

Community Wealth Building Assessment- Assets/Redevelopment- Civic Quarter Project

Cambridge City Council's Community Wealth Building (CWB) Strategy outlines our approach to reducing poverty and inequality in Cambridge and supporting a more inclusive, fair and sustainable economy. It takes a holistic approach to challenging the structures and conditions that lead to poverty and inequality, focusing on ensuring everyone benefits from the city's wealth.

This assessment has been created to use as a tool to ensure Community Wealth Building considerations have been made at every stage of a redevelopment process. It does not mandate that each of these elements need to be included but acts as a prompt, so options are considered early in the planning process.

Project Opportunities

The Guildhall and surrounding space combine social and community use, business and the very heart of democracy in Cambridge. It's redevelopment through the Civic Quarter project presents a key opportunity to build community wealth, maximising the social benefits for local communities, businesses, partners and tourism.

Phase	CWB Considerations	Activity/Progress
Design Phase	Can impacted groups help shape the design development? Engaging meaningfully with them early in the process and equipping them with the necessary tools/information to properly participate. This requires listening, developing collaboratively and actively considering/implementing their input. Example groups- Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE), businesses, equalities groups, schools/sixth forms, university, charities, business/employment networks.	<p>A further round of community engagement in May/June 2025 sought feedback on revised proposals, which built upon the 2024 Stage 2 concept design. Feedback was received from residents, students, market traders, staff, local businesses, residents, universities, colleges, business and community groups. The outcomes report was published in September 2025.</p> <p>A Civic Quarter update report with recommendations to proceed to the next stage of the project will go to Cabinet on 25 September 2025. Stakeholder groups that meet regularly, Civic Quarter Liaison and Market Traders Groups.</p>

	<p>Have the designs considered options for future community use of space?</p>	<p>There are plans for a public café in the remodelled Guildhall reception space which will be accessible for all as an informal meeting space. There will also be a changing places toilet, gender neutral toilets and a breast-feeding room all accessible to the public during opening hours.</p> <p>The Guildhall will have several meeting rooms, and the exact operational management and use of these spaces has yet to be determined.</p> <p>The designs for the Market Square will improve the accessibility and provide a more pleasant experience for the community and opportunities for small scale community events in front of the Guildhall, on quieter market trading days.</p>
	<p>Social return on investment. Have you considered how use of the asset will provide a social return over time? How will you measure this?</p>	<p>There are several ways at this stage of the design work, where the project will provide social return on investment through the creation of a welcoming new civic heart for the city and support the vibrancy and economy of the area. There will be increased utilisation of the Guildhall by the community. Opportunities for better customer experience from attending events at the Corn Exchange and The Guildhall. The improvements to the Market Square should lead to increase stall occupancy and improve the long-term viability of a bustling 7 day a week market. The public realm improvements should create environmental and biodiversity improvements, as well creating spaces for people to enjoy and spend time in.</p>

		<p>The project will also deliver savings for the Council through reducing operational costs, create opportunities for additional income and help to support the delivery of key frontline services to residents and the public.</p> <p>Although some early work on the methodology of how we measure these impacts has been carried out, it will be further developed by the project team once we received approval to proceed to the submission of a planning application stage (Post November 2025).</p>
	Does the design allow residents to actively participate in democratic life	<p>The detailed designs for the Guildhall will improve the accessibility into and around the building for residents, facilitating participation in the democratic life of the city.</p> <p>Technical design work to improve the Council Chamber and meeting spaces will take place from December 2025, if the project is approved to proceed.</p>
Development / Build Phase	Procurement of the contract- Working with local Small & Medium Enterprises (SME)	The appointed main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine will work with the Council to ensure that they employ local labour (20% of total labour force) when we reach that stage of the project.

	<p>Procurement of the contract- Include a greater weighting to social value within the tender. Ensure social value commitment is delivered through ongoing contract management</p>	<p>A procurement strategy for letting a build contract was taken forward from December 2024 with advice from the Council's procurement team and the Employer's Agent on the project.</p> <p>Social Value formed part of the assessment process for the appointment of a contractor. The tender documents outlined the 5 strategic objectives that the Council would like its social value activity to be targeted at, so it meets identified need in the city. The contractors were asked to describe the firm commitments that their organisation will make to deliver against these objectives.</p>
	<p>Procurement of the contract and engagement- Skills programme- providing local employment, apprenticeships and skills and training programmes.</p>	<p>In respect to skills and employment, the appointed contractor committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local labour - Work with Local Authority, their employment, and skills partners for project recruitment, liaising with Skills match and the construction desk. Employ local labour (20% of total labour force) • Subcontractors - Early engagement with subcontractors to understand recruitment plans > Appoint local subcontractors and suppliers where possible • Partnerships with schools, colleges and universities - Supporting T-level students and apprenticeship opportunities > Hosting work experience so students can see the benefits of a career in construction
	<p>Working with contractors who pay the Real Living Wage and have fair recruitment practices, including recruiting from groups with protected characteristics and people who live in disadvantaged areas of Cambridge</p>	<p>The appointed main contractor Sir Robert McAlpine will work with the Council to ensure that they meet this requirement when we reach that stage of the project.</p>

Occupation Phase	Can any vacant space or under-utilised land/asset that is earmarked for redevelopment be used via meanwhile-use by the community or VCSE?	We are in partnership with Allia who are providing affordable workspace to the community at the Guildhall. This relationship will continue until the point Vacant Possession is required (anticipated to be September 2026).
	Is there option for on-going use of the facility by the community, VCSE? How?	Provision of the Guildhall halls and other meeting spaces at certain times at discounted rates for community use is being considered. The café and informal workspaces in the reception heart space are open to all
	Can the use of space be decided with input from communities, VCSE groups or businesses to help understand the need/demand in the city so that it can be catered to?	The use of space proposals, and incorporation of community use has been developed following engagement with community groups and businesses.
	Can elements of the asset be managed by the community?	No community management of the assets is proposed.
	Can elements of it be owned by the community via asset transfer?	No community ownership of the assets is proposed.

Updated: 1 September 2025