

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

14 March 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, Tait, and Thompson.

Officers in Attendance:

Zoe James – Project Manager

Jenny Nell – Principal Planning Officer

Simon Maggs – Strategic Housing Manager

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 February 2017 (Report CAB2915 refers) be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation Rodney Morgan-Giles, addressed the meeting.

In summary, Mr Morgan-Giles stated that he was a member of the City of Winchester Trust. He continued that in his view St John's Winchester Trust possessed an iconic building in John's House that use could be made of (within a regeneration scheme) and that the regeneration site was ideal for housing, but the emphasis should not be on maximising the density that could be provided.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated that she had no announcements to make.

5. **PRESENTATION BY ST JOHNS WINCHESTER TRUST**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Clive Cook and Paul Williams from St Johns Winchester Trust. A copy of the presentation was available to view on the City Council's website.

Mr Cook provided background to the work of the Trust and to its long history in Winchester, as it was founded in Saxon times. A summary of the Trust's property holdings and present residential occupation was provided, for example it had 95 residents living in 82 alms-houses and the Trust employed 95 full and part time employees.

The Trust was taking the opportunity to review its aims and objectives and this had led to a strategic rationalisation of its property portfolio including the recent closure of Devenish House and the sale of the De Lunn building in Jewry Street. It had a reasonably strong financial position and was looking to invest in its estate and to provide assets where residents could live alone.

It had ambition to remodel some of its existing properties to increase the options for mobility of its residents and also to build up to 31 new alms-houses on Colebrook Street and Chesil Street to link to the regeneration project. It held properties in Northside and Southside (on both sides of The Broadway), in Colebrook Street and Chesil Street, on both sides of the River Itchen. The proposal at Chesil Street was to build 16 new alms-houses that would become part of a consolidated set of land holdings which represented a 'campus' of alms-houses. Pre-planning application discussions were taking place with the City Council to progress this.

Looking forward, the Trust was also considering future uses for St John's House, which may be commercial, cultural or social, but was required to be sustainable. It was encouraging ideas on how St John's House could be used for the benefit of the City, as it was located adjacent to the regeneration area.

The proposals for the consolidation of the alms-houses, the future of St John's House and its other landholdings in the City required a dialogue as part of the planning process and it was working with the City Council's officers to address these issues.

In answer to Members' questions, Mr Cook stated that the development on Chesil Street would be within its landholding next to St Peter's Church. A possible option for the alms-houses at Northside, which were Victorian listed buildings, was to encourage tenancy by 'younger' older persons that had mobility to use the upstairs rooms and could support others within the development that required additional care.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

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

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Rebecca Taylor and Paul Buckley from JTP.

Mrs Taylor stated that since the last meeting of the Group the consultation process had continued, including meetings with key stakeholders, leaflet drops, roadshows at the Market, Station, Bishops Waltham and Alresford. This information would now be compiled. Further meetings with interested parties were planned.

The input from the roadshow was still to be assessed and that the proposed visits to Weeke and Stanmore would be chased up.

WS Atkins were to undertake a bus and car park user survey on 23 – 25 March and were seeking in excess of 200 responses.

Six local schools had been approached for comment and Peter Symonds College had responded to date; the others would be reminded to submit comments.

The study area now included the Broadway and the technical work was progressing.

The results of the above would be reported to the Community Planning Weekend on Friday 24 (1.45pm – 5.00pm) and Saturday 25 March 2017 (10.45am – 4.00pm) at the Guildhall, Winchester. A preview would be held at 7.00pm on 23 March at the Paul Woodhouse Suite, Winchester Cathedral.

JTP staff would remain in Winchester after the event to compile the outcomes from the Community Planning Weekend.

The report back presentation would be to the meeting of the Group to be held on 4 April 2017.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

7. **HOUSING PROVISION.**

Jenny Nell and Simon Maggs gave a joint presentation to the Group, on the nature of housing provision within Winchester itself and the wider District.

In summary, Winchester had been recognised in 2016 as one of the best places to live in the country and this was reflected in a buoyant housing market with the average house property in Winchester being £487,000 (£360,000 for the District and £209,000 nationally).

The readily available entry level home (2 bed) would require 11 times income to purchase, with average incomes ranging from £22,000 for a single person and £32,000 for a couple. To buy lower quartile homes, an income of in excess of £60,000 per annum was required, and to rent in excess of £30,000 per annum.

In terms of household characteristics, there were a considerable number of one and two person households, but it was important to note that, particularly in the owner occupied sector, this did not necessarily correlate with a high demand for small units as people would try to buy the maximum they could afford. There were a high proportion of single pensioners and couples without dependants in the District as well as people sharing, due to the affordability issues. The private rented sector was important and had increased in relation to owner occupation.

There were 2300 persons on the housing register for Winchester with two thirds requiring one and two bed accommodation.

The Local Plan Part 1 from 2011 to 2031 had identified a requirement for 12,500 new dwellings across the District over the plan period, of which 4000 were required in Winchester. There was inward migration, particularly from those aged 25 - 44 presently living in London who desired to move to Winchester due to its high quality environment and relative cheapness. There was also a high proportion of single person households.

The housing market impacted on the economic performance of the local economy. The working population was highly paid and skilled, but the issues over affordability had impacted on business decisions to locate, stay or relocate within the City. Lower paid workers shared housing or commuted from elsewhere within the County or beyond. The resident student population within the town was helpful to the service economy in this respect and there were about 2500 student bed spaces within the town and further shared housing. Popular locations for student housing were Stanmore and Winnall; this however had an impact on the availability of family housing. The Council had therefore declared an Article Direction in Stanmore to restrict how many units could be converted and was looking to do the same in Winnall.

Welfare Reform had had an impact on local people with changes to Universal Credit affecting the ability to pay. For example, those under 35 were unable to claim housing benefit if living alone, which increased the need to share.

The combined effect of the above was to displace lower income households and increase distances to commute to work.

There were three new strategies to assist in housing provision.

The City Council's strategy was to double the number of new council homes built and to deliver 300 new homes by 2020. There would also be initiatives to provide access to affordable housing options, including for rent, shared ownership and students. These initiatives would deliver quality housing

options. Further initiatives were the consideration of creating a housing company and extending shared ownership.

The Local Plan Part 2 would be adopted on 5 April 2017 and had been the subject of extensive community engagement and technical work. Detailed policies, including WIN4, set out the planning policy framework for the central Winchester regeneration site. There were various Supplementary Planning Documents for specific topics including those for high quality places, affordable housing and parking.

The Housing Strategy (2013 -19), was aimed at providing cohesive communities to ensure everyone had the opportunity for a good quality of life. This would be achieved by: creating mixed inclusive communities; maximising the supply of high quality affordable housing to meet diverse needs and support the local economy; to improve the housing circumstances of vulnerable and excluded households; to enable older persons to have a choice of affordable accommodation that promoted independence and also to promote downsizing.

In terms of new supply, during the period from 2011 to 2016 some 1674 dwellings had been built, of which 532 were in the Town area. In addition there were about 2878 dwellings on sites with planning permission, across the Town area. Development on the Barton Farm Major Development Area had commenced. There were other potential sources from windfall and redevelopment opportunities, together with changes in permitted development rights to allow the conversion of B1 offices to residential creating 75 additional units in the last few years. There was a need for smaller 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings and policy CP2 would seek to have 50% provision in new developments, and Policy CP3 required the provision of 40% of dwellings on new sites to be affordable

With respect to tenures, the market mostly provided houses for owner occupation. Housing Associations and the Council were primary providers of affordable housing. The new developments at Barton Farm and the Police Headquarters would have 40% affordable housing and A2/Dominion Housing Association had developed a 100% affordable housing site at Sparkford Road. The Council would be providing 300 new dwellings in the next three years primarily on land within its ownership and could exercise control over type, quality and affordability, tenure and delivery timetable.

The private rented sector had also made an investment for provision in both existing stock and new build.

Local plan policies focussed on creating cohesive sustainable communities through design. The use of master plans and extensive community participation would lead to the best type of development. There were specific policies to control the size of new units (policy DM2) and requirement for affordable dwellings to be accessible and adaptable to meet the occupant's changing needs over time.

Improving housing choice was also important. Some people wished to downsize in order to release equity but still wanted to live locally and have accommodation that provided storage and good natural lighting.

The private sector and purpose built student accommodation played a role in the provision of smaller homes that would meet diverse markets, including options for older persons. Other options were shared housing, as has been provided at The Valley, Stanmore, where three persons could live together, and this was also a response to Welfare Reform. Community led housing initiatives had already been used as demonstrated by the Wickham Community Land Trust. The Council had a self build register which included about 100 names of those looking for self build opportunities. This was an area of the market that the City Council was giving further consideration to.

Representatives from JTP then gave a presentation as to the development opportunities on the Central Winchester Regeneration Site

In respect of the study area, Rebecca Taylor and Paul Buckley from JTP added that the regeneration site was approximately two hectares in size and existing land uses had been considered. Attention had been paid to Belgarum Place and Staple Gardens where 63 flats, 6 houses and 5 communal units had been provided. Illustrations of optimum development were provided to the Group, which provided information of the relationship between the height of units to the housing density that was achievable.

Examples of other developments that might be taken into consideration were provided, including St Clements Hospital, Mile End, London, which had provided 250 new homes at a density of 36 dwellings per hectare. The Hungate development in York had paid particular attention to the street width to provide narrow streets opening onto large areas and then pinching down again to provide visual clues and surprises that helped to understand 'Yorkness'. Apartments had been provided up to five and six stories in height with a density of 238 dwellings per hectare. The French quarter in Southampton had been based around the historic street pattern and had achieved a density of 400 dwellings per hectare.

The Community Planning Weekend would explore these examples and would also encourage attendees to come forward with their own ideas of what other developments should be taken into consideration.

In answer to Members' questions, Mr Maggs stated that there was demand from 1000 people on the housing waiting list for Central Winchester, with 50% of those requiring 2 bedroomed houses. Mr Tilbury added there was little demand for live work units, but the ability to work from home with an extra bedroom/office that was equipped for new technology would be desirable. Mrs Taylor added that the provision of a space for shared printers for example could be taken into consideration.

In exploring 'Winchesterness' Mr Buckley stated that the proportions and interconnections/interactions of the regeneration area needed to be mapped to provide an understanding of the site's requirements.

RESOLVED:

That the update on housing provision be noted.

8. **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:

- (i) Topographical Study – this work was completed.
- (ii) Desk Top Contamination Study – this work was complete and had indicated a low to moderate risk, which could constitute a constraint.
- (iii) Flood Risk Assessment – This work had been emailed to members of the Group. There were some significant issues relating to surface water and fluvial flooding and issues with foul sewage, and these risks would need to be managed. Possible solutions were raising the levels of development and providing different uses in potentially affected areas.
- (iv) Ecological Study – This work was now complete. There was indication that there might be bats within the area, but no exact location had been identified. There could be value in opening up parts of water courses that ran beneath the site and it was confirmed that this would be feasible.
- (v) Archaeological Assessment – This work would be completed by the 24 March.
- (vi) Traffic Management and Buses – WS Atkins was continuing its work on the requirements of buses, car parking, movement of people and cycling in order to obtain information to inform the process. Hampshire County Council was undertaking its wider transport study and was committing considerable resources into data collection to enable future options to be tested. This would lead to up to date information on how people moved around the City and the creation of a micro simulation model that could be used to test potential solutions. Further public engagement and stakeholder engagement was to take place before a strategy for the City could be produced.
- (vii) Retail Study – The JTP appointed consultant, Propernomics, intended to present their work at the Community Planning Weekend.

- (viii) Housing needs – this work would be undertaken in-house with support from JTP.

All studies would be published on the Council's website for public view once they were finalised.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

9. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that future meetings of the IPG be held in the Walton Suite, Guildhall as follows:

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 7:45pm.

Chairman