC frontage could be a new notice board for Winchester to show what is on, and SMC becomes a new hub for information and meeting point
- 13.04 EA- explained that in all her time of working at WCC signage for local cultural events doesn't really exist, there is one place by M&S, and another one up St. George's street  
"we're a cultural city but you can't see what's on when and where!"
- 13.05 SWS mentioned the possibility of LED screens and remotely managing the displays? SWS to look into this SWS
- 13.06 EA wondered whether the chairs and tables could be fixed, and therefore be used to strategically stop vehicles coming onto the covert as well as eradicating the need for storage and also anyone could come and sit there to eat their sandwiches etc
- 14.00 **K+O- Winchester as a city of Performance**
- 14.01 SWS this space should be used as place of performance, but just for storage..
- 14.02 CT noted that there is a sort of use tension between the charity stall, flower market and busker
- 14.03 SWS agreed and explained that there needed to be a formalised set of boundaries for each stakeholder, so that each knew their

- limits and where they could be, could this be demarcated through levels and materiality?
- 14.04 EA added you could have film screenings, book readings
- 14.05 EA noted also that should the market office be relocated to the toilets and the toilets reconfigured, it would make sense for them to be right there to manage all the events/ display etc. SWS to discuss this idea with estates- Kevin SWS
- 14.06 SWS pointed out that vertical garden wall (edible incredible Winchester) would not only add green screening to a wall, but offer activity and use for the communities in Winchester. CT noted that there are 12 trees in the Square- SWS to look at the option of trees in covert? SWS
- 14.07 IT responsibility of the markets the revenue should be reinvested into some of the problems surrounding the markets i.e bins
- 14.08 EA identified that within all the issues discussed, there are physical issues (things that require building, constructing, purchasing), and there are management and operational issues (which will be more directed to WCC and HCC)- which should form the set of recommendations. Recommendations should also include who has been consulted, and methodology. SWS to issue draft to EA before Town Forum on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. SWS
- For every infrastructure element there are a series of knock on-management things
- 14.09 IT we have failed to have buy ins multiple times with issues such as the bins- there needs to be bigger reasons to convince movement in decisions
- 15.00 **NEXT STEPS**
- 15.01 SWS to send to EA a low res copy of the presentation SWS to also issue out a stage 1 report by next week SWS to test all options through model and form a set of recommendations SWS to use VR for Town Forum SWS
- 15.02 SWS reviewed timeline, and next events 23<sup>rd</sup> August- Flat Whites Coffee to move to space - 2nd week Sept- Day event/festival – SWS to confirm date Steering group to be slightly before town forum- 2<sup>nd</sup> week sept- These events would be used to discuss in Town Forum. SWS
- 15.03 EA mentioned possibility of sending out to potential interest groups- SWS to draft email/poster call out and CT and EA to forward on. SWS

15.04 Church Commissioners- Lifting Faculty- EA has been in touch with CC and is currently trying to get faculty lifted. Sue Crocker to double check ownership of undercroft space.

**Meeting End 14:00pm**