

Item

Market Square Project – Consultation Concept Design

To:

Councillor Rosy Moore, Executive Councillor for Climate Change,
Environment and City Centre

Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee

28/01/2021

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Market

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council has embarked on a major project to improve the market square, as the city's principal civic space and site of the Council's daily General and Sunday market. The space and its associated infrastructure is looking 'tired' and the market layout and fixed stalls prevent the space from being fully utilised and its value fully realised as a key city centre and community asset.
- 1.2 The initial project work has involved an assessment of the issues, needs and opportunities associated with the market square. Using the assessment findings, the Council, with support of specialist

design and market consultants, has engaged key local stakeholders, including market traders, to develop a concept design plan for the square. The Council is now seeking to go out to public consultation on the proposed concept design, as detailed in the report in appendix A.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the proposed concept design for the market square (as detailed in the report in appendix A) for public consultation

3. Background

3.1 In 2018/19, the Council embarked on a major project to enhance the design, appearance and daytime, evening and night-time use of the market square, whilst being sensitive to the site's heritage value and retaining its outdoor market function.

3.2 The Council is delivering the project in accordance with the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Plan of Work 2020, which represents the industry standard framework for the delivery of construction projects and comprises of eight consecutive stages, from strategic definition and design brief to construction and use.

3.3 RIBA Stage 1 (Preparation and Briefing) was completed last year, with the publication of an initial site assessment report, which identifies the issues and opportunities and associated feasibility and business need for the market square project.

3.4 In summary, the RIBA Stage 1 report identified that the market square supports a successful seven day a week market, but the site's daytime, evening and night-time potential is not being fully realised. The fixed market stall infrastructure prevents the entire central 'cobbled' area of the square from being used for any other

activity/ function; and is also a source of anti-social behaviour at night. The square is not user friendly, lacking sufficient public seating and gathering areas; and is difficult to access for pedestrians, especially those with physical impairments, having an uneven central cobbled surface surrounded by a large tarmac highway with raised kerbs. The public realm quality of the space is considered poor for such an important civic space, with visually detracting street clutter, including the market waste compactor and bailer facility; and poor surface treatment.

3.5 Work on RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) commenced last January (2019), but was put 'on hold', as a result of COVID and the associated corporate spending review. Following approval to proceed last summer, work on Stage 2 re-commenced in August, with the appointment of a consultancy team, led by international consultancy and construction company, Mace, with technical support from independent design and planning consultancy, LDA Design, and independent retail market development consultancy, Quarterbridge.

3.6 The Council, with the support of the consultancy team, has completed the development of a proposed concept design, in accordance with the Council's RIBA Stage 2 brief. The proposed concept design is detailed in the LDA Design report in appendix A; and has been informed by the RIBA Stage 1 report and a series of organisational stakeholder engagement events and activities, including three available to the General and Sunday Market traders. A full list of stakeholders engaged in the Stage 2 concept design development work is included in appendix B.

3.7 In summary, the proposed RIBA Stage 2 concept design, as detailed in the report in appendix A, is comprised of the following key elements:

a) New surface treatment to create a single unified surface, across the entire market square area, to modern accessibility

standards, and including the restoration and repair of the Listed granite setts

- b) New improved market layout, based on re-alignment of stalls from a north-south to an east-west orientation, thereby improving permeability of the market for shoppers and creating increased space for seating/ tables and chairs; and for events and activities
- c) New, easily demountable standard stall design (two innovative design options proposed for 'testing')
- d) Enhanced public realm infrastructure provision, including additional seating, tables/ chairs and lighting; and de-cluttering of street furniture
- e) Refurbished and improved market trader toilets and storage facility
- f) New underground market waste management system

3.7 In overall terms, the proposed concept design for the market square creates an attractive, vibrant and accessible multi-functional market and outdoor civic space, befitting Cambridge's status as a global city, and maximising its ability to animate and drive footfall to the city centre; and thereby support the wider city centre 'high street' economic recovery post COVID.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications:

The cost of the proposed RIBA Stage 2 public consultation (as outlined in section 5) is already included in the approved revenue budget allocation for completing RIBA Stage 2.

4.2 Staffing implications:

The proposed RIBA Stage 2 public consultation will be undertaken by Council officers, with support from consultancy team, using the available Stage 2 budget allocation.

4.3 Equality and poverty implications:

The Equality Impact Assessment for the project is included in appendix C.

4.4 Other implications:

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

5.1 Subject to Committee approval and in light of current COVID restrictions, the public consultation plan for the proposed RIBA Stage 2 concept design, as detailed in the report in appendix A, is as follows.

- a) Make report available on line and invite comments on it using online survey form – to be made available on Council’s Market Square project webpage. For those without online access, make paper copies available on request.
- b) Send email/ letter to organisational stakeholders, with link to online report and survey form (as above)
- c) Work with Cambridge Market Traders Association and National Market Traders Federation representatives to support market trader engagement
- d) Work with Council’s Communities and Housing teams to engage targeted communities, including children and young people; women; and Council tenants and leaseholders

5.2 The consultation period will be for 6 weeks commencing 1st February and ending 12 March, 2021; and be supported by a communication plan, using social and news media and other outlets, to maximise community awareness and engagement in the consultation.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- RIBA Stage 1 - Feasibility assessment report
- RIBA Stage 2 – Stakeholder engagement workshop output

Both available from: [Market Square redevelopment - Cambridge City Council](#)

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Market Square Project Concept Design report
Appendix B – RIBA Stage 2 stakeholder engagement list
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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