

Item

Market Square Project – Consultation Draft Vision and Concept Design

To:

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

Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee

25/03/2021

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council has embarked on a major public realm capital project to improve Cambridge's market square, as the city's principal outdoor civic space and venue for the Council's popular seven day a week General and Sunday market.
- 1.2 The market square, and its associated outdoor public realm and market infrastructure, is looking 'tired' and not to the quality standard befitting the city's international status and profile.

- 1.3 The Council's initial project work has involved an assessment of the issues, needs and opportunities associated with the market square space. Using the site assessment findings, the Council, with the support of specialist design and market consultants, has engaged key organisational stakeholders, including market traders, to develop a proposed vision and supporting concept design plan for the square.
- 1.4 The Council is now seeking to go out to a six-week public consultation on the proposed vision and concept design, as detailed in Appendix A and B respectively, following the local elections in May 2021.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve the proposed consultation draft market square project vision and concept design, as detailed in Appendix A and B respectively, for a six-week public consultation starting in May, as outlined in Section 5 of this report**
- 2.2 To note the findings of the market square project operational management and outline business case assessment report in Appendix C**

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2018/19, the Council embarked on a major public realm capital 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 2020¹, which represents the industry standard framework for the delivery of

¹ [2020RIBAPlanofWorkoverviewpdf.pdf \(architecture.com\)](#)

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 space'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 able to be used for any other activity/ function; and is also a source of anti-social behaviour at night. The square is not particularly 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 wide vehicle highway with raised kerbs. The public realm quality of the space is also considered to be 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 Council's associated emergency spending review. Following the review outcome and approval to proceed last summer; work on Stage 2 re-commenced in August 2021, with the appointment of a consultancy team, led by international consultancy and construction company, Mace, and supported by independent design and planning consultancy, LDA Design, and independent retail market development consultancy, Quarterbridge.
- 3.6 The Council, with the support of this consultancy team, has completed the development of a proposed consultation draft vision (Appendix A) and concept design (Appendix B). The proposed

concept design has been informed by an operational management assessment of the Council's seven day a week market by Quarterbridge, which is included in the report in Appendix C; and by the preceding RIBA Stage 1 report (see Background Papers). The report in Appendix C also includes an outline business case assessment of the proposed concept design, which shows a strong social, economic and environmental case for investment in this major public realm capital project.

- 3.7 The RIBA Stage 1 and 2 output, to date, has, in turn, been informed by a range of different organisational stakeholder opportunities, including 'workshops' involving General and Sunday Market traders. A full list of organisational stakeholders engaged in the project to date is included in Appendix D. The output from the various stakeholder engagement workshops has been published on the Council's Market Square Project webpage - [Market Square redevelopment - Cambridge City Council](#). Wider public engagement in the Project has not been considered appropriate up until now, when the Council has something tangible and meaningful to respond to, namely the proposed consultation draft vision and concept design documents.
- 3.8 In summary, the proposed consultation draft concept design is comprised of the following core design 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 the 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 and tables and chairs; and for outdoor events and activities
 - c) New, easily demountable durable market stall design (two innovative design options proposed for 'testing' with market

- traders)
- d) Enhanced public realm infrastructure, 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

3.9 In summary, the proposed consultation draft vision and concept design will create 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 attract resident and visitor footfall to return to the city centre; and thereby support the wider city's social, economic and environmental 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.

The outline business case assessment for delivering the project, based on the consultation draft concept design is included in the report in Appendix C.

4.2 Staffing implications:

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

4.3 Equality and poverty implications:

The Equality Impact Assessment for RIBA Stage 2 is included in Appendix E.

4.4 Other implications:

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

5.1 The proposed six-week public consultation plan for the proposed vision and concept design is as follows.

- a) Make the consultation draft vision and concept design proposals available on line and invite comments on them using an online survey form – to be made available on Council's Market Square project webpage. For anyone without online access, paper 'hard' copies of the two documents and associated survey form will be made available on request.
- b) Send an email/ letter to all organisational stakeholders, with a link to the online report and survey form (as above in a))
- c) Work with Cambridge Market Traders Association (CMTA) and National Market Traders Federation (NMTF) representatives to support and secure market trader engagement in the consultation
- d) Work with the Council's Communities and Housing teams to engage targeted communities across the city, including children and young people; women; and Council tenants and leaseholders

5.2 Given the local elections in May and the Government's Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (2011) and associated restrictions on Council communication activity during the Pre-Election Period (previously known as 'purdah'), the proposed consultation period will commence, Monday, 17th May; and finish, Friday, 25th June 2021. The public consultation plan will be supported by a communication plan, including use of social and news media and other outlets, to maximise community awareness and engagement.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- RIBA Stage 1: Feasibility assessment report (available at: [Market Square redevelopment - Cambridge City Council](#))

7. Appendices

Appendix A: Market Square Project Vision – consultation draft

Appendix B: Market Square Project Concept Design – consultation draft

Appendix C: Market Square Project – Operational Management and Outline Business Case report

Appendix D: RIBA Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix E: Stakeholder engagement list

8. Inspection of papers

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

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**Appendix A:
Market Square Project Concept Design – consultation draft**

Attached

**Appendix B:
Market Square Project Vision – consultation draft**

Attached

**Appendix C:
Market Square Project – Operational Management and Outline
Business Case report**

Attached

**Appendix D:
RIBA Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment**

Attached

**Appendix E:
Stakeholder engagement list**

The following external organisational stakeholders (listed in alphabetical order) have been engaged in the proposed vision and concept design development work:

- Bidwells
- Cambridge Association of Architects
- Cambridge BID (Business Improvement District)
- Cambridge Disability Panel

- Cambridge Equalities Panel
- Cambridge Live
- Cambridge Market Traders Association (CMTA)
- CamCycle
- Collusion Cambridge
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- FeCRA (Federation of Cambridge Residents Association)
- Friends of Cambridge Market
- Gonville & Caius College
- King's College
- General and Sunday Market traders
- National Market Traders Federation (NMTF)
- Smart Cambridge
- Smarter Cambridge Transport
- St John's College
- University of Cambridge