

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM – SPECIAL MEETING

28 July 2015

Attendance:

Councillors:

Weir (Chairman) (P)

E Berry (P)

J Berry (P)

Burns (P)

Gosling

Green (P) (for Items 1-5)

Hiscock

Hutchison (P)

Mather (P) (for Items 1-5)

Maynard (P)

Osborne (P)

Prowse

Sanders

Scott (P)

Scowen

Tait (P)

Thompson

Tod (P)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Godfrey (Leader) and Councillor Byrnes (Portfolio Holder for Local Economy)

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillors Read (Portfolio Holder for Built Environment) and Miller (Portfolio Holder for Estates)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 10 June 2015, be approved and adopted.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Mather and Tod declared disclosable pecuniary interests due to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that, due to the number of members of the public wishing to address the Forum regarding the Station Approach Brief, this item would be brought forward for consideration at the start of the meeting.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Imogen Dawson (Station Area Neighbourhood Group), Phillip Gagg, Richard York, David Ash (2020 Group) and Chris Higgins (City of Winchester Trust), addressed the Forum under item 5, and Councillor Byrnes addressed the Forum under item 6. A summary of their comments are contained within the respective items below.

5. **STATION APPROACH BRIEF**

(Report WTF221 refers)

Members noted that the Report had not been made available for publication within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the need to consult with the Forum on its content.

Councillor Burns announced that following advice sought from the Chief Operating Officer regarding Members' Declaration of Interests, she declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in this item, due to the close proximity of her house to the Cattlemarket site.

At the invitation of the Chairman, five members of the public addressed the Forum during public participation and their comments are summarised below:

Imogen Dawson spoke on behalf of the Station Area Neighbourhood Group who had been involved in the consultation process. She emphasised that the proposals should also include the adjacent conservation area as well as the Station area and that the proposals would ultimately affect all who lived and worked in the area. She was of the opinion that congestion, pollution and the lack of an integrated public transport system were among the concerns that needed to be addressed in the first instance, especially given the commencement of works at the Barton Farm and Silver Hill developments that were likely to coincide with the timings proposed for the Station Area development. Ms Dawson expressed concern regarding congestion and parking at the Carfax junction, which she considered would be further exacerbated by the outstanding work yet to commence to Worthy Lane and Andover Road and the brief for Stockbridge Road that had not yet been written.

Phillip Gagg welcomed the changes that had been made to the brief to reflect a number of the comments previously raised by the Panel. However, he did not feel that the importance of the Station Area as a key gateway to the Town had been deeply embedded enough within the existing design brief. He made reference to the need for pedestrian and traffic access to the City Centre

being incorporated within the rules of the competition, together with applicants working through a list of the Council's priorities for the site to assess how they would address each aspiration and perform on deliverability.

Richard York drew the Forum's attention to the previous request for music space within the development that had been acknowledged by Cabinet. He was keen to see that the provision of cultural facilities at Station Approach endorsed.

David Ash addressed the Forum on behalf of the 2020 Group and congratulated officers on the alterations made to the design brief since the previous meeting of Cabinet. He suggested that prior to the commencement of works by the design team, an overall framework needed to be in place and he queried the validity of the work that had been undertaken by Tibbald's, who had produced just two reports to date. He reiterated the comments raised by other speakers in relation to the importance of the Station Area as a gateway for Winchester.

Chris Higgins addressed the Forum representing the City of Winchester Trust. Mr Higgins endorsed the comments made by the previous speakers and welcomed the approach proposed. He considered that the development needed to sensitively enhance Winchester and be respectful of the history and heritage of the area and he reiterated that the provision of cultural element, such as a Museum, Music Centre or something of a similar nature, would be fitting on this site. Mr Higgins suggested that total freedom be given to competitors rather than specifically define the requirements in order to utilise their skills, knowledge and creativity. He offered his expertise on behalf of the City for Winchester Trust on the project.

The Corporate Director introduced the report outlining the current draft of the Station Approach Brief which, as stated during public participation, had been updated following the recent Station Approach Panel meeting. The current draft included comments from the written submissions received from Members of the Panel prior to its meeting, to enable officers to incorporate some of the detail within this updated draft of the Brief, although further work to the Brief would still be required. It was reported that the Brief recognised where the Cabinet had agreed to start from, with the redevelopment opportunities to the Station Approach Area and within two sites, the Carfax and the Cattle Market, as a starting point.

The Forum were informed that development would follow the procurement method of a Competitive Dialogue Process (CDP), undertaken in accordance with EU Procurement 2015 regulations. This would be a complex project consisting of a design competition to engage creative and design expertise of those bidding to participate in this process. As part of the competition, it would be for them to interpret how best to achieve the outcomes. The Brief actively sought to incorporate the views, ideas and aspirations from key stakeholders, the Panel and the Town Forum to develop as outcomes as part of the competition. These outcomes would be taken forward by professionals with

expertise in the design field to create a development that the community had involvement in realising.

It was stressed that the development of Station Approach would not alleviate all issues within the Town area but would certainly improve some aspects for the greater good of Winchester.

Members were advised that a fundamental element to be included in the Brief, currently in the process of being considered, was that the outcomes must be financially viable and commercially deliverable. This would be a prerequisite to being a successful outcome, along with the necessity to meet Best Value requirements. .

The Corporate Director outlined the processes involved in the procurement CDP which included the shortlisting of design teams following expressions of interest that had been submitted; engagement via competition; the evaluation process of the financial cost of their work and the role of the Jury. Members were advised that the Jury would comprise of impartial individuals who would not have any connection or interest in the companies that had submitted bids in this process. The Jury would then make their recommendation to Council of the final outcome. This would not include a public vote.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Godfrey addressed the Forum to highlight the challenges to be faced alongside the aspirations to boost the local economy with modern business units and to bring businesses into the District, which in turn would create high value jobs and reduce the need for long distance travel.

In conclusion, Councillor Godfrey reiterated that this was a major development which involved various steps that needed to be realised, but it was hoped that as long as as the development moved in the right direction it could be carried out in a timely manner and he welcomed the support from stakeholders and the views of the Forum as Ward Members of the Town area.

During the consideration of this item, the Corporate Director and the Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) responded to a number of detailed questions from Members, which are summarised below:-

- (i) In response to queries regarding the concept of the CDP, the Corporate Director outlined that this was a procurement mechanism carried out for complex development processes. The process would be dealt with in stages, with stage one being the shortlisting of professional teams which would then be invited to make a submission. The shortlisting would be done by assessment of a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). It was noted that the process had strict criteria to be followed.
- (ii) The shortlisted bidders would be invited to make a submission against the requirements of the Brief and these would be assessed by a Jury of independent persons. In accordance with EU Procurement Regulations

the Jury would comprise of at least one third individuals possessing relevant technical qualifications.

- (iii) The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) reported that studies related to traffic, parking and access movements were on-going and would be provided as background documents to the design brief. The Forum recognised that Council had sound adopted policy and strategies in place against which proposal could be tested and that collaborative working was taking place with Hampshire County Council (HCC), together with the bus and railway operating companies . Officers advised that the focus would be on routes to and from the Station I area and the City Centre including Carfax junction and Station Hill;
- (iv) Officers reported that regeneration was essential to ensure the scheme was a success and opportunities needed to be created to achieve valuable commercial space that was adequate to attract and retain employers;
- (v) Following questions regarding archaeology exploratory works at the Cattlemarket and Carfax in an area known to contain significant Roman remains, officers advised that they had received the desktop studies of both sites and trenching work to the Carfax site was being investigated for commencement in August to form part of the document that goes out in the design competition;
- (vi) In respect of the CDP, officers advised that this was the first time the Council had used this procurement process and as such external legal advice was being sought. It was noted that specific references to height and scale of development had been removed from the Brief to allow bidders the freedom to make the best use of the space available within the development proposal; and
- (vii) In relation to public transport access and reducing omissions, the Forum suggested the use of small buses for the provision of a hop on hop off service. Officers advised that the use of small buses could be considered as part of the Barton Farm development.

During ensuing debate, the Forum welcomed the Brief and expressed their wishes for the site to include public space to promote and showcase public art and also the provision of cultural and entertainment facilities, where this was financially and economically viable, together with the need to promote sustainability within the development in order to reduce the carbon footprint by committing to renewable energy as a Winchester priority.

Members also expressed the view that, as the area contained green space and landscaping, urban designers should also be included on the Jury. Officers stated that the Council would also work in partnership with Hampshire Cultural Trust to consider its aims for a cultural addition to Winchester to establish if aspirations were shared with Members, with the

possibility of forming an alliance to identify potential locations in the delivery of a common objective.

The Forum requested that attention be given to the pedestrian crossings at the Station area junctions to ensure they were adequate for users of all abilities and speeds and raised concern regarding the unsightliness of subways between platforms at the train station. Officers reported that they would consider these particular concerns directly with representatives of South West Trains at the next meeting of the Transport Sub Group.

At the conclusion of debate, The Forum noted that feedback on the ongoing engineering and construction matters to further the Design Brief going forward would be provided to the Town Forum and the Station Approach Panel before the was Brief was confirmed in due course.

The Chairman thanked the Forum and members of the public for their participation and contribution towards shaping the Design Brief.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft of the Station Approach Brief, as outlined in the Report, be noted; and
2. That the comments of the Forum, as set out above, be reported to the Leader.

6. **MAGDALEN HILL CEMETERY EXTENSION**
(Report WTF222 refers)

Members noted that the Report had not been made available for publication within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration due to the short timescales involved with the project.,

At the invitation of the Councillor Byrnes addressed the Forum during public participation and stated that he was speaking as a local resident, rather than in his capacity as a Councillor. He raised query regarding the proximity of the new road to burial plots and concern regarding damage to memorials and suggested that affected family members be informed prior to the commencement of works.

In response, the Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) addressed the matters raised and advised that he would liaise with the Cemeteries Team in relation to a methodology for undertaking the works.

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) introduced the Report which proposed to extend the Magdalen Hill Cemetery to create 5,000 new burial plots, following planning consent being granted in April 2015. It was reported

that the works would extend the use of the cemetery by approximately 30 years.

The Report sought the Forum's support, in principle, to the authorise expenditure in the Capital programme, in addition to the funding in the capital budget set several years ago, and an increase to the overall scheme budget, to undertake the construction works and associated landscaping on site, subject to the approval of Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

1. That the release of capital expenditure to build the cemetery extension be supported, in principle, subject to approval by Cabinet; and
2. That the increase to the overall scheme budget be agreed, in principle, subject to approval by Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.35pm

Chairman