

## **CABINET COMMITTEE: REGENERATION**

**Monday, 16 March 2026**

Attendance:

Councillors  
Tod (Chairperson)

Cutler  
Learney

Thompson

Non-voting invited councillors:

Councillors Aron, Godfrey, Laming and Lee

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

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### 1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

### 2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Tod declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of various items on the agenda due to his role as Hampshire County Councillor. Tod declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of item 7 on the agenda due to his role as a Hampshire County Councillor. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Lee made a personal statement that he was a Trustee of WinACC, should any discussion arise in this respect during the consideration of items. However, he had taken no part in discussions on these matters with other trustees of WinACC.

### 3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke during public participation regarding the Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) proposals, as summarised below:

- (i) He characterised the current regeneration proposals as "utterly shambolic" and referred to the frequent turnover of officers and consultants at significant expense to the council.

- (ii) Expressed frustration at the slow pace of the regeneration timeline, noting similar concerns he raised in March 2023.
- (iii) He made reference to the RAOB building in Cross Keys Passage and his support for its redevelopment into retail and flats.
- (iv) Expressed concern at the decision to retain King's Walk, which he considered to be unsightly and stated that its demolition would be welcomed by local residents.
- (v) He criticised the perceived inability of the administration to make decisions regarding 158, 159, and 160 High Street and highlighted a lack of decision-making regarding the future of bus services in the city.
- (vi) He reported difficulties in navigating the council's regeneration websites and exhibition boards to locate information.
- (vii) He referred to the 17-month gap between committee meetings and the lack of progress on the scheme and suggested that the previous Henderson schemes, were superior to what was currently being offered.

In response, the Leader advised that the presentation would address the reasons for the retention of Kings Walk and future plans for the site.

In addition, the Leader emphasised that securing a partner willing to invest over £100 million into the city was a significant achievement, that the developed scheme was financially viable at a time when many developments across the country were not and clarified that the project was on track for a planning application to be submitted by the end of the year.

The Leader disputed Mr Tait's characterisation of the situation, noting the difficulty of delivering a project that had both popular support and financial deliverability, which had not been achieved previously.

#### 4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 October 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

#### 5. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader provided a brief update on Station Approach. It was announced that following collaborative working with Southwestern Railway and ward members, the council had removed fencing and blocks and replaced with new surfacing to protect the trees at the front of the station.

A query was raised regarding the lack of an update or decision to suspend progress being made on the Station Approach project since Scrutiny Committee last year.

In response, the Leader stated that these decisions had been made by full Cabinet. It was noted that the decision to await progress on Station Approach,

after a masterplan was agreed for the area, was widely communicated and made clear through the work plan process. It was noted that the development and viability was largely dependent on the deliverability of a northern park and ride facility. The market could not be engaged on the masterplan opportunities until that facility had been confirmed. The Leader clarified that there had been no decision not to proceed, only to pause work taken via the usual work planning processes of the council which had been published accordingly.

6. **UPDATE ON CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION (CWR), FORMER RIVER PARK LEISURE CENTRE (RPLC) AND BAR END DEPOT (PRESENTATION)**

The Leader welcomed Matt Woolgar of Jigsaw to the meeting, who provided feedback following recent engagement that had taken place on the Central Winchester Regeneration project (CWR).

The Head of Programme: Regeneration and Matt Woolgar gave a detailed presentation which provided a progress update on Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR), the former River Park Leisure Centre (RPLC) and the Bar End depot site, also setting out their respective timelines. The presentation was available on the council's website [here](#).

The Strategic Director, Head of Programme: Regeneration and Matt Woolgar responded to Members' questions on the CWR update presentation, in relation to the following:

- (a) Further clarification was sought on whether traditional bus stops would be removed in favour of distributed street stops and if this failed to future- proof the site for a mobility hub. A concern was raised regarding whether elderly or disabled residents would find distributed stops less accessible than a single focal point.
- (b) An enquiry was made regarding the impact of the new government carbon handbook on project ambition.
- (c) A question was asked whether the £4.5 million in Community Infrastructure Levy funds was being used for the acquisition of the Marks and Spencer car park.
- (d) Further clarification was sought regarding the absence of green walls or roofs in the artistic impressions and the impact of this on air quality.
- (e) A request was made for a review of bus routes in specific wards where services were deemed illogical.
- (f) A question was raised regarding whether proposed bus routes through Silver Hill and Tanner Street would hinder accessibility and if the area should be pedestrianised.
- (g) Further clarification was sought on whether the size of the proposed Woolstaplers Square was in keeping with the character of Winchester and why people would visit the location.
- (h) An enquiry was made regarding potential disruption to businesses on Middlebrook Street during construction. A further question was asked about the future of the Middlebrook Street car park.

- (i) A question was asked regarding how the regeneration area would be named and marketed. Further clarification was sought on the timeline for firmer proposals.
- (j) A question was asked regarding the factors leading to the decision to retain the King's Walk building. An enquiry was made about the extent of the refurbishment. A final question was raised regarding the funding of current design and environmental work.

The Strategic Director and Head of Programme: Regeneration responded to Members' questions on the former RPLC update presentation, in relation to the following:

- (a) A question was asked regarding how formal bids would be reconciled with the 1902 indenture, which mandated recreational use, given that some expressions of interest did not meet this requirement.
- (b) Further clarification was sought on whether the council possessed the discretion to veto bids that sat outside planning policy, such as "industrial housing".
- (c) A question was raised concerning the flood risk of the site and the problems this posed for future development.
- (d) An enquiry was made regarding the different weightings applied to the five assessment criteria.
- (e) Further clarification was sought on whether the assessment would result in a single numerical score or individual evaluations for each criterion. It was clarified that separate evaluations would be provided to feed into the final decision to ensure the process remained objective and transparent.
- (f) A question was asked whether public preference was a legally justifiable reason to accept a lower financial bid.
- (g) An enquiry was made as to who was responsible for setting the assessment criteria and whether these processes were transparent to the bidders.
- (h) A question was asked regarding whether environmental considerations would receive stronger weight given the proximity of the site to a chalk stream.

The Strategic Director and Head of Programme: Regeneration responded to Members' questions on the Bar End depot update presentation, in relation to the following:

- (a) Further clarification was sought as to whether housing was included within the local plan following the debate regarding major modifications.

In conclusion, the Leader thanked the Strategic Director, Head of Programme: Regeneration, and Matt Woolgar from Jigsaw for their informative updates.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the presentation and the comments raised by the committee, as summarised above, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.40 am

Chairperson