

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

4 April 2017

Attendance:

Councillors:

Vice Chairman in the Chair: Izard (P)

Ashton (P)
Burns (P)
Elks (P)
Hutchison (P)
Read (P)
Weston

Officer: Andy Hickman - Assistant Director (Policy & Planning).

Others in attendance:

Councillors: Griffiths, Horrill, Porter, Todd, Thompson and Weir.

Officers in Attendance:

Steve Tilbury – Corporate Director
Zoe James – Project Manager
Jenny Nell – Principal Planning Officer
Antonia Perkins – Head of Policy and Projects

1. **THE APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ashton be appointed Vice Chairman for the meeting.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 March 2017 (Report CAB2921 refers) be approved and adopted.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation the following points were made:

- That the development be low carbon.

- That disabled access be taken into consideration.
- That the needs of local residents be taken into consideration as well as those of visitors. For example, if the bus station was to move to the Middle Brook Street Car Park, the affect on neighbouring residents should be recognised.
- That the City Council's approach towards development was now much improved and this approach should also be taken forward for future developments, such as Station Approach.
- Due to uncertainty over economic growth and the impact of the Internet, the provision of retail should not be oversupplied within a large scheme. This would assist in preventing a situation where retail supply exceeded demand, which could lead to empty shops.
- Rather than a row of bus stops, a bus interchange should be provided where customers could change buses, for example to access the hospital, and where bus drivers could take their rest time. The bus interchange should also be covered.
- The positive ideas for transport generated at the Community Planning Weekend should be taken into account in the Transport Study being undertaken by Hampshire County Council.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Vice Chairman stated that the Chairman wished to thank all those that had participated in the Community Planning Weekend, which had been attended by approximately 700 people. This had provided significant information which would be taken into consideration in formation of the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be considered by Cabinet in June.

5. **PRESENTATION BY THE JTP TEAM SETTING OUT FEEDBACK FROM THE PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS.**

The Vice Chairman welcomed to the meeting Charles Campion and Marcus Adams from JTP.

Mr Campion introduced the JTP team and the partner specialists that were working in conjunction with the team on the outcomes for the regeneration project.

There had been an extensive consultation exercise with numerous stakeholders and interested parties, which had included roadshows at Alresford, Bishops Waltham and the railway station, bus surveys, consultation with local schools and colleges and the Community Planning Weekend on 24 and 25 March attended by approximately 700 people.

The Community Planning Weekend had included a number of workshops and these had generated numerous ideas, with over 1000 post-its being completed. Various follow-up meetings would now be arranged.

Key themes emerging from the engagement to date included:

- That the City Centre was a place for everybody.
- The City Centre must ideally provide a retail environment that was attractive to all.
- Young people should be properly represented.
- That there were barriers to connections and linkages through the town that could be improved.
- Where to locate land uses in a mixed use area.
- That people visit for a range of retail services.
- That the site be safe and welcoming.
- That greenery, trees and wildlife were important.

Marcus Adams continued by providing a summary of the historical land uses of the City and the regeneration site. An understanding of the historical background would help inform the redevelopment going forward. For example, although the north-south street pattern of early Winchester remained, the east-west street pattern had been largely lost during the Friarsgate redevelopment in 1963.

In establishing 'Winchesterness' a feature was the presence of development situated between open green spaces. For example, the regeneration site sat between Winnall Moors and Abbey Gardens and more could be made to provide connection between. Studies had been made of the ratios of enclosure that had worked well in the City's streets, such as The Square, and architectural details that added interest, for example in buildings that stepped forward and back with rear yards accessed from front streets. There were small and intimate spaces, such as Walcote Place, that worked well, with large mature trees that gave a feeling of enclosure. At Bridge Street and the riverside the high walls, footpath with a narrow green verge and the close proximity to water gave interest.

The regeneration site had constraints and also opportunities. The presently covered culverts were not appreciated and could potentially be opened up, for example by the St John's Northside alms houses and Middle Brook Street. The site contained trees and heritage assets including the alms houses, the Antiques Market and the Woolstaplers' Warehouse which could be incorporated within the development to give it structure. Important views could be revealed, for example from within the present Bus Station site to the Guildhall or from Middle Brook Street towards the Cathedral Tower. The use of taller buildings could provide an interesting and varied roofscape. The impact of flooding also needed to be taken into consideration

The present bus routing for Park and Ride and National Express led to vehicle manoeuvring in the Broadway and cars were also parked in the Broadway, which was an important gateway. The removal of buses from the Broadway area could lead to the provision of better quality public realm.

The site was in varied ownership which presented a constraint. There had also been feedback that incremental delivery of redevelopment would be desirable.

In considering hopes and ambition expressed through feedback from the engagement 10 key themes had emerged.

1. There was support for the Central Winchester regeneration.
 There was positivity towards change.
 A comprehensive plan could allow small parcels of land to be developed incrementally.
 A mixed use pedestrian friendly quarter that reflected 'Winchesterness' was supported.
 Vibrant retail and the creative use of the Woolstaplers' Warehouse and the Antiques Market were favoured.
2. 'Winchesterness'
 The development had to sit in its context – be a mix of styles that sat in the landscape.
 The SPD needed to be flexible to allow creativity and unknowns to happen, but also to have direction.
 It had to reflect physical, cultural and ecclesiastical needs.
3. Streets, spaces and water
 Street, spaces and water could be used to inform the development.
 Streets and alleyways could be used to link Winnall Moors to Abbey Gardens.
 A pedestrian friendly public realm could provide for a street market and space for busker performances.
 The opening of water courses could change the area's ambience.
 The rerouting of buses and taxis could make better use of public space, for example in the area in front of the Guildhall.
4. 'City experience' economy
 Winchester could compete by differentiating itself in relation to Southampton and Basingstoke.
 It had a low vacancy rate of four per cent, and a mix of new small and large shops would assist, but there should not be an oversupply.
 The present Brooks Shopping Centre was popular with young people and could be revamped to build on its strengths.
 The Antiques Market building could play an enhanced role.
 There was a perceived demand for small affordable employment space for creative and start up businesses.
 The re-routing of buses could provide the opportunity for the market to move down to the lower High Street and The Broadway to reinforce the offer of the regeneration area.
5. Getting about
 Traffic and cars were an impact to be addressed.

There was strong support for a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment in central Winchester.

Appropriate bus routing and parking strategies should be considered, taking into account of the needs of city dwellers and those who travel in from the wider District.

Flexibility was required to deal with the development of new transport technology.

6. Buses

The parking of buses at the bus depot was not a good use of land. Buses should be correctly integrated with the High Street and the railway station.

Bus stops should be conveniently located and there should be the provision of a shelter, toilets and real time travel information.

The bus interchange could possibly use the Middle Brook Street car park subject to testing various technical issues.

The facility could be a multi modal, for example having provision for bike hire and repairs.

7. Heritage and culture

The archaeological study would help to inform the detailed building and public realm design.

There had been support for an Anglo Saxon museum, which could be an option within the planning brief, but care would be needed on how to proceed.

Flexibility could be provided within the brief for the creative sector.

8. Housing and community

Housing could play an important part in the Central Winchester Regeneration area, given its sustainable location.

The type of housing needed to be decided with comment made on the provision of housing for downsizers, student accommodation, and social provision as well as the more affluent residents or commuters to provide a mixed community in the centre.

It had been suggested that there could be a community-focused Day Centre, which could bring people together.

It would be anticipated that the housing provided would be above retail development.

9. Delivery and meanwhile uses

Development of mixed use quarters was complex and examples of how others had undertaken this could be learned from, including the future proofing of development.

The regeneration site was one of a number of sites within Winchester and the bigger picture needed to be considered.

The ground floors provided life to the street and needed to be flexible so that they could adapt over time.

10. Community participation

The process needed to be kept going.

The process was complex and could be progressed by some further focus workshops.

The financial viability of the scheme was important and proposals needed to be robust, as had been the case in Scarborough's 20 year plan.

Marcus Adams continued that, in the context of the City, connections needed to be made between assets to link open space and heritage assets and also to civic, leisure and entertainment and retail land uses. For example, pedestrians on the High Street might presently stop at the Marks and Spencer store or at Colebrook Street and steps were required to encourage further access along the Broadway to Bridge Street. Similarly, the east west corridors could be improved, for example by opening the culverts.

The next stages were to provide some additional focused engagement and to complete the technical works for archaeology, transport and retail and to report to the Group's next meeting on 23 May 2017 with an update on the emerging SPD. Consideration would be given to the constraints and opportunities for a mixed use quarter, with a first draft of the SPD to be prepared by the summer with the final draft by winter 2017.

A report back broadsheet was available for collection for those present at the meeting and was available to view on the web site at centralwinchesterregen.co.uk.

RESOLVED:

That the feedback be noted.

6. **UPDATE ON TECHNICAL STUDIES AND NEXT STEPS**

The Assistant Director (Policy and Planning) informed the meeting of the progress on the following technical works:

- (i) Archaeological Assessment – This work had been slightly delayed and would be completed in approximately two weeks' time.
- (ii) Traffic Management and Buses – The bus study had generated 550 responses and these were being analysed.
- (iii) Retail Study – The retail study was being written up.

The other technical studies were progressing as outlined in JTP's presentation.

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

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

7. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

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

6:00pm Tuesday 23 May 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 4 July 2017
6:00pm Tuesday 1 August 2017

The meeting commenced at 6:45pm and concluded at 8:00pm.

Chairman