

Consultation Statement

Introduction:

This Consultation Statement accompanies the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Central Winchester Regeneration area (CWR area). It sets out what consultation and engagement has been undertaken to date and how it influenced the content of the draft and final plan. The statement covers

- Who was invited to be involved in the plan preparation;
- How they were invited to be involved in the plan preparation;
- A summary of the main issues raised as a result of the consultation and how those main issues have been addressed.

The draft SPD was informed by an extensive programme of stakeholder and community engagement as required by planning legislation.

Engagement with organisations and the community was vital in guiding the draft SPD. The approach was to work collaboratively to develop a design framework to incorporate the organisations and communities aims and objectives for the regeneration area.

The engagement process was launched in February 2017 and focused on a Community Planning Weekend (CPW) held on 24 and 25 March 2017 attended by over 700 people. Other activities involved individual meetings, community roadshows, focus group workshops and surveys, including users of the bus station and car parks. In all, over 1,500 people contributed to the process.

Who was invited to be involved in the plan preparation and how:

At the beginning of the engagement process, a database was compiled with over 200 contacts, including Winchester City Councillors, landowners, businesses, community groups, public bodies, voluntary organisations and other key stakeholders. This database grew throughout the process and now holds data for over 850 local stakeholders. Amongst these are Winchester BID, City of Winchester Trust, University of Winchester, Marks & Spencer plc, Stagecoach, St Clements Surgery and North Winchester Youth and Community Action.

A launch event was held on 10 February 2017 to begin publicising the community engagement and to explain Winchester City Council had appointed John Thompson and Partners (JTP) to work with it and the wider community to create an SPD and to explain JTP's Community Planning process to invited stakeholders and the local media – BBC Radio Solent, Winchester Radio and Hampshire Chronicle.

Community roadshows were held in early March 2017 at Winchester Sunday Market (5 March 10am – 1pm), Alresford Community Centre (9 March 9am – 12pm), Winchester Train Station (9 March 4pm – 7pm and 10 March 7am – 9am) and King's

Central Winchester Regeneration SPD – Consultation Statement

Church, Bishop's Waltham (10 March 1pm – 4pm) to explain JTP's role and the project objectives to the local community, to begin to understand local issues and aspirations and to encourage participation at the Community Planning Weekend.

Further pre-arranged meetings and conversations were held with residents of St John's Almshouses, students at Peter Symonds College, Christ Church Centre Street Pastors, students at Westgate School and local businesses/market traders and landowners.

A publicity flyer was distributed to approximately 13,000 households in Winchester via the Mid Hampshire Observer, advising the local community of the SPD engagement process and encouraging their attendance and participation in the CPW. The flyer also included the details of a telephone information line and a contact email to allow people to get in touch with and request further information about the process.

A large banner advertising the CPW was suspended across the High Street for a week prior to the event. A large poster was displayed in the Council office.

Press advertisements and media releases were distributed through the Mid Hampshire Observer and the Hampshire Chronicle throughout the Community Planning process. Social media was also utilised, with both the Council and JTP tweeting each event at various stages to help reach community users on those platforms.

A web page was set up displaying information and downloads about the proposals and this has been updated throughout the community engagement process. The website URL is: www.centralwinchesterregen.co.uk.

On 24 and 25 March 2017, over 700 members of the community participated at the CPW at the Guildhall to help create a Vision for the CWR area. People took part in workshops, walkabouts and hands-on planning groups to consider key issues and opportunities for the site and its relationship with the existing city. Participation was on a drop-in basis and people could stay for a short while, a few hours or for the whole event. There was also an exhibition explaining the background of the proposal.

Team members were on hand to facilitate the CPW and to answer questions. Community Planning and masterplanning expertise was provided by JTP. Other consultants were Atkins for transport, Osmond Brookes and Rocmor for commercial property, Propernomics for property research, Scarborough's Renaissance for creative and enterprising towns, Snug Architects for urban design and Ubu Design for landscape and public realm.

At the CPW, the local community shared their ideas and experiences with the JTP team through workshops and one-on-one discussions. A huge amount of data was captured through post-it note comments and hands-on planning drawings.

Central Winchester Regeneration SPD – Consultation Statement

Following the CPW, street surveys were conducted in Winchester High Street, Stanmore and Winnall, to engage with the age group between approximately 25 to 50 years old, so-called Generation X. A total of 54 questionnaires were completed; 25 in the High Street, 12 in Stanmore and 17 in Winnall.

Surveys with users of the bus station and car parks took place on 23 March (7am – 9pm) and 25 March (10am – 5pm) at five bus stops (South Winchester P&R; East Winchester P&R; Bus Station; The Broadway; & Upper Brook Street) and two car parks (The Brooks and Middle Brook Street).

Before, during and after the CPW, people were also encouraged to complete comment forms and submit them by post or email or simply to email their comments and suggestions to community@jtp.co.uk if they were unable to participate in any of the workshops or roadshow events. Around 150 comments were submitted.

After the public workshop days, the JTP team analysed and summarised the contributions and reported back to the local community at the Guildhall on 4 April 2017.

To engage further with the enterprising and creative business community, a workshop was held on 15 May 2017 to consider their needs and aspirations. Approximately 30 people, including those representing a range of groups and organisations attended. This included 360 Integrated PR, Action Hampshire, Hampshire Cultural Trust, T2 Architects and Winchester Music Project, amongst others.

Further work was then undertaken to develop a Vision for Central Winchester including analysis of Winchester's built form, views, streets and spaces, the emerging design framework and artist's illustrations which were presented to the public Informal Policy Group (IPG) on 4 July 2017. Members of the audience were invited to give their comments and thoughts after the presentation and fed into the SPD process.

Main issues raised and how they were addressed

The JTP team summarised and analysed all of the feedback from before, during and after the CPW and identified a number of key themes:

1. Support for Central Winchester Regeneration
2. Winchesterness
3. Streets, spaces and water
4. "City experience" economy
5. Getting about
6. Buses
7. Heritage and culture
8. Housing and community

Central Winchester Regeneration SPD – Consultation Statement

9. Delivery and meanwhile uses
10. Community participation – keep the process going

The first is an overarching theme supporting the positive change which could be brought forward through regeneration of the CWR area in incremental phases. Participants envisaged a mixed-use pedestrian friendly quarter which is distinctly Winchester; this first objective is the vision for the SPD framework and builds upon LPP2 policy WIN4:

The vision for the Central Winchester Regeneration Area is for the delivery of a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly quarter that is distinctly Winchester and supports a vibrant retail and cultural / heritage offer which is set within an exceptional public realm and incorporates the imaginative re-use of existing buildings of historic interest.

The remaining nine key themes and the nine principles set out in policy WIN4 were distilled and honed into a further eight objectives for the CWR area which development is aspires to meet:

1. Vibrant Mixed-Use Quarter
2. Winchesterness
3. Exceptional Public Realm
4. City Experience
5. Sustainable Transport
6. Incremental Delivery
7. Housing for All
8. Community

A draft SPD was produced based on the outputs of the engagement process as outlined above. **Consulting on the Draft SPD**

The draft SPD was made available to the public following a meeting of the Council's IPG on 30 October. The public, businesses and visitors had the opportunity to find out more and give their initial feedback at a drop-in exhibition event at Guildhall Winchester on 14 November 2017.

The draft SPD was reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017 before the Cabinet gave its approval for the SPD to go to formal consultation on 6 December 2017.

The formal consultation was launched with an exhibition at Guildhall Winchester on 11 December and ran until 5 February 2018.

The consultation was advertised through a public notice in the Mid Hants Observer on 14 December 2017, via letters to statutory and general consultees on the Local Plan database and those on JTP's stakeholder database as well as through articles in a number of newsletters and advertising flyers used at the exhibitions.

Central Winchester Regeneration SPD – Consultation Statement

Copies of the draft SPD were made available online and for collection from the Council's main office and at the various exhibition events. Reference copies of the draft SPD were also available to view at libraries throughout the District.

Exhibition boards were placed on display in The Brooks Shopping Centre from 12 December 2017 until 8 January 2018.

A week-long, staffed, touring exhibition ran at various times and locations across the district from 10 – 15 January 2018.

Feedback using an online comment form was encouraged although a printed form with a freepost return address was also available to be downloaded or collected from events and the Council's main office.

JTP and Council officers had over 1,000 interactions with visitors to the exhibition events and 210 written responses were received – 32 from representatives of organisations and the rest from individuals.

Addressing Consultation Feedback

A summary of the key feedback themes from the consultation was shared at a public meeting of the IPG in March 2018.

A list of all the responses received and a document showing the Council's response to the key themes, including how they affected the final SPD, were made available on the Council's website: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/projects/engagement-and-consultation>

Overall, the consultation showed a wide level of support for the draft SPD, the vision it promoted and the objectives it set out. Whilst there was considerable comment on the detail of the draft SPD, the majority of this was aimed at refining, improving or adding detail to the draft SPD, rather than resulting from fundamental objections. Amongst the themes that emerged from the responses, the following key issues were raised:

1. Sustainability / Environmental Protection
2. Movement Strategy / Bus operations / Cycling
3. Retail
4. Archaeology
5. Design guidance
6. Viability and Delivery
7. Development requirements

As a result of these issues, the following amendments were made:

- A ninth objective 'Climate Change and Sustainability' was added to cover sustainability standards and expectations
- The SPD was amended to include sufficient flexibility to be able to deal with the potential outcomes of the Movement Strategy and to respond to concerns regarding loss of the bus stops outside M&S and Paperchase

Central Winchester Regeneration SPD – Consultation Statement

- The SPD was amended to clearly indicate where cycle routes could be and how they could connect with existing routes outside the CWR area
- Recommendations from the Archaeology report produced by an Advisory Panel of independent Archaeology experts was added to the SPD
- The ranges in the land uses table were updated following initial viability assessments and to ensure flexibility to adapt to market changes was maintained
- The key aspirations in relation to development requirements were set out more clearly throughout the SPD

The vision was also amended after it was flagged that the imaginative re-use of existing buildings, where possible applies to all not only those of historic interest.

No amendments were made to the SPD in response the comments received in relation to retail, however a Council response was provided to explain that retail needs reports have been produced which provide evidence and recommendations on future needs, and to address concerns regarding rents and rates, to explain that the Council does not directly control the retail sector costs – rents are established by property owners and are market driven and business rates are set nationally.

A Council response was provided in relation to requests for more consideration and guidance on architectural styles, design and materials, to explain that it is not appropriate to include more detailed design guidance in the SPD as this will be addressed throughout the whole planning process. However, a more detailed section on what the planning process requires including expected developer contributions, community engagement and sustainability was added. And the title of section 2 in the SPD was amended from 'Context' to 'Context and Design Principles'.

In response to the comments related to lack of detail in relation to viability and delivery, the Council explained that it continues to work with consultants assessing scheme options and that next steps will be to assess models for delivery to determine the most appropriate approach.

The revised SPD, incorporating all the changes that were proposed, was recommended by the IPG, reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and adopted by Cabinet on 20 June 2018.

For further enquires or if you would like to join our mailing list so we can keep you updated on the next steps please email CWRegen@winchester.gov.uk

The SPD was formally adopted on 20 June 2018.