

# Planning, Transportation and Economic Regeneration



Findings of the public consultation into the Market Redevelopment Phase 2

As at 31/10/2013

*Prepared by:*

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*This report provides a summary of the findings of the public consultation.*

*It includes information about:*

- *The issues and options under consideration;*
- *The consultation method;*
- *The public response and views expressed;*
- *The decisions taken in light of what was learnt.*

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Planning, Transportation and Economic Regeneration**

Following the public consultation process of the Market re-development (phase 1) scheme that concluded in early 2013, a commitment was given to go back to the public once further details had been worked up for the new square, highways treatments and the rear of the Corn Exchange.

The Market re-development scheme is now progressing on site with the construction of the new food hall underway and that will be complete by the end of March 2014. Planning permission has also been secured to demolish the current Market Hall and for the new toilet block and Market offices at 2-4 Market Sq South.

## **CONSULTATION METHOD**

### **Objectives and techniques**

The purpose of the consultation was to capture the public's view on the proposals for the designs for the new square, highways treatments and the rear of the Corn Exchange in the Market area.

The consultation took place from the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The public were able to participate via the on-line consultation website or visiting one of four open consultation sessions held in the outdoor Market, at which hard copies of the consultation materials were available. Hard copies of the consultation materials were distributed to all the shops in the immediate surrounding area, and also to a number of different forums including the Older Persons Forum, the LE-one partnership and the Conservation Advisory Panel.

## **PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **Respondents**

The online consultation questionnaire was completed by 45 people and a further 6 hard copy versions of it were received.

The majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 54, with an overwhelming number of respondents (70%) identifying themselves as White British. The split between male and female respondents was similar with the percentage of responses being received from men (60%) and women (40%).

## Views and comments

Reactions in general were positive with a clear majority of opinion being in favour of the scheme.

Of the first two questions asked in the consultation 83% of respondents thought that the proposals would support businesses in and around the new square, and 81% thought that the proposals would improve the environment for residents and visitors.

There were a large number of very positive responses to the question of what people liked about the square. A number of themes were recognised in the responses such as: how the new design will create a much needed public space within the City Centre, how the design compliments the existing architecture of the Corn Exchange and the surrounding roadways and buildings, and how the square will make a great place for restaurants, bars and events to attract visitors to the area.

Some examples of the positive responses received:

*“Open space with seating and shaded by trees (like town hall square which is really popular in summer)”*

*“I really like the new square. I think that the materials that are proposed look great and create a very classy impression. I also like the look of the Corn Exchange extension, I think it will bring to life this wonderful treasure.”*

*“I think it make[s] [great] use of the space available[...] Though ambitious, I think a project like this is necessary for the core of the city. I love the idea of there being bars and cafes as there really isn't a [designated] square in the city where people congregate.”*

*“The public square could be a great venue for events and celebrations”*

*“I like the simplicity, the light and space. A modern Market which will include everyone and show the surrounding architecture at its best.”*

*“I like everything about it and I think it is a bold statement of what Leicester can achieve [...] It is long overdue.”*

In response to the question of what elements people did not like, a number of common themes emerged. The common themes centred on connectivity and transport, use and management of square, and the look and quality of the surrounding roads and shops.

### **1) Connectivity**

The comments highlighted the need for the Market to be well connected to other areas of high footfall such as Gallowtree Gate and Town Hall Square.

Concerns were raised over access to the public square in terms of traders' vehicles, which may lead to misuse and a lack of immediate parking for users of the Market and the surrounding shops.

The lack of provision for bicycle routes and covered cycle parking.

### **2) Use and management of the square**

The responses highlighted the importance of strong management of the public square to ensure it was not misused, kept clean, and was used as a space to hold events making the space a hub for art, education, retail and food to attract footfall and give locals and tourists a taste of Leicester.

### **3) Perimeter Area**

The surrounding streets and roads, as well as the outdoor market, were also considered to require investment, as many were considered to look tired and dirty, with too many cheap and empty shops with poor frontages. This will be brought into sharp contrast by the high quality of the public square and development.

Many comments from shoppers and traders were received that the existing outdoor Market would look shabby by comparison with the new square and that further investment in the area was required.

A number of other issues were raised, expressed by a minority of respondents. These issues related to concern of the design of the proposed extension being too modern in its look, the cost of the overall scheme in terms of the materials used and

the failure of the previous Market Square scheme. The lack of green space or a feature within the square was also raised as an issue.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **Decisions taken**

As a result of the majority of responses received being positive in terms of the proposed design and use, the decision has been taken to progress with the second phase of the Market re-development, largely as proposed within the consultation materials.

The issues raised have been considered and as a result a number of actions and design changes have been instructed .

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Response</b>
Connectivity to other areas of high footfall e.g. Gallowtree Gate and Town Hall Square	The council have recognised this as a priority to the long-term success of the public space. Clear marketing of, and signage to, the public space will be put in place at key access points across the city. This will be enacted as part of the city Councils strategy to improve signage across the City Centre.
Lack of immediate parking for users	The limitations of the Markets area mean that a significant increase in parking provision cannot be accommodated. A significant increase in parking provision is not in-keeping with the City Centre's Connecting Leicester strategy to make the City a friendly place for pedestrian and sustainable forms of transport. In regards to car access, limited parking around the Market area will remain with other actions being taken to address the issue of access via clear signage and improved street lighting between the area, and existing nearby car parks.
Misuse of square by Market Traders or other vehicles	The inclusion of bollards within the scheme design has been added to prevent the misuse of the square.
Lack of cycle route provision and covered cycle parking	The square has been designed to be attractive to pedestrian and cycle usage, via the materials and flat levels used. Cycle racks are included at the side of the Corn Exchange extension nearest to Dolphin Square, though it is unlikely they would be covered. Other racks in the city centre are also uncovered.
Cleanliness	An area management strategy is being produced to ensure a thorough cleanliness regime is put in place.
Events and activity to attract	Discussions are underway with the Cities' Events

footfall	Coordination team to ensure that the square is well used as an event space, and attracting footfall.
Outdoor Market	The City Council recognises that the new square and development will contrast the existing outdoor market. As a result, proposals and options for improvements to the outdoor Market will be developed as a Phase 3 of the Market re-development to be delivered beyond spring 2015.
Perimeter shops	The City Council has invested in an area improvement scheme available to the perimeter shops. This work will continue as part of the management strategy for the Market area, and a strong engagement with owners and occupiers of perimeter shops will be maintained.
Materials used in the square	The materials proposed for the square were chosen on the basis of being hard wearing and easy to clean. The material chosen is also in-keeping with other development taking place across the city e.g. Jubilee Square, to provide a clear connection across the City's highways and public spaces.
No green space or feature within the square	It was felt that the inclusion of a feature e.g. water, or too much green space within the square would limit its flexibility in terms of use. The inclusion of trees and street furniture as set out in the consultation materials was considered sufficient.