

POLICY & PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

15 JULY 2020

CIVIC QUARTER PLACEMAKING MEMBER WORKSHOP RESULTS, POLICY AND NEXT STEPS WITH SUSTAINABLE REGENERATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In May 2020 the regeneration team invited members to a virtual placemaking workshop which was designed to provide them the opportunity to further develop key principles for the Civic Quarter that will be taken forward into RIBA Stage 2 of the masterplanning work.
- 1.2. This report breaks down the background and context to the workshop, the results of the exercise completed by members, next steps and officer recommendations. The draft document is attached as Appendix 1 for PPAB to review.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. In January 2019, the Rushmoor Development Partnership (RDP) commissioned GT3 architects to carry out a programme of public and stakeholder engagement in order to formulate a 'Masterplan Strategic Briefing Document' that would go on to inform the early stages of the Civic Quarter masterplan. This document set out an over-arching vision, objectives and themes through to design principles and methodology moving forward.
- 2.2. Members of the public and stakeholders were given the opportunity to consider the site and express how they felt about it in its current form. Groups were also invited to express and articulate their vision, values, objectives and aspirations for the future of the site. Over 600 people provided responses online and at drop-in events and 70 people participated in vision workshops, and of them, 26 were councillors.
- 2.3. Following the conclusion of the GT3 engagement exercise, the RDP appointed LDA Design to progress the masterplan for the redevelopment of the Civic Quarter. Using the feedback from the public, in RIBA Stage 1 the RDP explored placemaking options and undertook capacity testing to better understand what could be possible in terms of development scale and mix on the site. LDA articulated the 8 strategic objectives identified in the GT3 report in their own 6 placemaking principles ensuring a continuity of approach.
- 2.4. LDA concluded the work needed to satisfy RIBA Stage 1 in November 2019. The RIBA Stage 2 work will see the architects take forward the proposals through

concept design and start to detail proposals that will go forward as part of an outline/hybrid planning application.

3. WORKSHOP SUMMARY

- 3.1. As stated above, in May 2020 the regeneration team invited members to a virtual placemaking workshop.
- 3.2. The workshop was presentation based and set out the background to this process alongside work completed to date. The presentation then explored the next stage of the masterplan and invited members to complete an exercise which sought to capture their views and to prioritise key emerging principles.
- 3.3. The intention is that these results will go on to inform the detail that LDA, the Civic Quarter scheme's masterplanners, will be working up in the concept design stage of the masterplanning process.
- 3.4. The results can be broken down into two distinct parts.

















Green Agenda Prioritisation

- 3.5. Since the last iteration of work completed by LDA, the 'Green Agenda' had arisen as a top priority for the council typified in the declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' on the 20th June 2019. As such, it was notably absent from the strategic objectives formulated by GT3 or the placemaking principles further developed by LDA.
- 3.6. Officers' proposed that the 'Green Agenda' should be embedded within the design principles for the Civic Quarter moving forward and so the question was posed to members as to what priority it should be given.
- 3.7. The 'Green Agenda' was rated a gold priority by an overwhelming majority of members and therefore will be considered as one of two gold principles that the RDP/LDA will need to prioritise in their scheme development.

Emerging Priorities

- 3.8. The other significant outcome of the exercise was the identification of 16 emerging priorities that are intended to be used to articulate member aspirations for the Civic Quarter site going forward into RIBA Stage 2 of the masterplanning process.
- 3.9. These 16 priorities were formulated through a number of questions which asked members to rank, in terms of importance, different items / aspects that could assist in realising the 8 key principles determined through the GT3 and LDA work undertaken previously.

- 3.10. In an effort to reflect the different weighting given to these strategic objectives, that being gold, silver and bronze, officers compiled the top three most popular choices from the gold principles, the top two from the silver principles, and the top one from the bronze principles. This enabled a clear distinction to be made in the categorisation of the principles and assisted in better articulating member sentiments.
- 3.11. Highlighted below is an excerpt from the final document which outlines the 16 emerging priorities.

16 Emerging Priorities			
Places for community events / gathering		Flexible community space to accommodate a variety of activities / groups	
Places for rest / relaxation		A wide mix of uses that appeals to different groups and encourages people from all ages and backgrounds to use the Civic Quarter	
Landscape – informal green approach (soft landscaping)		Places to sit / rest / reflect	
New development to incorporate renewable energy		Provide space for indoor leisure facilities	
Introduce measures to support sustainable travel		Improving pedestrian connections to the business park	
Maximise energy efficiency of buildings		Combine community / civic uses in a hub building	
Build on the town's aviation and other heritage (e.g. through public realm / public art)		Ensure the site is well integrated with the wider town centre / business parks (access routes and wayfinding)	
Introduction of a landmark building(s) / distinctive architecture and design.		Regular cultural events	

- 3.12. Officers would ask PPAB to note that the Microsoft Forms application has calculated the rankings based on the overall feeling of members and has aggregated the results. In analysing the data, officers have taken the top 3, 2 or 1 from each principle but would invite PPAB to interrogate the data further in an effort to clarify and be satisfied with the nuances of this process.
- 3.13. For example, when considering the question 'What options do you consider the most important in ensuring the Civic Quarter develops a strong identity and raised profile?' the item that most members chose as their first choice 'Community input into development' is currently outside the scope of extracted results. This is because the Microsoft Forms formula favours items that scored positively across all members responses rather than being based on the strength of feeling of some.

- 3.14. As such members may want to consider whether the priorities that fall out of the scope of the final list, but are nevertheless strongly supported, should also form part of the feedback that goes to the RDP.

4. **NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1. It is officers' intention for the Policy and Project Advisory Board to consider and agree a proposed set of priorities arising from the consultation with members to be submitted to Cabinet for approval. The intention is for the finalised document to be presented to the RDP so it may inform the early stages of the RIBA Stage 2 work.
- 4.2. Officers recognise that the Civic Quarter member workshop does not represent the conclusion of this undertaking but is rather one step in an iterative process. Additional thinking needs to be completed to properly develop the Council's policy position in regard to the key principles that will go on to define the Civic Quarter, particularly in relation to sustainable regeneration. It is also recognised that a broader group of Members have an interest in this work including those on the Climate Change Working Group and the Members group overseeing recovery from Covid-19.
- 4.3. Following discussion with the Chairs of these group it is therefore suggested that four learning seminars open to all members of the Council are set up which seek to analyse in more depth the following:
1. Sustainable design options and changing sustainability requirements – a look at viable and deliverable design options alongside a review of the standards and guidelines around sustainable builds.
 2. Housing led developments and reinventing the town – an exploration of successful case study schemes accompanied by an in-depth analysis of how both sustainable homes and sustainable living were best achieved.
 3. Sustainable transport – an appraisal of key issues surrounding improving access but reducing CO2, touching on areas such as parking, cycle and pedestrian routes, integrated transport hubs, public transport and EV charging provision.
 4. The Green Agenda – a discussion on how the green environment can be brought into a place to help support sustainability with a focus on biodiversity and sustainable living solutions.
- 4.4. These seminars would feature a presentation from a guest speaker who would be an industry lead in the given topic and be best placed to help in advancing the discussion and furthering members' understanding.
- 4.5. Key learning points and findings would be brought together by officers in a single policy paper to be considered by PPAB and the Climate Change and Recovery

Task and Finish Groups. Recommendations would then go on to inform a final report that would be brought before Cabinet for approval in due course.

- 4.6. Outputs from this work will be required to inform detailed phases of the Civic Quarter development and so should aim to be completed within 3 months so these priorities can be successfully embedded in the design process.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1. The Policy and Project Advisory Board is asked to:

(a) Consider the outputs from the members seminar and agree the priorities for recommendation to Cabinet to be passed through to the RDP and inform the next stage of masterplanning for the Civic Quarter

(b) endorse the proposed way forward for the next steps in developing the Council policy position in relation to sustainable regeneration.

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