

DECISION TAKER: CLLR LEARNEY – CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

REPORT TITLE: CENTRAL WINCHESTER REGENERATION - PROGRESS UPDATE AND OPEN FORUM FEEDBACK

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WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

#### PURPOSE

This report updates on progress on the Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) scheme with the CWR Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2018), climate emergency declaration (2019) and council plan 2020 – 2025 as key guides to delivery.

In summary, the current work involves producing a clear development framework which can then implement the aims and objectives of the SPD in a cost effective manner.

This report notes feedback received from the recent Open Forum held in February 2020 and the actions flowing from that engagement event.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That, following the Central Winchester Regeneration Open Forum on 17 February 2020, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management;
  - a. Notes progress on the project towards implementing the SPD as outlined in this report. The vision and objectives of the SPD can be seen at appendix F
  - b. Notes the content of the presentation shared at the Open Forum on 17 February.

- c. Notes the feedback given at that Forum
- d. Instructs the project team to consider the comments made during and after the Open Forum (appendix D and E) and feedback at the next Open Forum on how they have been used to assist with scheme development. A summary of the comments can be seen at paragraph 8.15.
- e. Instructs the project team to pause planning for refurbishment work on Coitbury House and consider options for the building in the emerging CWR development framework scheme.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Council Plan states that the over arching priority for the next 5 years is tackling the climate emergency and creating a greener district and that this needs to be embedded in delivery of council services.
- 1.2 The key priorities for services in the plan are;
  - a) Homes for all
  - b) Living well
  - c) Vibrant local economy
  - d) Your services, your voice
- 1.3 Progress on the Central Winchester regeneration supports these priorities by working to deliver a vibrant new mixed use scheme that will be creative and innovative to reach the net carbon zero targets of 2024 and 2030. The SPD details aims and objectives for the scheme and a planning and urban design framework which are in alignment with the council plan priorities.
- 1.4 The scheme will deliver towards the homes for all priority through the residential element of the development and support a vibrant local economy by working to fill the gap of affordable and flexible commercial space, enhancing the evening economy offer and creating an area aimed at attracting the young and creative talent in the City.
- 1.5 The open forum meetings provide an opportunity for residents, businesses and stakeholders to contribute to and comment the proposals as the project progresses.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Central Winchester regeneration project currently has allocated budget of £663,000 all of which is either spent or committed.
- 2.2 In order to progress through to an agreed development framework, a further £105,000 has been approved in CAB3211 Medium Term Financial Strategy, Budget and Council Tax 2020/21. This will enable feasibility studies, surveys, soft market testing, legal work and public engagement to take place.
- 2.3 The longer term financial impacts and options will be considered as the development framework emerges and the delivery strategy adopted will reflect both scheme viability and affordability to the council as major landowner.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no legal or procurement implications at this stage although as soft market testing and feasibility studies are undertaken on the preferred scheme, consultancy advice will be required.
- 3.2 Any procurement required as the scheme progresses through to delivery will be conducted in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

### 4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 The Central Winchester Regeneration Open Forum was held on Monday 17 February. The purpose of the Open Forum was to share progress and current work towards a development framework for the central Winchester site and to encourage attendees to comment and feedback on content shown.
- 4.2 This report provides feedback on the Open Forum.
- 4.3 An update on progress was given by JLL using the presentation attached to this report at appendix A.
- 4.4 Attendees were able to inspect, discuss and comment on the content shared at the Open Forum.
- 4.5 For those unable to attend, the content has also been shared on the council website and where there has been the opportunity to view and add comments on Citizen Space.
- 4.6 The feedback and actions will be used to assist in the detailed work to finalise the development framework.
- 4.7 All members, key stakeholders and those registering to receive updates on the project progress were informed about the Open Forum and invited to attend.
- 4.8 The Open Forum panel, see paragraph 8.3, assist the Cabinet Member in the public engagement process for the project.

### 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 In accordance with the SPD, the Council Plan and Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan, work on the central Winchester regeneration scheme is considering the impact, opportunities and objectives as the preferred scheme option is developed. This includes consideration of the carbon emission impact of development, transport implications, and other environmental and sustainability issues.
- 5.2 Expert advice is being obtained through the council's strategic consultants, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). More locally WinACC are engaged through the Open Forum panel.

## 6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The risk register for the central Winchester regeneration project is attached at appendix C.

## 7 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 7.1 All information gathered from sign in sheets at the Open Forum is handled in accordance with current data regulations.

## 8 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### 8.1 **Open Forum**

- 8.2 The Central Winchester Open Forum was held on the 17 February 2020. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management is lead Member for the project and chairs the meeting.

- 8.3 Supporting the Chair in the engagement process for the project is a panel comprising a cross party group of Members and members from key stakeholder organisations:

- a) Winchester Business Improvement District,
- b) WinACC
- c) Hampshire Cultural Trust
- d) Cycling UK and Cycle Winchester

- 8.4 The open forum meeting was given an update on progress on the project by JLL, the council's strategic consultant, who are working with the council to deliver the CWR scheme.

- 8.5 Objective 1 of the SPD is for a vibrant mixed use quarter of the city. The approach being taken is to devise a development framework that implements the SPD and that meets some of the strategic "gaps" for the city economy. Based on that gap analysis the CWR site lends itself well to:

- (i) Retention of the younger generation – 25 to 34 year olds
- (ii) Enhancing the student experience
- (iii) Employment and workspace creation
- (iv) Enhancing the night time economy
- (v) Affordable homes and smaller units
- (vi) Provision for activities to attract families

(vii) Opportunities to promote overnight tourism

- 8.6 To assist with this work three themed scheme scenarios were presented for comment. All scenarios were based on the vision and objectives of the SPD which is the planning policy guidance for the CWR area. This sets key parameters within which the council is working to develop a deliverable and affordable scheme.
- 8.7 The scenarios can be seen at appendix A and were;
- (i) Business not as usual – a commercially led scheme
  - (ii) Homes for all – a residentially led scheme
  - (iii) Destination Max – a culturally led scheme
- 8.8 The schemes were testing what the CWR site could be with a different balance of uses within the specified parameter ranges set out in the SPD.
- 8.9 All scenarios were based on the vision and objectives of the SPD which is the planning policy guidance for the CWR area. This sets key parameters within which the council is working to develop a deliverable and affordable scheme.
- 8.10 Options considering the level of retention of existing buildings have been explored in the scenarios in response to the Climate Emergency Declaration and action plan. In summary new construction generally emits more carbon to the atmosphere than repurposing existing buildings.
- 8.11 Attendees at the meeting were able to view the content, discuss the scheme scenarios with council members, officers, JLL and members of the panel, and leave comments.
- 8.12 The display boards from the meeting can be seen at appendix B.
- 8.13 The comments from the meeting were collated and briefly fed back to the audience in summary.
- 8.14 The comments collated at the meeting and subsequently on line, can be seen at appendix D and E.
- 8.15 The key themes from comments on the scenarios were:
- a) Broad support for many of the elements of all three scenarios and support around the aim to cater for the younger generation.
  - b) Many expressed a desire for the council to ‘get on and do something’.
  - c) High levels of support for the Business not as usual scenario and many also supported the view that the emphasis should be on providing workspace to allow for creative and start up businesses.

- d) Some support for the residential element of Homes for All but many felt it would be a wasted opportunity if more of the leisure and cultural uses were not included. Also some concern about lack of open public realm
- e) High levels of support for many elements of the Destination Max scenario, the covered market and cultural uses in particular, but some feeling there should be more residential and some raised the question of viability of a scheme with a lot of cultural uses.
- f) Many expressed the desire for a fully accessible scheme with pedestrian and cycle routes through it and that there should no car parking in the centre.
- g) Some comments stressed the importance of the SPD guidance, around heights, pedestrian/cycle priority and links to the wider city in particular.

8.16 All comments will be considered as the development framework is refined and this will be shared at the next Open Forum in summer 2020.

8.17 Next steps for the project are:

| Period                 | Action   |
|------------------------|--|
| February 2020          | Project team to collate all comments and work with JLL to review and consider them as the development framework is refined.  |
| March 2020 – June 2020 | Work on the detail of the development framework will continue and, in tandem, work on viability will be carried out  |
| March 2020 – June 2020 | Evaluate and establish the potential approach to delivery  |
| Summer 2020            | Central Winchester Open Forum to share the development framework and emerging delivery approach  |
| Summer 2020            | <p>6 week engagement period to share the development framework and emerging delivery approach with wider audiences.</p> <p>This is to include presentations to targeted audiences, public drop in sessions, stakeholder meetings and social media campaign.</p> <p>A draft engagement plan will be developed and the Open Forum panel consulted on that plan prior to the engagement period starting</p> |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| September 2020 – October 2020 | Open Forum prior to decision making process on development framework and delivery approach.  |
| Autumn 2020                   | Cabinet approval of development framework and delivery approach  |
| Autumn 2020 onwards           | <p>Dependant on delivery approach, next steps may include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guide</li> <li>• Phasing</li> <li>• Plot allocation and site preparation</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Disposal/delivery agreements (inc leases/sale/JV/partnerships)</li> </ul> |

#### 8.18 Other project updates

#### 8.19 Movement and accessibility

- a) The council is working closely with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to align the development framework on the preferred CWR scheme with progress on the Movement Strategy studies and action plan.
- b) As a priority, we are working with HCC and the bus operators on options for the bus station relocation.
- c) Atkins (HCC term consultant) are carrying out the stage one feasibility study which looks at several options that work for the regeneration of the site, the wider movement strategy and bus operators.
- d) Outputs from the first phase study are expected in spring 2020 and these will be fed in to the work on the preferred scheme.
- e) Our close working relationship continues in all areas of the emerging studies under the Movement Strategy as accessibility is a key consideration for the CWR site.

#### 8.20 Archaeology

8.21 Following the decision in 2019 to start early investigation work across the site, progress and the timeline for this work is as follows:

| Period | Actions | Status |
|--------|---------|--------|
|--------|---------|--------|



|                                |  |           |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|
| March 2019                     | Approval to scope out work needed for early investigations on site.  | Complete  |
| April 2019                     | Detailed scoping study was undertaken with specialist consultants to ascertain the details, timescales and costs of the required work.   | Complete  |
| July 2019                      | Project review panel endorsed the decision to carry out the work   | Complete  |
| August 2019                    | Formal approval to carry out the work detailed in the study and funding agreed by Cabinet  | Complete  |
| September 2019 – December 2019 | Detailed consultants brief drawn up in collaboration with specialists from Historic England and input from independent archaeologist Patrick Ottaway. There is only one other known city in the UK where similar work has been carried out and it is important to call on expert advice. | Complete  |
| January 2020                   | Procurement documents drawn up in line with EU procurement regulations   | Complete  |
| February 2020                  | 6 week tender process begins   | On target |
| April 2020 – May 2020          | Evaluation of bids takes place followed by appointment of preferred consultant   | On target |
| May 2020                       | Successful consultant commences contract   | On target |

## 8.22 Coitbury House

- a) Plans to refurbish Coitbury House were shared at the Open Forum in September. These include;
- (i) Opening up the internal floor plates and reworking the internal lay out to modernise services and WCs and maximise lettable space to appeal to potential tenants.
  - (ii) Re working the western end of the building to transform the entrance and reception area and provide a focal point for the building.

- (iii) Re working the roof to increase internal floor space and improve the profile and roof scape.
    - (iv) Replace the external fire escape with an enclosed stair case.
  - b) The viability of that scheme was not affordable and that, together with a lack of tenant demand and uncertainty around what the final CWR scheme is going to look like, meant that it was sensible to pause work and consider the options around Coitbury House as part of the wider scenario work.
  - c) The cost of carrying out the refurbishment work shared at the September Open Forum is estimated at between £2.5m and £3.7m. Any investment in this building requires careful consideration to ensure that there is an acceptable return on investment, and that the end use is a good fit with the overall development framework.
- 8.23 Retention and refurbishment of Coitbury House was not specifically a part of the SPD plan. Options for the building are now being considered in work being done on the development framework which will be shared at the next CWR Open Forum, likely to be in summer 2020.
- 8.24 Meanwhile Uses
  - a) The meanwhile uses study commissioned at the beginning of 2019 was concluded as scheduled in the spring 2019.
  - b) The study explored options to deliver a meanwhile uses destination on the vacant area of the bus station and looked at;
    - (i) Demand of a scheme by potential end users and tenants
    - (ii) Opportunities and constraints around the site
    - (iii) Mix of uses and number of units required
    - (iv) Look and feel of a potential scheme
    - (v) Costs and timescales involved in delivering a scheme
  - c) The study showed that a meanwhile uses scheme could be very successful on the proposed site but the timescale and cost involved to establish the site proved to be far greater than originally estimated.
  - d) Investment in the region of £1.5 m would be needed to ensure the right quantity and mix of uses to make the space a destination that would attract footfall. Timescales to deliver and operate the site to get a return on that investment would be upwards of 5 years.
  - e) Findings of the study were considered at the project review in August 2019 and a decision was made not to proceed with the study area but

to look at how the exciting elements of that study could be brought in to other areas of the site.

- f) Work being carried out on the preferred CWR scheme option includes how to incorporate meanwhile and interim uses to the wider site and proposals will be shared at the next CWR Open Forum.

#### 8.25 Lower section of the High Street and Broadway

- a) Plans for the transformation of this area were shared at the open forum in September 2019 and comments were overwhelmingly supportive.
- b) Colleagues at HCC are finalising that report and we will then be ready to implement phases of work when timing and funding allows.
- c) Funding remains a barrier to delivery at this stage, even with the phasing option, but avenues are being explored around bidding for grants and external funding as well as, in due course, applying for CIL funding. It is likely that these improvements will be delivered incrementally over time.
- d) Proposals for the CWR site and proposals for the Broadway study area will align and be complementary.
- e) The proposals have also been shared more widely with colleagues at HCC to make sure all concerned are fully aware of the aspirations for the study area as work continues on the movement strategy action plan.

#### 8.26 Central Winchester regeneration SPD, the local plan and the Vision for Winchester

- a) It is recognised that, as part of the local plan refresh, various studies are being carried to identify future needs around town centre uses, housing and education.
- b) In addition to these studies, a new Vision for Winchester is being developed. The aim of this document is to outline aspirations for how the city develops and grows over the coming years and the work is being overseen by the Winchester Town Forum.
- c) It should be noted that project teams, member groups and consultants working on the studies and documents are working together to ensure that the contents align.

#### 8.27 Property matters

- a) Old Friarsgate Medical Centre – the building has been bought from the previous owners by the council, made safe with hoardings and other

security measures, and final legal matters are being concluded in relation to dilapidations.

- b) High street properties – the council has bought four properties 158-160 and 164 - 165 High Street, either side of the bus station entrance.
  - (i) Discussions continue between the council and the tenants on day to day landlord and tenant matters.
  - (ii) The council is carrying out improvement work to the exterior of the vacant units to enhance the appearance while the longer term use is decided. The long term plans for vacant units will complement the those uses identified in the emerging development framework.
- c) New doctors' surgery – the council is working closely with a number of key parties including the St Clements GP practice, the West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and the District Valuer to finalise lease documentation and build plans for the new doctors surgery on Upper Brook Street to enable the GP practice to relocate.
- d) The council will be meeting with key landowners on the development site over the next few weeks.

## 9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 9.1 That the contents of this report are not considered at the Cabinet Member Decision Day.
- 9.2 Failure to consider the contents of this report and formally recognise the outputs does not contribute to the council objectives of openness and transparency.
- 9.3 This has therefore been rejected.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

CAB3186 - 28 August 2019 Funding for Central Winchester Regeneration Archaeology

CAB3211 - 12 February 2020 Medium Term Financial Strategy, Budget and Council Tax 2020/21

#### Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: CWR Open Forum Presentation

Appendix B: CWR Open Forum Boards

Appendix C: CWR Risk Register

Appendix D: CWR Open Forum 17 02 20 –comments

Appendix E: CWR Open Forum 17 02 20 – comments via WCC website

Appendix F: CWR SPD Vision and Objectives