

MINUTES

Meeting: WARMINSTER AREA BOARD
Place: Warminster Civic Centre, Sambourne Road, Warminster Wilts
Date: 29 June 2017
Start Time: 7.00 pm
Finish Time: 8.40 pm

Please direct any enquiries on these minutes to:

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In Attendance:

Wiltshire Councillors

Cllr Andrew Davis (Chairman), Cllr Pip Ridout (Vice Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson, Cllr Christopher Newbury and Cllr Fleur de Rhé-Philippe

Wiltshire Council Officers

Jacqui Abbot, Community Engagement Manager
Jan Bowra, Locality Youth Facilitator
Tim Martienssen, Head of Economic Planning
Becky Holloway, Democratic Services Officer

Total in attendance: 35

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Summary of Issues Discussed and Decision</u>
1.	<p><u>Chairman's Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Area Board and Cllr Tony Jackson to his first meeting.</p>
2.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Chitterne Parish Council.</p>
3.	<p><u>Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Area Board held on 2 March 2017 were presented and it was requested that the "In Attendance" heading was changed to "Present".</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of Warminster Area Board held on 2 March 2017 with the amendment specified above.</p>
4.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
5.	<p><u>Chairman's Announcements</u></p> <p>The Chairman made the following announcements:</p> <p><u>Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2017-18.</u></p> <p>Cllr Andrew Davis reported that he had been elected as Chairman at a special meeting of the Area Board on 16 May 2017 and that Cllr Pip Ridout had been elected as the Vice-Chair.</p> <p><u>Warminster Regeneration Project.</u></p> <p>The scoping exercise for what would be possible for the town centre had been completed in early 2017 and the Chairman invited Tim Martienssen, Head of Economic Development, to give an update on the project and to table the report (appended). The conclusions of the consultants' report were noted. It was explained that the report would enable the council to make better-informed decisions about the site and may support future bids for funding.</p> <p>In the discussion that followed, members of the public expressed disappointment that local ambitions for the site had not yet been met and that consideration should be made to the replacement or rejuvenation of the town's leisure facilities. A specific question had been submitted regarding the way in which the matter was taken forward by Wiltshire Council and Warminster Area</p>

	<p>Board and a written answer would be provided to this. It was suggested that the regeneration working group be revived and that their first task should be to consider the consultants' report and actions that could be implemented locally.</p> <p>Members confirmed that they had entered discussion with the Cabinet member responsible for town redevelopment programmes and that further information would be sought in response to the points raised during the discussion.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Tim Martienssen, who extended an offer to the board to return to a later meeting to explore the report findings in more depth.</p> <p><u>Housing site allocation consultation</u></p> <p>The Chairman announced that the public consultation had started on the Housing Site Allocation and that four public exhibitions would be held in July 2017. Meeting attendees were encouraged to submit their comments and it was agreed that further information would be circulated (appended).</p>
6.	<p><u>Appointments to Outside Bodies and Working Groups</u></p> <p>The Chairman drew to the meeting's attention the required membership of the working groups and task groups of Warminster Area Board, and the outside bodies to which the board sent a representative. It was reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Group had been disbanded. Nominations were sought for each of the positions and it was</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Andrew Davis to the Community Area Transport Group (CATG)</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Andrew Davis to the Health and Wellbeing Group</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Andrew Davis to the Warminster and Westbury CCTV Partnership</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Pip Ridout to the Warminster and Village Community Partnership</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Pip Ridout to the Neighbourhood Tasking Group (NTG)</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Andrew Davis to the Local Youth Network</p> <p>To appoint Cllr Tony Jackson and Cllr Fleur de Rhe Phillippe to the Warminster Regeneration Working Group</p>

7.	<p><u>Updates from Partners</u></p> <p>Written updates from key partners had been included with the agenda pack and the following partners provided a verbal update to accompany their reports</p> <p><u>Wiltshire Police</u> Andy Fee introduced himself and his role and invited questions. He reported that he intended to attend future Area Board meetings and to provide written updates. He gave details on the police team working in Warminster, Tisbury and Trowbridge and about their work in engaging with communities and partners. Rural protection and domestic abuse were reported to be key priorities for the area. The police radios held in CCTV centres in the area had been temporarily removed but it was acknowledged that they were a valuable way of collecting and recording evidence and work was being undertaken to reinstate them.</p> <p><u>Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service</u> The officer invited questions on the written report. It was highlighted that the statistics included in the report were well received and a request was made that these continued to be included.</p> <p><u>Warminster Town Council</u> It was reported that Warminster Town Council had been awarded gold status and members of the board extended their congratulations for this achievement</p> <p><u>Athenaeum Trust</u> Tony Nicklin provided an update on the asset transfer of the Warminster Community Centre from Wiltshire Council to the Athenaeum Trust. The cost of the work required on the building had increased due to the identification of asbestos and fundraising was halfway to completion. Negotiations were ongoing around the access Wiltshire Council would have regarding use of office space in the building. Thanks were extended to the councillors on the Area Board who had worked hard on taking the project forward.</p>
8.	<p><u>Cyber Crime in Wiltshire</u></p> <p>This item was deferred to a future meeting</p>
9.	<p><u>Local Youth Network Update and Youth Activities Grant Applications</u></p> <p>Jan Bowra, Locality Youth Facilitator, provided an update on the work of the Local Youth Network and encouraged members of the town and parish councils to join the network and seek advice and support with any youth projects they were undertaking. Work was ongoing to ensure LYN meetings were flexible to the needs of young people and other members. The youth grant budget for 2017/18 was reported to be £17,285 and there had been no underspend from the previous financial year. No applications for grants had been received for consideration at the meeting.</p>

10.	<p><u>Introduction to your local Area Board</u></p> <p>Jacqui Abbott, the Community Engagement Manager (CEM), delivered a presentation on the roles and functions of Warminster Area Board. She explained that her role was to support community engagement with council processes, to manage the community area grant fund, to support and co-ordinate community events and projects and to promote opportunities to the public.</p> <p>The CEM went on to provide details of the budgets for 2017/18 for each of the Area Board's funding streams and gave an overview of the Board's priority areas for the coming year which were identified at a community consultation event earlier in the year.</p> <p>Recent projects included a county-wide spring clean and a new tree planting initiative to commemorate the centenary of the end of the first world war which was in its planning stages.</p> <p>Members were encouraged to visit the Our Community Matters website and to sign up for the weekly electronic newsletter.</p>
11.	<p><u>The Big Pledge - London Calling</u></p> <p>A short film was shown on the big pledge activity challenge. Members of the meeting were encouraged to sign up to the pledge online and log their activity during the month of July. Details of the challenge were available at: http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/bigpledge</p>
12.	<p><u>Community Area Transport Group - update</u></p> <p>Notes from the meeting of the Community Area Transport Group from 29 March 2017 were presented and it was agreed that clarification on the financial position of the grant scheme would be provided at the next meeting of the Area Board.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>To receive the notes of the CATG meeting of 29 March 2017</p> <p>To award costs associated with retaining the parallel parking arrangement, resurfacing the footway and replace damaged kerbs at Boreham Fields (issue 4538) subject to a 25% contribution from Warminster Town Council</p>

13.	<p><u>Area Board Funding - Community Area Grants</u></p> <p>The area board considered four applications to the Community Area Grant fund and members were invited to ask questions of the applicants. After consideration of each grant it was</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>To award £5000.00 to Codford Parish Council for an extension and roof restoration for Codford Village Hall.</p> <p>To award £807.00 to Tynings Allotments and Leisure Gardener's Association for external tables and chairs.</p> <p>To award £2000.00 to The Woolstore Country Theatre for a new Lighting Power Distribution System.</p> <p>To award £5000.00 to Heytesbury & Sutton Veny Cricket Club for cricket covers and net, and renovation of the pavilion.</p>
14.	<p><u>Urgent items</u></p> <p>There were no urgent items.</p>
15.	<p><u>Future Meeting Dates</u></p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded members that the next meeting of the Warminster Area Board would be held at Codford Village hall on Thursday 7 September 2017.</p>

Warminster Central Car Park Feasibility Study

Warminster Central Car Park has been identified as a key focus for town centre regeneration. The Warminster Town Plan (2012) / Core Strategy / Neighbourhood Plan all envisage a new retail development on the Central Car Park site.

Local stakeholders including the Area Board and the Town Council have asked whether new development and a reconfiguration of the public owned land and premises in this area could generate sufficient value to enable investment in new community and leisure facilities for the town.

Wiltshire Council commissioned PER Consulting, working in association with urban designers - Place Dynamix to prepare a feasibility study to determine suitable development options and to advise Wiltshire Council on the most appropriate way forward to secure a high quality development in light of current market conditions and other constraints. The work has been led by the Economic Regeneration Service and conducted in consultation with other public sector stakeholders under the One Public Estate Programme.

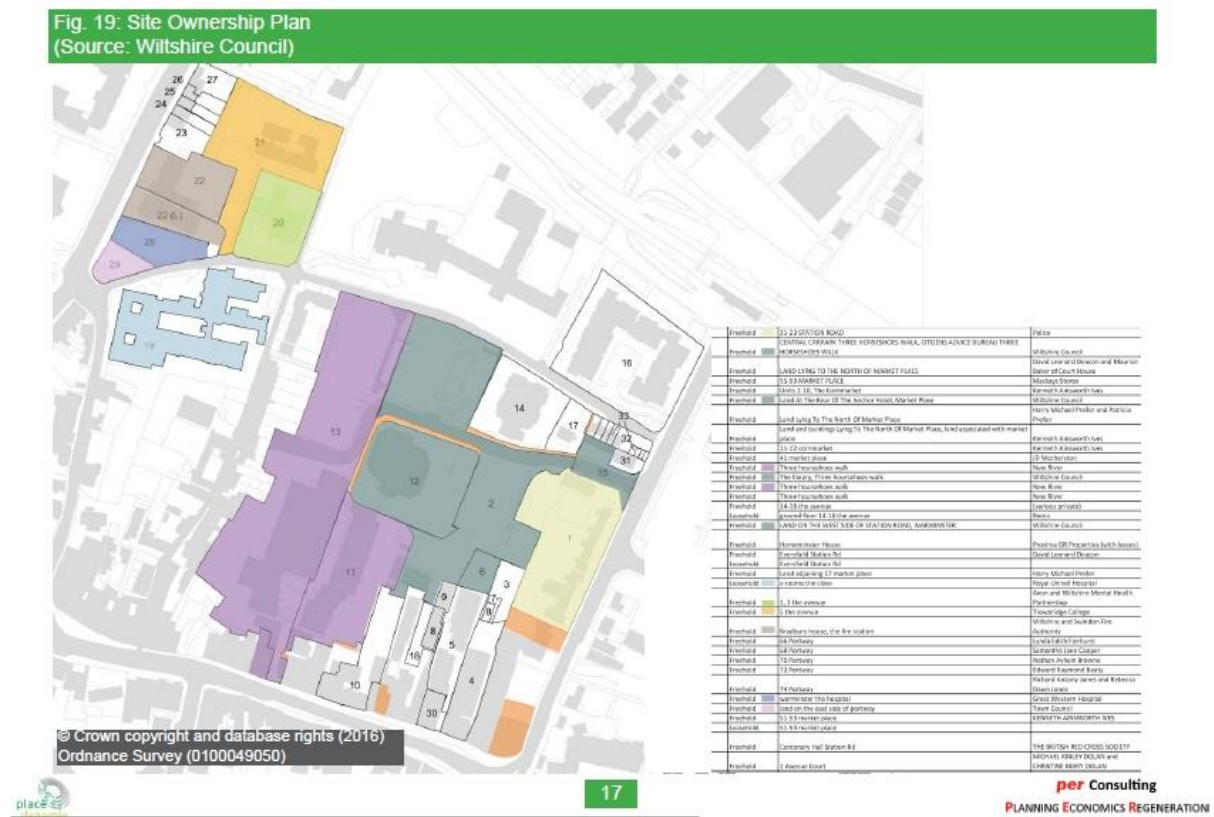


Detailed feasibility and viability testing were undertaken to consider the options for regeneration of the area and the challenges and opportunities for future development.

A large number of stakeholders have been consulted during this work with the three primary landowners at the core; Wiltshire Council, Swindon & Wiltshire Police Authority and New River Retail. One Wiltshire Estate partners have been consulted to establish the extent to which wider regeneration and redevelopment opportunities can be linked. Local stakeholders including the Town Council, Wiltshire Councillors and members of the original campus board were consulted on their aspirations and objectives for the area as well as their local knowledge.

Feasibility Study

Warminster Central Car Park has a mix of land ownerships and provides service access to the retail operations in Three Horseshoes Walk and The Cornmarket and accommodates the town Library and Tourist Information Centre.



Work included a town centre car park occupancy study; a review of Wiltshire Council land titles; consultation with neighbouring land owners and internal stakeholders on the development principles for the site.

The issues to be addressed in considering future development potential include:

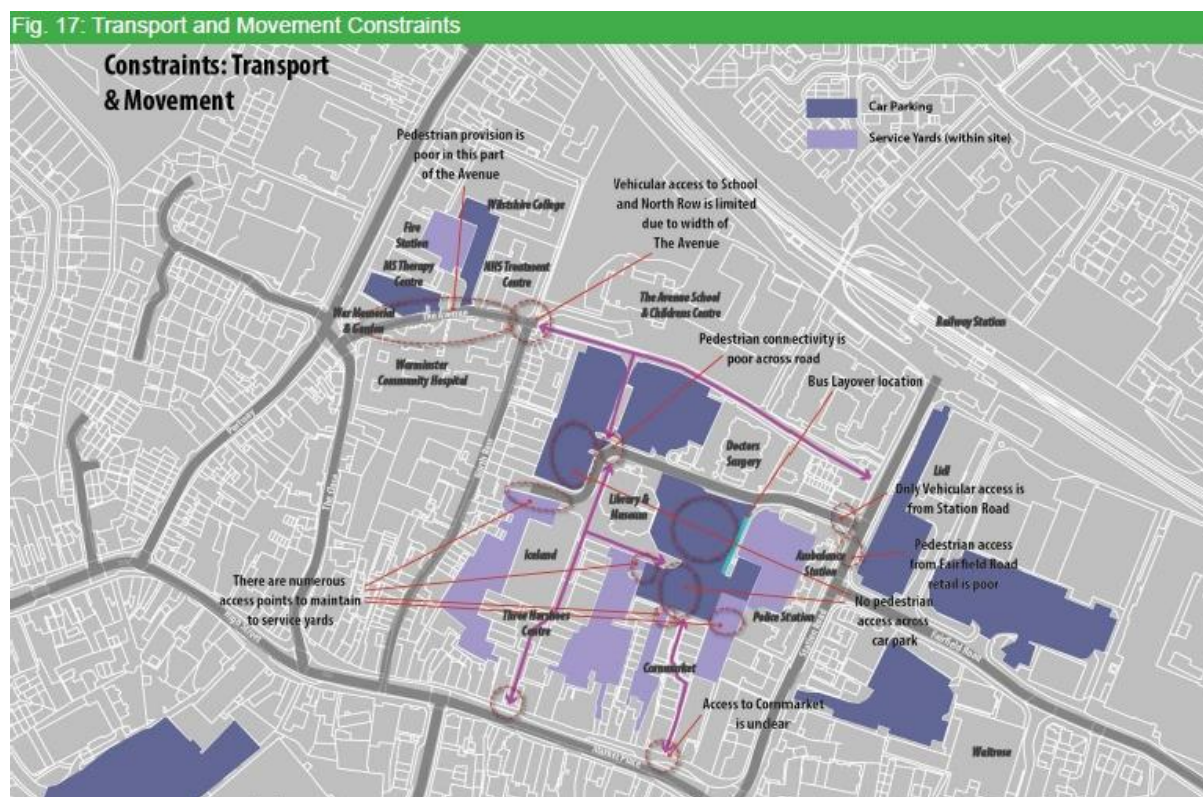
- The need to maintain town centre car parking whilst also addressing additional development needs;
- The implications of different land ownerships, rights of way and restrictive covenants attached to the land;
- Potential for land assembly and consolidation of the public estate;
- Viability of new development and inclusion of high quality urban design/public realm enhancing linkages to the rest of the town centre;
- Investor interest and potential return on investment;
- The implications for the wider public estate and uses around the site.

Site constraints and opportunities

An analysis of planning policy, urban design, transport and movement, infrastructure and land ownership to establish the development parameters to inform options was undertaken.

The public sector estate to the north west of the Central Car Park area is independent of the two areas from a redevelopment perspective and therefore does lend itself to site assembly.

The site is constrained by a number of rights of way and restrictive covenants. These have been mapped and reviewed in detail. The title for the Central Car Park has been cleansed to incorporate previously unregistered land.



Market context

- Nationally most retail operators have been shrinking their physical retail portfolio, with only the 'discount' brands expanding.
- The core town centre of Warminster appears to perform well, with a relatively low vacancy rate and a good mix of uses meeting local needs.
- Higher order retail provision is being met by larger town centres nearby which places the focus in Warminster on the discount market.
- Any new development has to be 'occupier' driven given the challenges across the retail sector and the focus on regional centres for many prime retailers.
- The Central Car Park has the potential to provide larger floorplate units and could attract traditional out-of-town operators within a town centre location – however, free car parking is likely to be a critical requirement of retailers.

New River Retail (NRR) provided commentary from their perspective. In their opinion retail development is in a difficult place currently. Well-known names, both UK and US owned, are consolidating or contracting rather than expanding their number of outlets. Schemes which have been in development for some time are finding that prospective occupying tenants are either pulling out or asking for huge concessions to proceed.

Stores such as Marks and Spencer are showing little appetite to expand and the market is equally tough for the value retailers, reflected by the contraction of brands like Poundland and Poundworld. The food and beverage sector has felt a sharp downturn in recent months.

NRR feel that Warminster will currently struggle to attract further big name brands, because of its population size. There is no obvious market space to be filled. New housing development or a large employer relocating to the area could catalyse investment in the future.

NRR themselves are not a developer but doubt that any would risk money on speculative investment without anchor tenants in place for a new retail scheme. The principle of further development in Warminster with potential tenants is kept open but their appetite is substantially lower now than it was 12 months ago.

Viability of new development

Uses that could complement a retail-led mixed use scheme include commercial leisure, commercial office space and residential use. There is thought to be scope to attract commercial leisure operators (eg commercial gym) to a well-designed mixed use development and to focus part of the development area towards residential uses. The demand for new office space is considered to be limited.

Moving the library from its current location would enable a more cohesive redevelopment, maximising space for new commercial use and associated car parking. However, replacing the library on a 'like for like' basis would be challenging, as estimated land values do not fully meet the calculated costs for developing a new space.

The scale of retail development that can be delivered is relatively modest due to the site constraints and the need to retain a reasonable amount of parking. It is anticipated that market incentives may be necessary to attract tenants. This could limit commercial values and therefore has implications for the delivery of public realm enhancements.

A new 'bus facility' on the site will be a challenge for viability due to reducing land available for commercial redevelopment and given the relatively low retail values involved.

The Police Station could be redeveloped for primarily residential but is not particularly dependent on Council owned land to do so.

Redevelopment of the Car Park would result in loss of revenue income to the Council. Any potential land scale would have to consider the current value (circa £40k per annum)

Conclusions

A viable development proposal will be dependent on future market conditions and commercial appetite for investment.

The analysis contained in the feasibility study has highlighted the sensitivity in the retail market and the need for a more cautious development approach. This has implications for some of the ambitions contained in the Neighbourhood Plan (Approved November 2016). Commercial margins are very tight and great care will be needed to manage expectations in terms of design and public realm contributions to ensure viability.

The feasibility study has also shown that a development approach is possible which will minimise land acquisition costs and enable a degree of independence between development phases. There is little need for land assembly, albeit a coordinated delivery strategy in conjunction with the principal landowners would improve deliverability.

Potential developer interest for the retail element has been tested and has confirmed that at the present time market conditions are not favourable for a retail-led scheme due to a current lack of occupier interest and investors.

The values that could be realised from the release of Council owned land would not cover the costs of substantial new community facilities. The values that could be realised from the redevelopment of the Police Station/Ambulance site could be reasonably significant.

Other options that could be considered for funding such facilities are:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – the Town Council retains 25% of CIL as result of having an approved Neighbourhood Plan. With 900+ homes planned for development over the next ten years for Warminster and an average CIL income of circa £3,000 there is a fairly significant opportunity.
- Section 106 agreements related to new development could be linked to town centre improvements.

There is potential for longer term opportunities for the public sector estate in central Warminster. Wiltshire Council will continue its engagement through the One Wiltshire Estate partnership to share the findings of the feasibility study with key stakeholders and collaborate on bringing forward future opportunities.



Formal Consultation on the Pre-Submission Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan

Friday 14 July to Friday 22 September 2017

The Draft Plan will identify, where necessary, new allocations for housing at settlements and review settlement boundaries.

The draft Plan can be viewed from Friday 14 July at the council's main offices at Monkton Park (Chippenham), Bourne Hill (Salisbury) and County Hall (Trowbridge) and in all Wiltshire Council libraries during normal opening hours or can be available to view on the council's website at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshsgsiteallocationsplan>

There will be four public exhibitions where you can find out more about the consultation.

These will be held between **12pm** and **7pm** at:

17 July: The Neeld Hall (Neeld Community and Art Centre) in Chippenham

19 July: Guildhall, Salisbury

24 July: Devizes Town Hall

26 July: County Hall Trowbridge

Please return comments to Wiltshire Council, by 5pm on Friday 22 September 2017 via the following ways:

Online: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshsgsiteallocationsplan>

By post to: Spatial Planning, Economic Development and Planning, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN.

By e-mail to: spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk

