

Wiltshire Council

Strategic Planning Committee

19 June 2019

Public Participation Questions from Sarah Prinsloo and Mike d'Apice, Extinction Rebellion Salisbury

Question 1

Background note number 7 of the supporting report states that “the Masterplan has been prepared with recognition that the long-term role of the town centre may be subject to change and there is a need to respond flexibly to the unknowns surrounding this. The Masterplan is designed to respond to the requirements of WCS allocation, but with allowance for flexibility for subsequent planning applications to respond appropriately to market conditions”.

Given the closure of many retail outlets in favour of online shopping, the recognition of a climate emergency and the need for flexibility stated, is it reasonable to sell off public land and important facilities to leave future provision of services in the hands of private enterprise?

I would ask councillors to consider that our future adaptation to potential climate chaos in the future will require additional public services and facilities, particularly for public transport, support for food provision and carbon capture and any short term financial gain from any such sale is indeed short-sighted.

Response

The redevelopment of The Maltings and Central Car Park (MCCP) site is not being driven by the council seeking to profit from land sales. Its purpose is to make the best use of the council's assets to support the sustainable and economic growth of the city.

Question 2

Improvements to pedestrian access and an increase in pedestrianisation of the city centre is welcomed, and elements of the scheme are very positive, in particular the greening and rewilding of the rivers; however is it realistic to approve this masterplan now in light of:

- the upcoming CAF, which will also involve the same areas and is likely to look at further pedestrianisation and consideration of public transport but is not yet in consultation
- the recently announced award for consultants to rebrand and enhance the City's character based around the 5 rivers.

Given the delays to date on the Maltings masterplan would it not make better sense and be more efficient to combine all to ensure that they are harmonised?

Response

The MCCP masterplan and the Salisbury Central Area Framework (CAF) serve different purposes and are complementary to one another. The preparation of the MCCP masterplan has been developed alongside the wider CAF and the programme of activities linked to the Salisbury recovery programme. Now that the delivery programme for the MCCP is under way, it is logical for the site to be placed within a wider framework of the emerging CAF, which is intended to inform the future development of the wider city centre. The CAF is in its early stages, and the council is working to ensure that the principles already set out by the MCCP masterplan will be complemented by the emerging themes of the CAF. Early consultation on the CAF is expected to take place this summer.

The project to develop a Salisbury Competitive Brand Positioning was jointly commissioned by VisitWiltshire, Salisbury BID and Salisbury City Council in autumn 2018. Wiltshire Council, among other key organisations, has supported this project and the themes emerging from this project will feed into the CAF, and potentially into future detailed proposals for the phased development of The MCCP site. The masterplan does not preclude this taking place.

Question 3

We welcome the apparent implicit acceptance of the urgency of action needed to respond to the as yet unchecked changes to our climate. We note however the inclusion of explicit caveats in the detailed amendments under Theme 9, at Appendix 2 of the Master Plan, in response to Climate Change related recommendations. "Where possible and viable the development should be carbon neutral" or requisite amendments, quite reasonably, have yet to be determined. However the Council is requested to confirm they will set the bar for "possibility" and "viability" at the level already achieved elsewhere: Projects such as the cited Passivhaus Business Centre in Oxfordshire have demonstrated that very little is now not "possible". Likewise the lives of the first wave of climate change victims are demonstrably no longer "viable" as they have already died from famine, cyclones, drought induced wars and a variety of other individual catastrophes, our city's 'enhancement' should not add to these.

Response

These observations are noted. By law, planning applications on the site will be determined in accordance with the most up-to-date national and local planning policies, and Wiltshire Council will strive to deliver the highest standards that can be achieved on the site in terms of delivering genuinely sustainable development.