

Minutes

Civic Quarter Liaison Group Meeting 01

Time: 16.30 – 17:30

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, CB2 3QJ

Chair: Councillor Rosy Moore (RM), Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment

Attendees:

Glenys Self	Market Trader
Patrick Usborne	Friends of Cambridge Market
William Bannell	Cambridge Association of Architects
Paul Neeve	Cambridge Tourist Information Centre
James Rixon	Market Traders Association
Robert Gardiner	Cambridge Association of Architects
James Littlewood	Gonville & Caius College
Margaret Johnston	Cambridge Past Present and Future
Becky Burrell	Great St Mary's Church
Maria Manion	Cambridge BID
David Stoughton	Cambridge BID
Taj Khan	Living Streets
Wendy Blythe	Cambridge Tourist Information Centre
John Preston	Federation of Cambridge Residents' Associations

Elected Members:

Councillor Mike Davey	MD	Leader of the Council
Councillor Rosy Moore	RM	Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment
Councillor Tim Bick	TB	Market Ward Councillor
Councillor Katie Porrer	KB	Market Ward councillor

Project Team:

Ben Binns	BB	Assistant Director, Development, Cambridge City Council
Tom Conlon	TC	Senior Development Manager, Cambridge City Council
Paul Boucher	PB	Capital Project Manager, Cambridge City Council
Nick Vose	NV	Director, Marengo Communications

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

- RM introduced the agenda for the evening and invited the project team to introduce themselves.

2.0 Terms of Reference

- RM confirmed that the Civic Quarter Liaison Group was not a decision-making forum. It is instead intended to be an open forum for stakeholders to ask questions and participate in a two-way discussion with the Project Team.
- RM emphasised that this is an open forum and that stakeholders were encouraged to put forward additional groups / individuals for future invitations.
- RM confirmed that a further two meetings had been scheduled one in April 2024 and one in October 2024. The Project Team is open to future meetings taking place in-person, online or a combination.

3.0 Civic Quarter Update Presentation

- BB delivered a presentation on the project incorporating the information shared within the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Report published on 17 January 2024 and approved by Elected Members at a meeting of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2024.
- BB outlined how investing in the Civic Quarter would help the council to achieve a number of important objectives including:
 - Creating a more attractive central Cambridge destination that would increase visitor numbers for the market, the Corn Exchange and businesses in the area.
 - Making essential, long term savings to ensure frontline council services are sustainable, by cutting operational costs and increasing revenue streams – a process that is a part of the council’s continuing [‘Our Cambridge’ transformation strategy](#).
 - Helping the council to meet its net zero carbon by 2030 target.
- BB confirmed that previous feasibility studies and consultation, including feedback on demountable market stalls, will form an important part of the Civic Quarter brief.
- BB addressed the link between the three projects and explained that the council could better support the vibrancy of the city if there were three attractive fit for purpose places.
- BB confirmed that the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2024 approved £1.45m to procure a design consortium to RIBA Stage 2 (also known as a concept design). The intention is to bring back a report to Elected Members in November 2024 to share an update on the indicative cost programme and a set of design options.
- BB explained the Governance Structure and Communications Engagement Plan – both documents are available on the project website.
- BB confirmed that Citizens Lab <https://engage.cambridge.gov.uk/en-GB/> will be used to engage residents from across the city.

4.0 Open Discussion and Questions

Can you confirm what you mean by the “Legal Status of the Market”?

BB: There is a need to update the current market legal status to ensure that it complies with up to date legislation.

You talk about civic and cultural event requirements and there are also various steering groups. I am wondering how these fit in with the conference on the 27 February 2024 which is looking at the planning process regarding culture – with a topic called “Creating a Buzz in the Night-Time Economy” by the Chief Executive of Cambridge BID and Owen Garling from the Bennet Institute is talking about “creating a sense of civic pride”. I am just wondering how that feeds into what we are talking about tonight and how we can ensure joined up thinking and that residents feel part of the process.

BB: Confirmed that the council would expect the winning design consortium to carefully consider the night-time economy and planning process regarding culture – this may well include reflecting on the outcomes of the conference on the 27 February 2024.

I know there is an officers’ working paper on cultural events are we able to see a copy?

MD: Confirmed that a paper on the city council’s draft cultural strategy is due to go to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee.

Would you consider involving the ‘Urban Room’ in your consultation?

<https://www.cambridgearchitects.org/resources/cambridge-room>

RM: This could be a good opportunity subject to timings.

Would you consider ensuring that any design team entering does so in partnership with a local architectural practice that understands Cambridge and the complexities of market square.

TC: The procurement process will expect people to demonstrate their local understanding and connection. There are three key parts to the procurement brief. 1) demonstrating a vision for the Civic Quarter and how each team will work with stakeholders to bring a vision forward, 2) experience of similar projects, including listed buildings, public realm and securing net zero carbon, 3) the financial officer.

The Cambridge Association of Architects would be very happy to form a Steering Group to support the design process.

RM: We can take this away and see how this can fit into the process.

I wish to emphasise the importance of an agreed public brief so everyone can start to see what can be done. The project is currently looking at the design process, but a step needs to happen before this to understand what can happen – for example, the logistics of how different activities will interact together.

BB: Confirmed the importance of the brief and understanding the different interactions between the buildings and spaces in between.

The meeting papers make mention of a Changing Places toilet, I would very much like this to be included in the brief.

RM: We do have money in the council's budget for a Changing Places toilet and we have been struggling to find a good location, but this work is ongoing.

I noticed that we talk about civic functions in the Guildhall. Can we just clarify that this would be clear within the brief?

TC: the brief for the Guildhall is clear that the retention of the civic function and a customer service function is key.

The vision for a better market is very much welcomed but I want to reiterate that design briefs should make it clear that demountable stalls are not feasible.

TC: previous work that included the option of demountable stalls was included with the meeting pack to demonstrate the work that had gone on before. It was not an endorsement of that approach, and the feedback has been clear that they were not fit for the needs of traders.

RM: The stalls were a trial, and the plan was never to have stalls that would be taken down every day. A lot of work has already been done looking at the different types of stalls and we will make sure this work is passed on.

We have made previous representations on the market square to stress that a design brief is needed ahead of any design workshops to agree what are the purposes of each space (Guildhall, Market Square and Corn Exchange) and why you plan it there and how these various activities in the area will interact. Could you therefore confirm what you will look at during the design workshops in May / June?

TC: The design workshops will be developed with the winning design consortium, but we expect the May / June workshops to be based around a listening exercise to inform the development of a vision and set of draft designs. This listening exercise would include understanding needs and priorities for the spaces individually and collectively.

From a logistical perspective can you explain the timeframe we can expect this to take place. And are we talking about the market here or all three – i.e. will all the designs be done together or separately.

TC: Confirmed that all three spaces will be designed together, with a worked-up design for the Civic Quarter ready for November 2024.

Can you confirm that designing out anti-social behaviour will be an important part of the brief?

RM: Agreed that this has been taken into account and that we have already looked at the current running of the market to make some changes.

Who have you invited to the group, for example is there anyone from the Arts Theatre of Corn Exchange. Perhaps it would be a good idea to encourage people to extend the invite at the start of each meeting.

BB: We looked at the previous invitees to the market liaison group and we are hoping to widen this group over time to make it more public.

Achieving net zero carbon by 2030 is a goal of the brief so can you confirm if that 2030 is the goal for completing the Civic Quarter project?

RM: Part of our 2030 goal is to retrofit the Guildhall and make it more energy efficient so we would hope it would be completed by 2030. But to confirm we don't necessarily expect the Guildhall to be net zero carbon.

Your governance structure mentions an external steering group, can you confirm who you expect to be on this and how it would be selected?

BB: We expect to confirm this when we have appointed the design consortium. We would like it to be a mixture of groups and individuals to reflect the makeup of the city.

There are no students on your governance structure.

RM: We will take this away and see how we can ensure student involvement.

MD: Has spoken to several bursars about this project over the last few weeks and we will talk with them to understand how we can get the voice of the University, colleges and students included.

I would like to emphasis the importance of pedestrians. We've found in the past that when there are many pressures and competing factors on the design is that pedestrians come quite low on the list.

BB: We will make sure this is part of the brief.

5.0 Closing Comments

RM thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.