

Central Winchester Regeneration PROJECT UPDATE BROADSHEET May 2018

CENTRAL WINCHESTER
REGENERATION

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and see us at the events around the district and who shared their views in person, online and in writing at the different stages throughout this project. We've been so impressed by the passion, thoughtfulness and consideration that people have expressed during workshops and events. Your contributions to the SPD have been, and will continue to be, vital.

From the workshops held in the spring of 2017, we identified the public's aspirations: maintaining 'Winchesterness'; developing 'bit-by-bit'; using different architects and individual developments rather than one big scheme; retaining The Brooks, The Antiques Market and the Woolstapler's Hall, incorporating the heritage and culture of our City into the new area, and making practical endeavours to keep our City working and businesses succeeding, while the area evolves.



See the timeline on the back page for what will happen in the next few months.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

PROGRESS OF THE SPD

The formal consultation closed on Monday 5 February and we received over 200 written responses; 32 from representatives of organisations and the rest from individuals. We have spent the weeks since considering the responses, reviewing feedback and have now made appropriate changes to the SPD in light of the comments made.

Some of the feedback included suggestions that are outside the scope of this SPD and so have not been incorporated. However, they were still very helpful and so we have been sharing these findings internally to see how they can be considered within our services.

We have categorised the comments into themes to make it easier to reference, respond and input into this SPD. A summary of the main feedback themes and the Council's proposed response to them is included in this broadsheet. The full detail can be seen online at: winchester.gov.uk/CWR

The revised SPD, highlighting all the changes that are proposed to be made to it, will be presented to Cabinet on 20 June.

RECAP OF WHAT THE SPD IS

SPDs can add further detail to adopted Local Plan policies and create a link between the Local Plan and any future planning applications for development in the area covered by the SPD. They provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues.

Preparation of an SPD involves evidence gathering and then public consultation on an initial draft before a final version is agreed for adoption.

Once adopted, an SPD is a material consideration during the decision making process.

This SPD has been written in a style that is user friendly and incorporates and builds on relevant policy requirements and guidance. It is **not** a site by site allocation of uses or prescriptive in its design approach. It does, however, set out a coordinated framework for the whole area and will be a consideration in all planning applications for the CWR area.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE SPD IS ADOPTED?

The IPG is the panel set up to manage and oversee the creation of this SPD, to review your feedback. Once this work is completed the SPD will then be in the hands of the Cabinet (Central Winchester Regeneration) Committee. Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR) is the working name of the project, and this Cabinet will work to make the ideas a reality. The membership of the Committee will be agreed at full Council on 16 May 2018 and announced on 17 May 2018.

The Committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the CWR project. More information about Cabinet (CWR) Committee, including meeting dates, can be found on our website: winchester.gov.uk/meetings/committees/42

It is recognised that the Council is likely to need additional expertise, sourced externally, to deliver the next phase of the project.



WHAT YOU TOLD US

What you told us during the consultation, and the Council's responses.

During the public consultation we met many residents and had numerous conversations about the SPD and the centre of Winchester. We also received many comments online. Since the consultation closed at the beginning of February, we've been carefully compiling the comments into groups and themes, and then discussing them with specialists within the Council and outside to determine how we respond to the points and any concerns raised. You can refer back to the appendices and full SPD to read more detail which can be found from 15 May at: winchester.gov.uk/CWR.

Below are those themes, your key thoughts around them, the Council's responses to those points and details of any subsequent amendments to the SPD which will be subject to Cabinet approval on 20 June.



ARCHAEOLOGY, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

YOUR POINTS

The retention of the Antiques Market and Woolstapler's Hall is welcomed.

There is wide support for the ideas for cultural / heritage uses in the area, such as a museum in Woolstapler's Hall, or open-air concert space in the current bus station space.

The English Project and Hampshire Cultural Trust would both welcome conversations about the potential use of key sites, for perhaps a museum development, as would the Theatres Trust with regard to use of the Antiques Market for artistic and cultural offerings.

Linguistic and literary history were also mentioned and it was asked for them to be included in the SPD under 'Winchesterness'.

OUR RESPONSE

This is noted, and the SPD aspires to preserve these key buildings and appropriate uses will be assessed upon application.

In line with the local community, we want to create something culturally and historically significant for Winchester.

The input and involvement from these specialist groups is welcomed, and ideas can be discussed. The SPD can't identify specific locations and requirements for various uses or specify a precise facility or operator for these cultural amenities but the Council can work collaboratively to find a solution on the site.

While these aspects are part of our history, the 'Winchesterness' section reflects this and does not need to refer specifically to linguistic or literary history.

YOUR POINTS

Both River Park and St John's Rooms were mentioned; River Park as a possible location for a cultural centre and St John's Rooms deserving of more access and publicity.

There was concern that the Archaeology Advisory Panel's work would not be incorporated into the SPD as it was being completed after the public consultation.

A variety of points were raised around archaeology. They ranged from a desire to see a full 'big dig' style excavation, commenting that the desk-based research is not enough to make assessment, to preserving what's there and providing a 21st Century space to create our future heritage.

Winchester's multi-cultural and religious groups raised points about the provision of community space and meeting the needs of our diverse population. One of the community groups specifically made reference to the feasibility of community use and that therefore the design framework should depend upon delivery of a specific cultural or heritage use.

OUR RESPONSE

These points are noted. Both of these areas are outside of the SPD scope but the input is helpful and will be discussed within the context of other projects.

The Archaeology Advisory Panel's report has now been produced. It's available in full on the website, and in summary as a page under Central Winchester Regeneration. The expert panel's findings and conclusions have been reviewed and they advise on how the Local Plan's policies should be achieved on this site. The findings have therefore been incorporated into the final SPD.

Appendix 2 of the SPD ('History') has also been updated using information from the Panel's report.

The findings and conclusions from the Archaeology Advisory Panel are clear. They have said we should preserve what's there for a later time when the technology is more advanced and we can entrust the space to future generations to enjoy. They also said that even if money were no object a 'big dig' was not recommended.

The IPG has agreed that ongoing public dialogue will continue this year. The Archaeology Advisory Panel are happy to meet with the public in the Autumn.

Furthermore, on the note of excavation, this matter would be explored as and when proposals come forward for the site. Within the planning guidance at both national, local and City levels developers need to include provision for assessing any archaeology on site and how, if there were significant finds, they would preserve and share those artefacts.

Anyone is entitled to bid for any premises and all applications will be considered. The SPD sets out guidance to achieve a mix of uses across the area. It doesn't allocate or provide space for specific groups.

It would not be reasonable or realistic to seek to withhold planning consent across the area simply because a facility which is out of an applicant's control has not been delivered. Similarly, viability is an important consideration which cannot be ignored.

The facilities proposed are aimed at a cross section of the community which would include, but could not be limited to, specific ethnic or religious groups.



WHAT YOU TOLD US

MOVEMENT STRATEGY / BUS OPERATIONS / CYCLING

YOUR POINTS

Concerns were raised about the timing of the SPD and Movement Strategy in that the Movement Strategy is going to finish after the SPD is adopted. Some people have suggested the SPD be held until the completion of the Movement Strategy.

There have been many comments on transport matters, often illustrating opposing positions on matters such as parking. There were also many requests for more detail and/or emphasis on particular issues and topics such as bus routes, cycle ways and pedestrianisation.

People raised concerns about the location of bus stops and shelters if the bus hub moves and the direction of the bus routes changes slightly. Specifically the loss of the bus stops outside M&S and Paperchase have concerned some respondents.

Many raised concerns about cycling, and they want to clearly understand the provision for cycling in the centre, the safety of routes and shared spaces where cyclists and pedestrians would both use the routes.

OUR RESPONSE

The Movement Strategy is an extensive project led by Hampshire County Council (HCC), in association with Winchester City Council, with a much wider geographical remit and impact than the Central Winchester Regeneration SPD. The SPD is sufficiently flexible to allow for the outcomes from the Movement Strategy. Both Councils are working together on the local and wider access issues relating to major developments across the City.

The individual project inputs are being fed into the development of the Movement Strategy to better inform the overall outcome.

We understand that this needs to be carefully reviewed and we are working closely with Hampshire County Council. We have amended the SPD to allow for flexibility around City centre movement so that outcomes from the movement strategy can be accommodated. This may require a phased implementation to changes around bus routes and bus stop locations.

We've noted these concerns and we will indicate where cycle routes could be and how they could connect to existing routes outside of the CWR area. We will also suggest whether they will be just for pedestrians or shared routes.

RETAIL

YOUR POINTS

The need for retail space and the scale or type of retail outlets in the area was also questioned. These points were made in the context of concerns raised about empty units in the City centre and an increase in online shopping.

Another point made is that the business rates and City centre rentals should be affordable for independents, start-ups and small businesses.

OUR RESPONSE

Winchester is fortunate to have lower than national average empty units. While there is an increase in internet shopping for some items, there is no clear evidence to suggest there will no longer be a requirement for good quality retail experiences in the future.

The SPD provides for a range of retail floor space that is flexible to allow for changes in market demands. The western edge of the site could be an ideal retail space, and potentially some existing retail units will be lost in the redevelopment and therefore need to be re-accommodated.

Winchester City Council does not control the business rates; these are set by Central Government.

The majority of the units in the City centre are owned and rented by private landlords who set their rents by market forces and this again is outside of the City Council's control.

SUSTAINABILITY / ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

YOUR POINTS

There were a number of comments regarding sustainability and environmental protection. Some were specifically promoting energy efficiency, minimising emissions, mitigating climate change, renewable energy supplies and units on site, as well as the importance of building to set standards.

Concern was voiced that the Council could not be fully trusted to enforce its planning regulations.

OUR RESPONSE

We have noted the comments made and added a ninth objective to the SPD that is 'Climate Change and Sustainability' to cover sustainability standards and expectations.

Careful consideration has been given to traffic management, air quality, and the unique nature of Winchester as a walled City, with historic buildings on the site boundary, trees, waterways and culverts.

The adopted Local Plan promotes sustainable development. There is a wide range of policies that planning applications will have to comply with.

DESIGN STATEMENTS AND ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

YOUR POINTS

There is a desire to see high quality design, small scale and mixed uses incorporating a mix of architecture, in keeping with Winchester and supporting the existing old buildings.

Careful use of materials and considerate architecture are important to keep the character of the City centre.

OUR RESPONSE

The SPD allows for a 'bit by bit' approach to development and the guidance aspires to ensure high quality buildings, landscape and public realm, emphasising the 'Winchesterness' in their design.

When the SPD was first planned, it was decided that it would provide the framework for future design rather than prescribe specific architectural styles or materials. Very detailed or specific design requirements could also conflict with one of the aims of the SPD, which is to allow the area to be developed incrementally. This allows for a variety of architectural responses, within the overall strategy and vision promoted by the SPD, and is also informed by existing design guidance in the Local Plan and 'High Quality Places' SPD.

The title of section 2 in the SPD has been amended from 'Context' to 'Context and Design Principles' and the planning process set out in the SPD has been updated to clarify that applicants should consult on proposals before they are submitted. Developers must demonstrate how the community has been informed of the emerging proposals and how any matters raised by the community have been taken into account.

VIABILITY AND DELIVERY

YOUR POINTS

Some people were expecting more detail in relation to the viability and rationale behind the split of land uses set out in the SPD.

OUR RESPONSE

We're continuing work with specialists to assess a range of scheme options to ensure that a viable scheme is achieved in line with the vision and objectives of the SPD. We'll share the outputs of these assessments once they are completed. The ranges of land use within the SPD are flexible to be able to adapt to market changes.

ADDRESSING THE KEY QUESTIONS

Our thanks to those people who attended the Informal Policy Group meeting held in public on 19th March. Below is a brief summary of the responses to the key questions asked by attendees, covering archaeology and other areas.

PAST APPROACH TO ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE CITY

The Brooks excavation in 1989 involved an L shaped excavation. The Department of Environment withdrew a grant at short notice and Winchester City Council stepped in to provide considerable funding for the successful excavation of the northern part of the site. The excavation was carried out, but the funding did not cover publication of the findings.

While one third of The Brooks site was subject to archaeological investigation, these excavations preceded the latest guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its predecessors, Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) and Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), which favour preservation in situ where required.

The 2006 Silver Hill planning consent had a full Archaeological Strategy covering evaluation, mitigation design (primarily focused on preservation but also including excavation, both pre-planned and where additionally required, eg if preservation could not be achieved), outreach and research aims. The key difference now is that due to land ownership changes, there is scope for early investigations to understand the impact of proposals and inform planning decisions. Previously, there was very little access to land, hence the development of an iterative strategy which was to have been undertaken post-consent.

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Canterbury has been cited as a City with similarities to Winchester which has successfully dealt with its archaeology. It was a similar site, waterlogged like Winchester, and with Roman remains. Winchester has medieval on top, which is nationally significant. Canterbury carried out the work with minimal use of lift pits and minimal invasive investigations.

Jorvik (in York) has been cited as an example of archaeology being well managed, leading to the creation of a successful heritage and tourist attraction. The Archaeology Advisory Panel have praise for the positive results achieved in York, but believe it would be wrong to assume we could do the same in Winchester. The two cities are different in many ways including the tourism market which is far greater in York, than in Winchester.

PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

We must do the least possible damage to the buried archaeology and preserve important remains for future generations when new techniques are likely to be available. There have been vast improvements in archaeological technology and techniques since the 1950s, and there will be considerable further improvements in the next 50 years. Because of the importance of this site, the Archaeology Advisory Panel stresses that it is far better to wait until we can carry out any works with far greater accuracy and care.

ENFORCING THE PROPOSED APPROACH

Winchester City Council takes its responsibilities as a planning authority seriously, and will work closely with developers on all issues, including archaeology, to ensure planning conditions are explained fully and then scrupulously implemented.

The process will necessitate an ongoing dialogue from pre-app through to planning and beyond. The pre-app stage will be very important; once Winchester City Council gets an idea of what developer(s) are considering, this will dictate the building / archaeological techniques likely to be used. The Council is determined to set a high standard; techniques must be least invasive and most productive for information gathering. Developers will be given a clear understanding of the policy.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

The Council, the Archaeology Advisory Panel and the local community are in agreement about the need to create something culturally and historically significant for Winchester, for example an Anglo-Saxon museum. This will help attract tourism, as is the case at York and Bath.

We are exploring various options and are visiting cities similar to Winchester, including Bath, Oxford and Chester, to review how they have incorporated cultural ideas into their regeneration projects.





RETAIL

While many retail options have been considered, including an Outlet Centre such as those at Bicester, Portsmouth and Clarks Village at Glastonbury, we intend to create a mixed-use quarter with retail sitting alongside residential and cultural offerings. Winchester Business Improvement District (BID) supports that strategy. The majority of retail is intended to be relatively small units aimed at independent retailers.

It is accepted that there are concerns among retailers and shoppers about the possible effect of new retail development upon traders in the High Street. The provision of retail proposed within the CWR area will only marginally increase retail space in the City, accounting for an extra 3-4%, when research has identified demand of 5-10%. Having an SPD that allows for flexibility is the way forward.

Regarding closure of shops, Winchester currently¹ has a 3.1% vacancy rate against a national average of 8.9%.

Winchester City Council does not control the retail sector's costs: Central Government sets business rates and private landlords set rents. Shopping habits are changing; some towns, stores and chains are failing to adapt, but we should celebrate the dynamism of retailers in Winchester. This new area will give us an opportunity to replace units that don't serve the modern retailer well and create spaces that retailers and customers want and expect in thriving modern cities.

VIABILITY

Initial modelling and testing of the draft SPD was done before it went to consultation to confirm it could be delivered commercially and financially. Cabinet (Central Winchester Regeneration) Committee's role will be to oversee the regeneration including ensuring it is commercially and financially viable.

The IPG has visited Oxford and is soon to visit Chester and Bath to study their regeneration, and a range of financial viability models are being tested. These include scenarios that include a museum, the concept of a quiet-to-busy area of usage and mixed-use development. The appraisals are also considering the proportion of retail content and ways to complement the High Street. Consultations are continuing, including input from the Winchester Business Improvement District, and findings will be shared with the public in due course.

VISUAL APPEARANCE

We acknowledge there is considerable interest in the development's visual appearance. The SPD is not intended to be prescriptive about precise visual appearance. However, once the SPD has been adopted, and planning enquiries and applications begin, there will be opportunities for people to view and comment on proposals. One of the benefits of the development being delivered incrementally, or bit-by-bit, is that it will provide opportunity for ideas and creativity from a range of architects and designers.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing within the CWR area will help ensure the area retains its energy and appeal. Affordable housing is a Council priority and so our New Homes Delivery Team is giving careful consideration to this matter, including options for shared ownership and rent. Every effort will be made to achieve the 40% affordable housing content and the possibility of subsidy from Home England is being explored.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Work is continuing between Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council over the development of the Winchester Movement Strategy. This work includes consideration of bus routes and bus stops. The conclusions of the project team are due to be released in the autumn.

SPD STATUTORY CHALLENGE PERIOD

The preparation of SPDs is covered by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended 2017. As set out in part 5 of regulation 11, once the SPD is adopted, applications may be made to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision. Such applications, challenging the process itself rather than the content, must be made no later than three months after the date on which the SPD was adopted.

¹ As at 9 April 2018

ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGY

Tracy Matthews, Historic Environment Officer from Winchester City Council, presented the findings of the independent archaeology Advisory Panel at the Informal Policy Group meeting on 19 March as other commitments prevented the Panel's Chair, Professor Biddle, from attending the meeting. None of the other panel members are employed by, nor have any allegiance to, Winchester City Council. The panel members, excluding Tracy Matthews, were each offered a modest honorarium and expenses for their involvement.

The primary findings and recommendations of the expert panel were:

- In keeping with national planning guidance, preservation should be the primary objective
- Large-scale excavations are not recommended as a mitigation strategy

- Any archaeological investigations should be carried out with a minimum of disruption and damage to the potential findings, but should be sufficient to inform appropriate mitigation strategies which might include further archaeological work in places
- Developers will need to incorporate responsible archaeological investigation and detailed public realm enhancement as an integral part of their proposals
- The local community could have opportunities to be involved as the area and developments evolve, and as part of a long-term legacy.

ONGOING PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON ARCHAEOLOGY

In recognition of the strength of feeling around the important issue of archaeology, the IPG has agreed that ongoing public dialogue will continue this year. The Archaeology Advisory Panel are happy to meet with the public in the Autumn.

A copy of the Archaeology Advisory Panel's report can be found in the technical reports section of our website:

WINCHESTER.GOV.UK/CWR

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?

