

CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION INFORMAL POLICY GROUP

25 September 2017

Attendance:

Councillors:

Chairman: Horrill (P)

Ashton (P)

Burns (P)

Elks (P)

Hutchison

Izard (P)

Read (P)

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

Others in attendance:

Councillors: Berry, Brook, Gottlieb, Learney, Mather, Thompson and Weir.

Officers in Attendance:

Laura Taylor – Chief Executive

Rachel Robinson – Business Analyst and Project Manager

Jenny Nell – Head of Strategic Planning

Simon Maggs – Strategic Housing Manager

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 July 2017 (Report CAB2975 refers) be approved and adopted.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Marcus Adams and other representatives of John Thompson and Partners (JTP), architects and master planners, Mr Frank Baxter from Hampshire County Council, Professor Martin Biddle and approximately 120 members of the public. Members of the public were informed that a broadsheet with key information on the progress of the Supplementary Planning Document was available for collection at the end of the meeting.

In summary, the Chairman explained that work was in progress to bring about change to the regeneration area. Friarsgate Car Park had been demolished and partially rebuilt and the bus station had been bought from Stagecoach and had also been renovated in the short-term to the benefit of many bus

users. The renovation of the bus station had included improved seating, new shelters and a ticket office. It was more user friendly with high kerbs to improve access and the improved public safety. Alterations to the road access to the bus station had also allowed the High Street to be freed of buses. These had been examples of the Council being creative and entrepreneurial and working in partnership to achieve positive change. Thanks were extended to Stagecoach and Hampshire County Council for their partnership working.

In respect of flooding, new temporary portable floodgates had been tested at St Bede's School and the School of Art. This was also an example of good partnership working between Hampshire County Council, the University of Southampton and the Environment Agency together with the Council's own team. This work, together with further flood protection work at Durngate in the New Year, would bring about positive benefits to reduce the flooding risk in the regeneration area.

4. **TIMETABLE**

The Chairman explained the timetable for the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the meeting. The timetable was summarised as set out below:

Progress review – at the Informal Policy Group meeting held today.

Draft SPD – presented to the Informal Policy Group meeting on 30 October 2017 (held in public).

Engagement – a summary draft SPD would be available for review.

Draft SPD considered for consultation by Cabinet on 6 December 2017 (held in public).

Consultation – Extended formal consultation from December 2017 to February 2018.

Consultation feedback considered and SPD finalised.

Final SPD approved by Cabinet.

The Chairman stated that the timetable allowed the opportunity to take the public's comments into consideration.

5. **PROGRESSING THE SPD – MOVEMENT STRATEGY, PARKING, ARCHAEOLOGY AND HOUSING**

The Chairman explained that information on each of the following issues was contained within the broadsheet which was available at the meeting and would also be published on the Council's and JTP's regeneration website.

Movement Strategy

Mr Baxter from Hampshire County Council explained the governance arrangements for the Joint Project Board to progress the Movement Strategy. He continued that there would be considerable collection of data (including trip pattern data, assessment of traffic volumes, pedestrian counts, public

transport and walking and cycling studies). The data would be analysed and there would be public involvement and engagement. Public consultation would include a telephone survey of 500 – 1000 residents to supplement an open online survey. The survey period would commence in October/November 2017 and would last for approximately six weeks. Meetings and targeted workshops would be held with a wide range of local interest groups and delivery partners including students and residents. The views and ideas generated would be modelled to assess their feasibility.

Parking

The Chairman commented that the City Council was considering the approach to parking in the regeneration area which would reflect the overall approach of reducing reliance on central parking and encouraging people to park in accordance with the ‘three ring’ approach to pricing and allocating Winchester Town car parks.

Mr Hickman outlined the background to the ‘three-ring’ approach to pricing and allocating Winchester Town car parks. The central ring would be for short-term shopping car parks with the second inner ring (including Chesil Street multi-storey, Durngate, Worthy Lane, Cattle Market car parks) providing a walk into the town centre from the core edge. The third outer ring was park and ride. The changes to the pricing structure were introduced from May 2017 and their effect on parking behaviour was being studied and assessed in association with the Movement Strategy.

The Friarsgate Car Park had been reduced from 350 to 70 spaces. The St Clements doctor’s surgery would be relocated on the Upper Brook Street Car Park with a resultant further reduction of 58 spaces. As part of the proposals for the regeneration area, it was likely that the remaining Friarsgate spaces would not be replaced. Further parking had been provided at the park and ride facility at Pitt and the two new decks adding to parking at the railway station. Some parking would likely be provided for the new housing within the regeneration area, as appropriate for the type of housing. A car park occupancy survey would consider the effects of the policy alongside the ongoing Movement Strategy. Careful consideration was currently being given to the level of public parking to be provided/ maintained within the regeneration area and this would be set out in the draft SPD.

Archaeology

The Chairman informed the meeting that an Advisory Panel had been established to be chaired by Professor Martin Biddle. Its membership would be comprised of five nationally and locally recognised archaeologists to utilise their expertise and to seek opinions on how to progress and how to consider archaeological issues on the site. Factors to take consideration on such a large site would include the approach to further assessment, design of future buildings, sites to be explored and whether there was sufficient archaeological information or did it require updating. The Panel had commenced its work

and would need to be precise in its approach so that a consistent and correct route towards archaeology could be established that was also cost-effective.

Housing

Mr Maggs from The New Homes Team at the City Council outlined the choices being considered to provide access to housing.

Alternatives to the traditional 1 -4 bedroom houses and flats were being considered to reflect the changes in lifestyles, including small one bedroom apartments where considerations such as natural daylight, sufficient storage and onsite care were important. Some cities were looking at compact and affordable designs for first time buyers where residents were willing to exchange space to have shared facilities if the scheme offered sufficient quality. The compromise could be on shared workspace, kitchen space, outdoor space and communal areas to provide co-living at an affordable price.

Such units could be offered for sale and to rent. These were examples of ideas that were being explored with experts to feed into the SPD formulation.

6. **PRESENTATION BY THE JTP TEAM ON THE EMERGING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) AND VISION.**

Mr Adams gave a presentation on the emerging SPD.

Mr Adams stated that the SPD was not a design scheme and that the vision was backed with quantitative and qualitative data.

The SPD would be divided into eight chapters and would have numerous appendices in order that its main message would be contained within the front chapters.

The chapters would include:

1. An introduction – The role of the SPD and defining the study area.
2. Development objectives – this chapter would include vision and strategic objectives. The SPD would need to be definitive and deliverable and also to be flexible to be creative.
3. Engagement process – detailing the forums and roadshows that had taken place and the continuing community participation.
4. Winchesterness – to define the spirit of walking through the town; defined by its streets, spaces, water, parks and buildings and materials that led to a definition of its character.
5. Views and Skyline
6. The Urban Design Framework – to include: mixed uses for a creative quarter. Public realm to consider streets, spaces and water. Movement and Accessibility and land uses: bus hub, retail and markets, workspace, archaeology and heritage, housing and community would also be considerations. Height, scale and massing would be included under this section.

- 7. Delivery and phasing – including viability and meanwhile uses as land parcels would come forward in a phased and incremental way.
 - 8. Sustainability – to consider energy strategy, greening and ecology, air quality, building envelope and surface water drainage.
- Appendices – to include technical assessments and reports.

The Chairman stated that the SPD would also need to be deliverable, viable and feasible.

7. **MAKING THE SPD A REALITY**

The Chairman stated that other assessment work was underway including: commercial viability; the costs of the regeneration scheme and options for delivery.

Some input was also being obtained from the development industry.

A crucial part of the work of the IPG was to make the SPD a reality so that it could develop and evolve over time.

8. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation the following points were made, which are summarised below:

Transport

Bill Reece: as a resident of Middle Brook Street for 10 years, he asked that there be openness and a willingness to listen (on options for the bus station). He was disappointed that there appeared to be favour to move the bus station to the Middle Brook Street Car Park, which was busy and he asked about the criteria to be used to listen to the public in making decisions (about the bus station siting).

The Chairman commented that the suggestion of the future of the bus station would be fed into the Movement Strategy, but this was not definitive and different views would be taken on board on the location of a bus station, or even if one was required to be located within the regeneration area.

A local resident: As a user of the bus station it required a cafe with inside and outside space and toilet provision; otherwise the changes had been positive.

A local resident: Was it a constraint of the Movement Strategy that through traffic had to pass through central Winchester and also that the bus station need to be centrally located.

The Chairman stated that all options would be modelled. It was a recommendation to keep the bus station within the centre, with the Middle Brook Street area being an option, although there had also been some views to relocate it at the railway station. This was not a constraint and all views could be submitted so that they could be modelled.

A local resident: The works carried out to improve the bus station were good, but more night lighting to make it less foreboding would make for further improvement. The relocation of the bus station to Middle Brook Street would not be possible as it would be on the same site of the new St Clement's doctor's surgery.

The Chairman stated that she would take up the comment on lighting with the Council's Head of Estates and Regeneration. The St Clement Street surgery would be located on the Upper Brook Street Car Park site and not the site being considered for the possible relocation of the bus station.

Retail

Mrs Cooper: as an independent shop owner in King's Walk, her premises would be closed when the regeneration took place. There were ten shops in King's Walk, of which eight were independently owned. It would be ideal if the independent shop owners were consulted with in order to identify the type of premises that they would need in the new development.

The Chairman stated that the Central Winchester Regeneration Committee would take into consideration these aspects and consider factors relating to the transition period.

A regular visitor to the area: asked about rents levied in the High Street, which were in her opinion too high and only attracted stores such as Morrisons and Tesco.

The Chairman stated that level of vacant stores in Winchester stood at 4% which was less than the national average. Some businesses, such as Jaeger, had gone bankrupt, which was a national situation rather than specific to Winchester. There were some national stores that were missing from Winchester, but the City Council did not have control over all store premises. The IPG was taking into consideration representation made by the Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) and also the advice of retail consultants and was closely monitoring the situation. The regeneration area would look to have a balance of uses within the site.

Peter Crichton: Independent shops were struggling to survive, and similar to the proposals for housing, consideration could be given to ways to encourage small independent retailers to grow their businesses.

The Chairman stated that JTP had considered this within their brief, for example utilising the Antiques Market for start-up business uses, and this work would continue.

Design and Architecture

Rosemary Poole: Would a single architect be appointed for the whole scheme or would there be the opportunity for different architects (to be appointed) for different areas within the regeneration area. A question was

also asked as to the height of the Wool Staplers Hall in relation to the new development.

The Chairman stated that the site would be developed incrementally which may involve more than one architect, but the overall scheme would be cohesive and consistent. The draft would take into consideration the height of buildings and took into consideration the views from different vantage points.

Richard Baker – City Winchester Trust: under the disregarded Silver Hill scheme put forward by Allies and Morrison, Architects, there was a master plan and drawings that formed the planning application. The SPD was not a design statement and the Trust asked about the time gap between the SPD adoption and the invitation of planning applications and the provision of detailed information on matters such as building designs and floor size.

The Chairman stated that the IPG was working towards delivery of the SPD and there was a need to understand the use of space within the regeneration area. This would look at options but would not be fully detailed. Mr Baker responded that the SPD would be a sketch of development footprints and there may be a need for a more detailed framework through which to deliver the scheme.

Bill Ledbetter: there was support for the opening of water courses which would help with flood control. The opening of the Brooks had not been mentioned at the meeting, but if opened it would be best if it was not covered beneath metal grilles.

The Chairman stated that the opening of water courses would be embraced where possible and feasible going forward and would not be a negative factor.

Councillor Berry: The IPG had provided a clear presentation and she endorsed the comments of those supporting young entrepreneurs that were business minded and wished to create a vibrant area. A new development should respect the architecture of past and be incorporated into the town rather than being modernist boxes.

Consultants

John Andrews: Deloitte had been previously involved with the Silver Hill scheme, and he asked about the criteria used to select consultants and whether past mistakes might be repeated.

The Chairman stated that Deloitte's appointment had been through a competitive tendering exercise in response to a brief and their appointment was appropriate for the task.

Viability

Juliet Verney: Had the Council considered seeking sponsorship from the public to fund individual parts of the development that they might wish financially support.

Bill Ledbetter: The SPD did not include consideration of long term economic sustainability. There was a need to build on Winchester's heritage and creativity in order that visitors stayed for longer, as was the case at York.

A representative of Winchester Chamber of Music: In addition to housing, entertainment and culture added weight as economic wealth generators and should be given consideration.

The Chairman stated that entertainment and culture would help visitors to stay in the town.

Publicity

A local resident: The whole IPG process was refreshing after Silver Hill. Would the presentation slides be available on the Council's and JTP's website?

The Chairman replied that this would be the case.

The Chairman thanked public speakers for their contribution

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm and concluded at 7:45pm.

Chairman