

Minutes

Civic Quarter Liaison Group Meeting

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026

Time: 4:30pm – 5:30pm

Location: Committee Room 1, Guildhall and MS Teams

Chair: Cllr Rosy Moore

Apologies: Ben Binns, Project Sponsor

Attendees: A list of attendees who provided their name and organisation is included as an Appendix.

Elected Members Present in Room:

- Cllr Rosy Moore
- Cllr Simon Smith
- Cllr Tim Bick
- Cllr Katie Porrer (online)
- Cllr Antoinette Nestor (online)

Cambridge City Council representatives:

- Jaques van der Vyver – Project Lead – Development Team
- Paul Boucher – Project Manager - Development Team
- David Wright – Inclusive Economy and Climate Manager

Design / Delivery Team:

- David Roberts – Cartwright Pickard
- Nick Sturge – Sir Robert McAlpine (SRM)
- Daughan Bedford – SRM

Introduction

Cllr Rosy Moore welcomed attendees and outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an update following the Planning Committee on 25 March 2026, including the outcome of the planning applications, an update on highways and traffic proposals, construction logistics, and emerging decant arrangements, and to hear feedback and questions from stakeholders. The meeting was held in a hybrid format.

Planning Submissions and Timetable

- It was confirmed that the Guildhall and Corn Exchange applications were approved by Planning Committee on 25 March 2026, while the Market Square application was deferred before determination. This deferment covered both the main application and the listed building application. It was stated that the issues raised by committee related primarily to highways matters, including concerns regarding the shared surface approach and objections from the County Highways Authority.
- It was stated that the project team will continue discussions with the Highways Authority to identify areas of agreement and resolve outstanding issues ahead of the application returning to Planning Committee in June. It was also stated that further engagement will take place with Historic England regarding materials and surface treatments.
- It was confirmed that, subject to planning approval and Cabinet approval in September 2026, works are still planned to commence in January 2027. The programme durations remain approximately 12 months for the Market Square, 18 months for the Corn Exchange and 24 months for the Guildhall, subject to archaeological findings and other constraints.

Highways and Traffic Proposals

- It was explained that a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are being developed to support the proposals. These include the extension of the existing Market Square traffic restrictions to include Sundays, the removal of through traffic from Corn Exchange Street towards Bennett Street, and the removal of the right turn exit from the Grand Arcade car park, which would require much broader traffic rerouting.
- It was stated that these measures are intended to reduce traffic levels, improve pedestrian and cycle movement and support the operation of the Civic Quarter. It was also stated that further modelling work is underway in collaboration with the County Highways Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership to understand the wider impact on surrounding streets.
- Questions were raised about the impact of traffic changes on surrounding routes, including Regent Street, Lensfield Road and Hills Road, and the potential for congestion if vehicle movements are displaced. It was stated that modelling is ongoing and that a range of options are being considered to manage flows and mitigate impacts.
- Questions were also raised about the timescales for implementing the proposed TROs. It was stated that timescales will vary depending on the complexity of each measure, with simpler changes potentially deliverable earlier and more complex changes likely to take longer due to the statutory process and required engagement.

- Concerns were raised about pedestrian safety, particularly on Bene't Street and in areas with high footfall. It was stated that reducing traffic and improving the balance between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is a key objective, and that further work will be undertaken with the Highways Authority to achieve this.

Construction Logistics and Delivery

- It was stated that construction logistics are being developed to minimise disruption within the city centre. This includes consideration of using an off-site consolidation centre to reduce the number of large vehicles entering the city centre and the use of smaller vehicles for final deliveries.
- It was also stated that coordination with other projects, including planned works at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, will be required to manage cumulative impacts. It was noted that further engagement will take place with relevant stakeholders as these plans are developed.

Decant and Temporary Market Proposals

- It was explained that the current approach to decanting the market has evolved following previous engagement and survey feedback. It was stated that there is a clear preference from traders to remain within the city centre, and that the current proposals focus on accommodating stalls across a number of streets including King's Parade, St Mary's Passage, Petty Cury and Sidney Street.
- It was noted that accommodating the full market within these locations presents significant challenges due to the constrained nature of the streets, high pedestrian footfall and the need to maintain access for businesses, servicing and emergency vehicles. It was stated that smaller stall formats are being considered in some locations to maximise capacity and flexibility.
- Questions were raised about the impact on pedestrian movement, cycle parking and access to businesses. It was acknowledged that these are key considerations and that further work is required to refine the layouts and understand the impacts. It was stated that the proposals remain indicative and will continue to be developed in consultation with stakeholders.
- Concerns were also raised about the interaction between market activity and existing businesses, including access arrangements, servicing and potential disruption. It was stated that the team is aware of these issues and will continue to engage with affected businesses as proposals are refined.

Demountable Stall Trials

- It was stated that work is underway to trial demountable stalls, including different models and configurations, to test their functionality and suitability. It was noted that these trials, to start week commencing 13th April, will inform the development of the temporary market arrangements.
- Questions were raised about whether the decant proposals would require planning permission. It was confirmed that a separate planning application will be required for the temporary market arrangements and will be brought forward in due course.

Other Queries and Discussion

- Suggestions were made regarding pedestrian crossings and movement, including potential improvements at key junctions to reduce congestion and improve safety. It was stated that these suggestions will be passed to the relevant teams and considered as part of wider highways discussions.
- It was also noted that there is no single perfect solution to the decant challenge, and that the proposals represent a balance between competing constraints, including trader preferences, city centre activity, safety and deliverability.

Next Steps

- It was stated that further work will be undertaken on highways proposals, traffic modelling and decant arrangements, with ongoing engagement with stakeholders. The Market Square planning application is expected to return to Planning Committee in June 2026, and further updates will be provided as the project progresses.

Appendix – Attendees

List based on MS Teams attendance and in-person participants (excluding unidentified):

MS Teams attendance

Paul Boucher (Cambridge City Council)
WardenM (External)
Linda Jones (Cambridge Living Streets) (Unverified)
Laura Cook (External)
Pete Edwards
Thomas Thurbon (Cambridge City Council)
Julian Cree
Louise Bradley (External)
Daniel Morgan (Cambridge City Council)
Amanda Nilsson (External)
Frances Alderton (Cambridge City Council)
Cllr Antoinette Nestor (Cambridge City – Castle) (External)
Martin Macwhinnie (External)
John Preston (Unverified)
Victoria (Unverified)
Hannah Coetsee (Cambridge City Council)
Martin May (Head Porter) (External)
Cllr Katie Porrer (Cambridge City – Market) (External).

In person attendance:

David Stoughton (Living Streets)
Glenys Self (Friends of Cambridge Market)
Maria Mannion (Cambridge BID)
David Wright (Cambridge City Council)
Daughan Bedford (Sir Robert McAlpine)
Nick Sturge (Sir Robert McAlpine)
Cllr Simon Smith
Cllr Tim Bick
David Roberts, Cartwright Pickard
Jaques van der Vyver (Cambridge City Council)
Paul Boucher (Cambridge City Council)
Cllr Rosie Moore (Chair)