



Statement of Community Involvement Chester Northgate, Northgate Street, Chester, CH1 2BY

May 2019

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For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Limited t/a Avison Young

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Avison Young in support of an application made by Cheshire West and Chester Council ("the Council") for a new Multi Storey Car Park and a \$73 application to make minor material changes to the design elements of the approved Phases 0 and 1.
- 1.2 Further details of the site and the proposed development are set out in full in Chapter 3, as well as the accompanying Supporting Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to undertaking pre-application consultation on occasions when it brings forward development proposals and has appointed a dedicated project team to oversee this. The project team sought to engage with local councillors, community groups, neighbouring landowners and members of the wider public throughout the pre-application process.
- 1.4 The purpose of this SCI is to provide an overview of the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken with the local community and key stakeholders. The SCI should be read in conjunction with all other supporting documentation submitted with this application as detailed in **Appendix 1** of the statement.
- 1.5 The structure of the remainder of this Statement is as follows:

Section Two: sets out the background to Chester Northgate;

Section Three: outlines the applications proposals;

Section Four: describes the consultation strategy undertaken;

Section Five: sets out the level of consultation feedback received and responds to the feedback comments;

Section Six: describes other stakeholder review and feedback and reviews the feedback from the stakeholder groups; and

Section Seven: provides Summary and Conclusions.

2. Background to Chester Northgate

Introduction

- 2.1 Chester Northgate is the most significant development in Chester for decades and will transform the city's historic core, supporting the whole city to thrive. It will create jobs, increase tourism and drive economic growth. The redevelopment of Chester Northgate will create a significant new destination within the heart of the city, complementing other key One City Plan investments such as the Central Business Quarter, Storyhouse and the new Chester Bus Interchange.
- 2.2 Chester Northgate has an extensive and complex history, the evolution of which is summarised below:

Scottish Widows

- 2.3 A Scottish Widows' pension fund owned The Forum during most of the 1990s. Scottish Widows completed a refurbishment of the existing Forum shopping centre in 1995 giving the centre the look that it maintains to this day. The pension fund also pursued a scheme to extend the centre across the Northgate site up to Hunter Street. It planned to locate a new 100,000 sq ft department store close to Hunter Street, with around 30 new shops and a new bus station and taxi ranks accessed from St Martin's Way. The indoor market would have also been relocated close to Hunter Street, with a new shopping mall running from the department store back into the existing Forum.
- 2.4 The scheme did not gain traction and Scottish Widows sold its land interests to ING around the end of the decade.

ING

- 2.5 In 2005 planning permission was granted to ING for comprehensive redevelopment plans for a 440,000 sq ft retail development of the whole Northgate site. The scheme included a new performing arts centre, bus exchange, library and indoor market as well as a department store, 70 new shop units and 123 residential units. There was also an off-site provision of new Council offices. A Compulsory Purchase Order was confirmed by the Secretary of State in September 2006 and an extension of time for the planning approval was granted in 2007. After the UK's financial crisis of 2007-08 ING applied for a further extension of time, which was granted in 2011 but was never built.
- 2.6 Having concluded that ING was highly unlikely to deliver its scheme, the Council terminated its agreement with ING in February 2012. The Council also undertook a significant investment in the redevelopment of Northgate by acquiring all of ING's land interests, which included The Forum Shopping Centre.

The 'One City Plan'

2.7 At the same time, the Council worked closely with local stakeholders to prepare the 'One City Plan' – a document that sets out an overarching vision and a development framework for the city.

- 2.8 The plan guides development in the city and has seen over £194m invested to date, delivering major projects including One City Place, King Charles Tower Green and Chester Bus Interchange.
- 2.9 The Council commissioned a new concept scheme and masterplan of its own for Northgate which were approved in late 2015. In line with the early phases of the scheme, both Storyhouse and the new bus interchange opened in 2017.
- 2.10 During 2018, the economic uncertainty in the retail market led to the Council reviewing its original plans for Northgate. It subsequently decided to pursue the development of an initial 'leisure' phase whilst postponing the remainder of the development to later phases.
- 2.11 Whilst the Council own over 85% of land and property interests within the scheme area, it progressed a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire the remainder of the site in order to deliver the scheme; the CPO was confirmed by the Secretary of State in September 2018. However, the Council own 100% of the land needed to deliver Phase 1.

Planning Approval (Hybrid)

- 2.12 Hybrid application 16/02282/OUT was granted planning permission on the 21st of September 2016 for part-demolition and part-retention of existing buildings and the construction of comprehensive mixed-use development comprising; retail stores, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments (Use Classes A1, A2, A3 and A4), offices (Use Class B1), cinema and leisure uses (Use Class D2), 70-120 residential units (Use Class C3), public toilets, shopmobility, a relocated hotel and indoor market with associated new public squares, car and cycle parking, provision for buses and associated highway works and infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.
- 2.13 The Masterplan and Parameter Plans approved under the hybrid application demonstrated that the development would be delivered through three phases. Phases 0 and 1 were in detail and Phase 2 in outline.
- 2.14 Due to economic and viability reasons, changes are proposed to Phase 1 of the scheme.

3. Application Proposals

- 3.1 The planning applications to which this SCI relates to is for the redevelopment of Phases 0 and 1 of Chester Northgate. This phase was previously approved under the hybrid application back in 2016 and the latest proposals relate to the same defined boundary as shown on the plan extract below.
- 3.2 A detailed application has been submitted by the Council for a Multi Storey Car Park in the position of the hotel approved under application 16/02282/OUT in 2016.
- 3.3 A \$.73 application has also been submitted to make minor material amendments, from application 16/02282/OUT, to the elevations of the market, cinema and Hunter's Walk, with minor alterations to the location/ configuration of the cinema element but still within the approved area of the permitted building. As the Public Consultation events related to both of these development proposals this \$CI is prepared to cover both aspects.
- 3.4 The proposals include areas of public realm which is space that is free and open to everyone. The public square will sit at the heart of the development and will support associated business. encourage greater participation in community and cultural activities.
- 3.5 The Multi Storey Car Park replaces the previously approved hotel within Phase 1. The car park will provide a convenient place for people to park in close proximity to Northgate. Internal access to the adjoining market is provided internally.

4. Consultation Strategy

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of local and national planning policy which promotes community involvement in the preparation of planning applications. In particular, the following policy guidance is considered:
 - Cheshire West and Chester Statement of Community Involvement (October 2017);
 - The Localism Act House of Commons (November 2011); and
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012).

Cheshire West and Chester Statement of Community Involvement (October 2017)

- 4.2 Cheshire West and Chester's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in 2017 and provides information on the consultation process for particular types of planning applications. In general, the Statement encourages Applicants to undertake their own pre-application consultation.
- 4.3 Based on a review of the SCI, the document states:

"Developers are encouraged to engage with the Council prior to the submission of planning applications to reduce any potential problems and to ensure that applications are submitted with all the necessary information enabling them to be dealt with without delay.... The Council encourages developers involved in 'significant' planning applications to carry out independent public consultations prior to the submission of schemes, providing the community with an early opportunity to become involved in proposals for their area. This could take the form of public exhibitions, meetings workshops or media coverage etc. Results from any public consultation exercise undertaken by the applicant should form part of the application".

The Localism Act

- 4.4 In November 2011 the Localism Act received Royal Assent. This is the Government's method of devolving greater powers to Councils and neighbourhoods in order to give local communities more control over planning decisions. It is a material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 4.5 Paragraph 122 of the Localism Act introduces a new requirement for developers to consult local communities on a wider range of developments before submitting planning applications. Developers must consider any responses received before proposals are finalised and show how they have been taken into account when submitting applications. It is hoped that this will give local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to any draft proposals.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.6 The NPPF was originally published on 27th March 2012. The 2018 Framework was published in July 2018 and then again in February 2019, containing the Government's most up-to-date planning guidance.

- 4.7 There is clear rationale from the Government to increase the amount of public consultation undertaken in the planning process.
- 4.8 Section 4 on "Pre-Application engagement and front-loading" within the NPPF states how early engagement "has significant potential to improve the efficient and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties". It further goes on to state "they [Local Planning Authorities] should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications".

Consultation Strategy

4.9 In the context of the above, the Council have completed a full and comprehensive consultation programme that fully complies with both local and national guidance described above, in advance of the submission of the application. Key areas of consultation undertaken include:

Pre-Application Meetings with the Council

- 4.10 Avison Young has held regular meetings with Officers from theCouncil. Consultation commenced after the project team met Council planning officers as part of early preapplication discussions. They have been kept advised of the activities undertaken in support of the application throughout the process. Regular updates have also been delivered to a dedicated cross-party working group of councillors.
- 4.11 The applicant's team has held regular meetings with the following consultees to ensure that they have been kept fully informed of the emerging design proposals and to address any comments that they have made:
 - Environmental Protection Officers;
 - Conservation Officer:
 - Highways Officers;
 - Biodiversity Officers;
 - CWaC Archaeological Advisory Service;
 - Civic Trust;
 - Access Officers;
 - SPEN;
 - Lead Local Flood Authority;
 - Welsh Water;

- Landscape Officers;
- Climate Change Officers;
- Highways England; and
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Consultation with the Local Community

Public Exhibition

- 4.12 A three-day drop-in public exhibition took place in a dedicated consultation shop in the Forum Shopping Centre. The unit is located in the City Centre and in close proximity to the Phase 1 Northgate Development area.
- 4.13 The dates and timings of the exhibition were as follows:
 - Thursday 28th March 2019, 12pm 8pm
 - Friday 29th March 2019, 12pm 7pm
 - Saturday 30th March 2019, 10.30am 3.30pm



4.14 An information leaflet was prepared to advertise the public exhibition which was hand delivered to surrounding properties and businesses on 26 March 2019. (one week prior to the event).

4.15 At the exhibition, members of the project technical team were on hand to answer questions and discuss the proposals. Display boards, a 3D Model of Northgate and an interactive touchscreen computer provided visitors with detailed information about the proposals.

Advertising the Consultation Event

- 4.16 An email invite to key stakeholder groups and individuals was sent out on 22 March 2019.
- 4.17 A dedicated website was set up (www.chesternorthgate.com) in support of the consultation on 25 March 2019. This allowed those unable to attend any of the arranged events to find out more about the proposals outside of those dates and times and have their say. Cheshire West and Chester's website contained a link to the consultation website and guided visitors to it.
- 4.18 An article advertising the event was issued to and published by Place Northwest.
- 4.19 Local press articles, advertising the event, were published on 15th February, 22 March, 27 March and 10 April 2019.
- 4.20 A radio interview with Officers from the Council took place on 27 March 2019.

Key Stakeholders

4.21 Throughout the emerging design process, the applicant has held numerous meetings with key consultees. A summary of the feedback can found at Appendix 2.

Design Review Panel

4.22 On the 28 March 2019, Avison Young, the Council and AHR Architects attended a Design Panel Review meeting in Chester. Feedback was received from the Design Panel as can be found at Appendix 3.

Summary

4.23 As demonstrated above, the applicant has undertaken a comprehensive pre-application consultation programme in full accordance with local and national planning guidance. A number of stakeholders have been consulted, the results of which are summarised in the following section.

5. Consultation Feedback and Review

- 5.1 This Chapter provides an overview of the comments received from the wider public from the consultation programme which has been undertaken.
- 5.2 Overall there have been 143 feedback forms received. The following level of response is summarised below:
- 5.3 The main themes of feedback received during this stage of consultation is set out in the table below:

Theme of Feedback	Points Covered		
Davis	The views of the Walsh Hills should be presented.		
Design	The views of the Welsh Hills should be preserved;		
	 Concerns about the design of the car park, particularly in terms of its height, scale, massing and appearance (too monolithic). One respondent questioned whether the flat roof line could be broken up to give the impression of more 'organic' development, or whether this could be located underground; 		
	It there a possibility to add more culture to the proposals, including an art gallery / permanent exhibition space / art and drama workshop;		
	The 'modern design' was generally well received however, a number of respondents considered that high quality and long-lasting materials was very important in achieving the good design;		
	A number of respondents requested that the design included directional signs around the proposal and wider city;		
	Concerns were raised in relation to whether the design was preserving Chester's local historic buildings, heritage and street plan; and		
	There was lots of support for the screen in the public square.		
	The design looks like a series of boxes, totally out of keeping with Chester.		
	No need for a public square.		
	The high buildings proposed will create a canyon.		
	The terracotta façade looks too modern amongst the historic buildings and spoils the traditional frontage of the library		
	Without a revised overall Masterplan the current proposals for Phase 1 must be seen as premature as it must fit into the overall plan for the area.		
	The MSCP is too high in its current form and too close to St Martins Way. There should be a setback from St Martins Way that includes trees.		
	The MSCP is domineering and should be broken up.		
	What is the Council doing or intends to do about the derelict Kirkton House building? Will it be retained/improved?		

Market	The market was generally welcomed, with lots of support for the split levels;
	Questions about whether the rent is affordable to the existing market traders;
	Lots of general agreement with the focus of the market on small independent retailers and eatery outlets to ensure that it is unique and interesting;
	It is important for this part of the development to maximise the use of natural light;
	The plans for the new market should include co-working space and internet access; and
	Discussions were had in relation to whether the market could include more than just eating and drinking stalls to ensure that it is sustainable.
Public Realm • The development should include lots of public realm planting; and	
	Lots of support for the 'green living wall' generally however, some concerns were raised in relation to future maintenance responsibilities and costs.
Access	The development should be easily accessible to all (especially for those with disabilities and older people);
	Gradients across the site should be as gentle as possible;
	Discussions of whether the bike hub was in the most suitable location on the Inner Ring Road as there are no cycle routes adjacent and the surrounding network is 'unsafe'. Questions were raised about whether the cycle hub could be relocated more centrally, possibly in the Town Hall Square;
	 Questions about whether the plans could expand the cycle hub and offer cycling pumps, repair and cycle hire facility;
	 Concerns were raised about the public transport infrastructure and accessibility of the development, suggesting that the "shopper hopper" bus needs to link the bus and train station to the market and all shops at all times of the day;
	Concerns were raised about whether the construction and delivery traffic would be routed via Kings Street as this could be disruptive; and
	One respondent raised concerns about this development would worsen waiting / short stay parking on Sens Close which is already an existing problem.
Retail	Questions of whether new retail space is required in Chester – comments were made that the new space should be dynamic and complement the existing retail offer in Chester and not compete and affect viability; and
	Comments about the need to more actively promote the re-occupation of empty shops.
Sustainability	Consideration should be given to ensuring the development minimises climate change – electrical charging points should be included in the car park;
	Concerns were raised in relation to whether the car park proposals would adversely affect Chester's air quality;
	Consideration should be given to using sustainable building materials and incorporating the highest standards of energy efficiency into the building; and
	Questions were raised as to whether the development can include green roof technologies, including solar panels and collection and management of

rainwater.

Matters Discussed with the Team During Public Exhibition

5.4 In addition to the responses received via the proposed method of feedback, this SCI also sets out below the main points of discussion held between attendees and the team who were at the exhibition. These included the following themes:

Accessible and Suitable for All Needs

- Concerns were raised over sudden steps and trip hazards throughout the development. Respondents also noted that where external steps were required, these should be well designed (colour contrast, handrails and tactile surfaces);
- Consideration should be given to ensuring that lifts can accommodate more than one wheelchair users at a time and ideally provide two lifts so that there is an alternative in the event of a breakdown;
- One respondent raised concerns about the glazed roof creating shadows and reflections which may cause issues for visually impaired visitors;
- Some people requested that drop off areas were incorporated into the development for private vehicles and taxis; and
- Some people requested that the development was signposted for ease of navigation, and one noted that a Map for All would be welcomed.

Design

- Discussions in relation to external seating areas requiring a wider range of seating types to suit differing needs:
- One respondent suggested that adjustable tables should be incorporated into the Market Hall to suit varying needs of wheelchair users;
- Changing facilities must be located near to other toilets and be available for use during cinema and restaurant opening hours to encourage sustainable transport movements;

Responses to Feedback

In accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 2 of this Statement, all of the comments received as part of the consultation exercise have been considered by the Applicant and the technical team. In response to the matters raised at the Exhibition, a response is provided below:

Issue Raised	Response
The high buildings proposed will create a canyon.	The scale of the new buildings will be in accordance with the existing planning approval which tested the overall scale of the development in environmental terms.
Concerns about the design of the car park, particularly in terms of its height, scale, massing and appearance (too monolithic). One respondent questioned whether the flat roof line could be broken up to give the impression of more 'organic' development, or whether this could be located underground.	The scheme has been carefully designed and the parameters established under the previous approval have been adhered to. Both the immediate and wider context of Chester have been fully considered and incorporated into the design of the proposals for Phases 0 and 1.
The design looks like a series of boxes, totally out of keeping	The overall form of the buildings has been largely set by the existing planning approval which we are seeking minor amendments to in order to improve the facades.
with Chester.	The architectural approach to the facades has been developed in dialogue with key project stakeholders including Historic England who have welcomed the approach and the strong references to the character of the rural nature of Cheshire and the prevalent materiality of Chester City centre. The introduction of green walls also softens the design.
Could the design of the entrance to the cinema be considered further?	Further thought has been given to this particular part of the scheme and additional detailing is proposed in order to enhance the entrance.
The terracotta façade looks too modern amongst the historic buildings and spoils the traditional frontage of the library.	The materials proposed have been carefully selected following feedback received in relation to the 'material boards' which formed part of consultation on the project. The terracotta façade to the extended Hunters Walk building has been selected as a material reference to the old Library façade rather than attempting to replicate the form of the old library in the extension. This material reference takes what is relatively unusual about the old library façade and allows a modern reinterpretation of the existing building. This approach has been thoroughly tested with Historic England who are supportive of this design approach.
Can the design of Hunters Walk be reconsidered?	Changes have now been proposed to the materials used to creative a more attractive design. It is not possible however to maintain full two-storey height clearance the whole way through the building.
Without a revised overall Masterplan the current proposals for Phase 1 must be seen as premature as it must fit into the overall plan for the area.	We have carefully considered how Phases 0 and 1 will relate to future development. It should be noted that the existing planning approval sets the parameters within which the new planning application will be assessed, with the only change of being the MSCP replacing the hotel.

The MSCP is too high in its current form and too close to St Martins Way. There should be a setback from St Martins Way that includes trees.	The design team has paid particular attention to the height of the MSCP to ensure that the building onto St.Martins Way is lower than the existing planning permission for the hotel block that formed part of the original planning approval. In order to maintain the height of the block below the height of the existing permission the line of the building had to be maintained in its original position.
The MSCP is domineering and should be broken up.	The scale and massing of the MSCP has been carefully considered in comparison with the existing planning approval massing for the new hotel. The architectural approach to the design of the building was been tested with key stakeholders such as Historic England who have welcomed the approach to reduce the visual scale of the block through the introduction of movement through the façade by using a random arrangement of panels including living green wall panels.
How is the potential of views from the upper and particularly top floors or roof of the MSCP to be exploited.	The floor slabs within the MSCP are 'flat' slabs which allow the top floor of the car park to be used as a temporary event space. The occupancy of such events will be limited to the overall occupancy of the MSCP in its normal operational condition.
The location of the cycle hub is poor and would be better located in the MSCP.	The location of the Cycle Hub is currently being reconsidered based on the feedback during the pubic consultation. Cycle parking and storage will be provided across the scheme.
How is the design and construction of the cinema to accommodate possible changes in future demands? Will it be designed for additional uses or to be easily adaptable for other uses?	The Cinema has been designed to suit the operational requirements of the end operator, Picturehouse.
The views of the Welsh Hills should be preserved.	The existing planning approval sets the parameters within which the new planning application will be assessed. The scheme has been designed to be as sensitive as possible to the existing landscape and townscape.
Is there a possibility to add more culture to the proposals, including an art gallery / permanent exhibition space / art and drama workshop.	The applicant understands the unique heritage of Chester and the importance of ensuring that the proposals respect the local distinctiveness. The proposals introduce new facilities that will complement and improve the offer available within the City Centre. Such as the Mezzanine space in the market which could be utilised as gallery space.
The 'modern design' was generally well perceived however, a number of respondent's considered that high quality and long-lasting materials was very important in achieving the good design.	High quality materials and finishes are proposed and the final details are to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority throughout the planning application process.
Concerns were raised in relation to whether the design was preserving Chester's local historic buildings, heritage and street plan.	The proposals sensitively respond to the character and appearance of Chester City Centre and include detailed design features and artwork to ensure that the design assimilates well with its surroundings.
There was lots of support for the screen in the public square.	The support for the screen is welcome but it must be noted that the screen is likely to be on a temporary basis and will be used for the screening of events etc.

A number of respondents requested that the design included directional signs around the proposal and wider city.	Signage is being considered and further details will be provided during the application stage
No need for a public square.	We have received significant support for the provision of a public square, with various individuals and groups expressing an interest in utilising it for several purposes. The existing planning approval sets the parameters within which the new planning application will be assessed. The new public square will link the new development at Hunters Walk through to the new Market. The new public square will host a number of complementary uses associated with the market and will become a significant new public space for Chester.
The MSCP should include underground car parking which could incorporate the conservation and exhibition of archaeological features.	The principles set and agreed in the existing permission do not allow for underground car parking to be provided as it could destroy large amounts of known archaeological remains.
Questions about whether the plans could expand the cycle hub and offer cycling pumps, repair and cycle hire facility.	The majority of feedback on the proposed cycle hub is that it is located in the wrong place next to St.Martins Way. As such the location of this provision is currently being reconsidered.
What is the Council doing or intends to do about the derelict Kirkton House building? Will it be retained/improved?	The council is looking at a number of options to bring Kirkton House and the adjacent land back into use. Once these options are firmed up then we will consult widely with the community to gather their opinion.
The market was generally welcomed, with lots of support for the split levels.	The support for the market is welcomed.
The market will include chain outlets which is disappointing.	The focus of the market is for independent traders, there are no chain outlets within the market hall. The development should serve to further improve footfall in the area, building on the success of Storyhouse, during the day but also in the evening to provide a safe, well used environment. This additional footfall should benefit wider businesses by bringing more people into the city.

How is car parking for the development as a whole affected by the abandonment of the new hotel and the retention of the Crowne Plaza and the existing car parks?	The overall principles for car parking associated with the Chester Northgate masterplan remain unchanged (i.e. new, improved parking supply to replace spaces currently located on the site at Market Car Park and Trinity Street Car Park). Motorists will be directed to new areas of parking from St. Martin's Way. The site of the hotel in the original application provides an opportunity to introduce a multi-storey car park with access provided to and from Hunter Street via St. Martin's Way. For information, parking was always proposed on Hunter Street but the latest proposals increase provision at this location. Although the latest proposals increase the total provision on Hunter Street, it is envisaged that there would be a corresponding decrease in future provision associated with subsequent phases so as not to exceed the total number within the Chester Northgate hybrid scheme. In any case, subsequent phases of development would provide further assessment and justification of overall parking supply (both above or below ground) based on the needs of the development and the city at the time.
How does the car park access and egress relate to the proposals for phase 2 and particularly the proposed increase in underground potential which the previous proposals exploited well?	The new multi-storey car park will be accessed to and from Hunter Street and will not be affected by any proposals associated with subsequent phases. The St. Martin's Way/Princess Street junction is retained for these proposals and will continue to provide access to the hotel, Trinity Street Car Park and existing properties until such time that an alternative route (i.e. Edwards's Street) is provided in subsequent phases. This arrangement was agreed with CWaC Highways as part of the original application and the principles remain unchanged. In terms of car parking (both above and below ground), further assessments will be conducted as part of subsequent phases to account for the overall provision associated with the Chester Northgate masterplan.
How does the car park relate to transport and movement designs for the city as a whole and particularly the city centre hopper bus service?	Parking supply is a key part of the overall management of travel demand in any city. In Chester, the Council's Parking Strategy recognises that both the Market Car Park and the Trinity Street Car Park are popular locations for visitors to the city centre. The area remains a key parking location and the latest development proposals will see an improved parking offer in terms of quality appearance, safety, security and access. It should be noted that the provision of parking within the city centre is just one strand of the overall parking strategy which also includes parking locations on the periphery of the city at the various Park and Ride sites as well as smaller sites along key routes. With regards to the shopper hopper, it is understood that this service would continue with further discussions required with the Council regarding future routeing options.
Where are the bus stops, shelter, waiting, information, refreshments, toilets and similar facilities?	New bus stops are proposed on St. Martin's Way as part of Phase 1 at locations previously identified in the original Chester Northgate masterplan. It should also be noted that there are a number of existing bus stops and associated infrastructure which facilitates the promotion of buses as a sustainable mode. For example, the nearest group of bus stops to the site are at Canal Street, George Street and Upper Northgate Street, approximately 300-330 metres from the junction of Northgate Street/Princess Street and at a typical walking speed this equates to a journey time of 4-5 minutes.

How does the car park relate to existing cycle and pedestrian movement for the city?	In terms of this phase, the new multi-storey car park does not affect the overall access strategy for pedestrians or cyclists. Crossing facilities will continue to be provided at key junctions on St. Martin's Way and footways will be provided adjacent to new highways to facilitate pedestrian movement. The retention of Princess Street (and associated crossing infrastructure on St. Martin's Way) as part of this phase will also allow cyclists to access a quiet network of streets around Trinity Street and Hamilton Place to access the city centre.
The development should be easily accessible to all (especially for those with disabilities and older people).	A key priority is to ensure access and movement across the site works for all. The design includes measures such as keeping gradients to a minimum and providing lift access where required and resting places.
Gradients across the site should be as gently as possible.	Throughout the design process the applicant has sought to ensure that gradients are as gently sloping as possible. This has been balanced against the archaeological constraints of the site.
Discussions of whether the bike hub was in the most suitable location on the Inner Ring Road as there are no cycle routes adjacent and the surrounding network is 'unsafe'. Questions were raised about whether the cycle hub could be relocated more centrally, possibly in the Town Hall Square.	The location of the Cycle Hub is currently being reconsidered based on the feedback during the pubic consultation. Cycle storage is likely to be designed within the public realm.
The development should include lots of public realm planting.	Landscaping is proposed to the public realm which will enhance the appearance and visitor experience.
Lots of support for the 'green living wall' generally however, some concerns were raised in relation to future maintenance responsibilities and costs.	Support for the green living wall is welcomed. The team believes this to be a real asset to the scheme. The wall would be carefully managed and maintained throughout its lifetime to ensure that it remains an attractive feature in perpetuity. The design of the green wall on the MSCP has been redesigned following feedback, removing 'swirls' to provide a more ordered response.
Questions about whether the rent is affordable to the existing market traders.	Rent is not a material planning consideration. However, rents for the new market have been benchmarked against the councils other three markets in the Borough.
Lots of general agreement with the focus of the market on small independent retailers and eatery outlets to ensure that it is unique and interesting.	The support is welcomed. The team has sought to ensure that a distinctive and attractive market design is provided which will enable new independent retailers and eatery outlets to enhance the offer currently available within the City Centre.
It is important for this part of the development to maximise the use of natural light.	The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) submitted with the planning applications includes a sunlight/daylight assessment, full details can be viewed within the EIA submission

The plans for the new market should include co-working space and internet access.	Relocating Chester Market will be at the heart of the first phase, with ambitious plans to become one of the best markets in the country. The market will cater for local traders. The applicant is considering the inclusion of other areas within the market building and full details will be included within the planning submission.
Discussions were had in relation to whether the market could include more than just eating and drinking stalls to ensure that it is sustainable.	Relocating Chester Market will be at the heart of the first phase, with ambitious plans to become one of the best markets in the country. The market will cater for local traders. The applicant is considering the inclusion of other areas within the market building and full details are included within the planning submission.
Concerns were raised about the public transport infrastructure and accessibility of the development, suggesting that the "shopper hopper" bus needs to link the bus and train station to the market and all shops at all times of the day.	The Transport Assessment submitted with the applications demonstrates that bus facilities surrounding the site ensure that frequent services can be made available within acceptable distances and at key travel times, suitable for a variety of trip purposes.
Concerns were raised about whether the construction and delivery traffic would be routed via Kings Street as this could be disruptive.	Full details of construction management will be agreed with the Council and the applicant is preparing a Construction Environmental Management Plan which may be a conditional requirement.
One respondent raised concerns that the development would worsen waiting / short stay parking on Sens Close which is already an existing problem.	It is not anticipated that the proposals would create any waiting or parking issues in or around the development site. The proposals provide a new MSCP and as such adequate and convenient parking provision is being provided.
Comments about the need to more actively promote the re- occupation of empty shops.	The Northgate scheme will breathe new life into Chester City Centre and improve the appearance of the City. The cumulative effect would boost the local economy and ensure that vacancy rates are reduced.
Consideration should be given to ensuring the development minimises climate change – electrical charging points should be included in the car park.	An initial 5% (39 spaces) of the MSCP spaces will be allocated for the use of electric vehicles with associated charging infrastructure. A further 5% of will be allocated for future electric vehicle provision, allowing the Multi-Storey Car Park to provide up to 10% of its capacity for electric vehicles.
Concerns were raised in relation to whether the car park proposals would adversely affect Chester's air quality.	The site is within an Air Quality Management Area and therefore a full Air Quality Assessment will be detailed within the EIA which assesses the air quality impacts from the new MSCP and other Phase 0 and 1 elements.
Consideration should be given to using sustainable building materials and incorporating the highest standards of energy efficiency into the building.	The materials to be used will be agreed with the Council but the applicant is committed to using sustainable materials and ensuring energy efficiency.

Questions were raised as to whether the development can include green roof technologies, including solar panels and collection and management of rainwater.

Full consideration is being given to sustainability measures and how they can be incorporated into the development proposals. Full details will be provided within the submitted planning application.

Summary

5.6 This section has summarised and responded to the feedback received from local residents during the preapplication consultation undertaken by the team. All comments received have been taken into consideration and revision made where appropriate, such as to the design and location of the proposed cycle hub.

6. Stakeholder Feedback and Review

6.1 In addition to the wider public feedback, a review of the comments received from the stakeholder groups who provided feedback forms has also been undertaken. The main themes of discussion are set out in the table below:

Stakeholder	Issue Raised	Response
Chester Archaeological Society	Recommend protecting nationally important buried archaeology, especially the well-preserved Roman barracks under the 'pocket park at the western end of the site and bring the results of the previous nationally important excavations in the Princess Street – Hunter Street area to full publication.	An Archaeological Assessment is to submitted as part of the planning application which gives full consideration to protecting buried archaeology within the site.
Chester Self Advocacy	Expressed support for the market and the visual display at the exhibition.	The support expressed is welcomed.
Chester Contemporary Artists	Would like to see a dedicated art gallery.	Phases 0 and 1 are the first phase of development that includes a new cinema, market, restaurants and public space and new car parking facilities. This will attract more visitors to the city enhancing the leisure activities already established by Storyhouse. The proposals do not include a dedicated art gallery but consideration is being given to public art within the development proposals and full details will be provided as part of the planning applications.
City Walls Medical Centre	No bus service would and has affected the medical practice. Concerns expressed about the bus service being dependent upon the bus companies.	The bus services are dependant upon the bus companies but the Council is confident that suitable services will be agreed between the parties. Bus facilities surrounding the site ensure that frequent services can be made available within acceptable distances and at key travel times, suitable for a variety of trip purposes.

Cycling UK	Cycle Hub at St Martins at wrong location and St Martins Way is unsafe for cyclists. Cycle hub would be more preferable at the market. Access by public transport is very	The location of the Cycle Hub is currently being reconsidered based on the feedback during the pubic consultation. Cycle storage is likely to be designed within the public realm. Bus facilities surrounding the site ensure that frequent services can be made available within acceptable distances and at key travel times, suitable for a variety of trip purposes.
	unclear. Consideration of cycle routes across the town should be given in order to improve accessibility.	Cyclists are able to access the site from existing cycle routes on Northgate Street via Town Hall Square or Hunter Street. In addition, links to and from Bedward Row in the west will remain with crossing infrastructure on St. Martin's Way and cycle parking close to the crossing point on the development side of St. Martin's Way to enable cyclists to park and access the site.
FOE CSF Transition CWDF	How is sustainability and minimising climate change being built into the scheme.	Sustainability has been at the heart of the process. The scheme will include a cycle hub and electric vehicle charging facilities and make use of sustainable materials. A significant number of disabled parking spaces will be provided and the site will be easily accessed by public transport. Provision of cycle storage is to be designated within the public realm.

Design Panel Review

- 6.2 On the 28 March 2019, Avison Young, the Council and AHR Architects attended a Design Panel Review meeting in Chester. Following the meeting feedback was provided by the panel and is summarised below:
 - The panel were particularly encouraged by the collaborative approach developed between Cheshire West and Chester Council, the design team and the preferred contractor.
 - The following points were identified by the Panel for the attention of the Project Team and the Local Authority to be considered as the design details progress:

Architectural Approach and Localism

- 1) The computer-generated imagery viewed, particularly of the proposed square were compelling. Likewise, images of the proposed market space.
- 2) The panel also stated that they would like to applaud the use of cross-sections to illustrate the scheme. It has helped the Design Review Panel to better understand the complexity of scheme in the short time available within the review session.
- 3) Questions were asked regarding the spatial quality of the market particularly as it is located under the main cinema box above. The panel felt that the design team have a good

- understanding on how to ensure the market hall bright and spacious. The continuous diagonal timber grid, which would control light, change, was a particularly good solution.
- 4) The panel warned against the overall impression of the scheme in terms of form, and material feeling like a 1990's shopping area. Within the context of localism, the panel would suggest further thought on how the scheme can be adjusted to reflect the locality more creatively.
- 5) The panel considered that the least successful piece within the architectural arrangement is the cinema entrance. The entrance sequence to the cinema needs to be re-thought in their view. Given this is where the main stair event is located overlooking the square and town hall there is a significant opportunity to create a distinctive experience linking new building, square and city centre together.
- 6) The panel was not convinced with the application of the curvy green on the car park. The vertical green walls are great but it comes across as a graphic image, rather than an architecturally designed building. The panel really like the green stuff but would like the design team to celebrate that it is a well-designed car park.

Highways and Arrival Experience

- 1) The panel recommend the preparation of a Transport Plan to further support decisions in respect of transport. In particular, the panel would highlight the need to ensure that vehicular and pedestrian priorities are reviewed on Hunter Street, to ensure that most of the traffic goes to the car park and not through to Storyhouse and beyond. A junction to the east of the car park entrance would help to address this.
- 2) The panel recommended the inclusion of a ramp down Princess Street to improve access for cyclists, buggies and mobility scooters. A review of the pinch point on the corner where the pavement narrows on St. Oswalds Way was also recommended.

Sustainability

- 1) The panel would strongly recommend the preparation of an energy and sustainability strategy, to clearly show the thinking behind the scheme's green credentials.
- 2) The developing narrative for cycle storage is really encouraged by the panel and thought should be given to ensure that additional facilities for cyclists, such as showers and associated facilities are built in to the scheme, to ensure full value for Chester's cycling residents.

The Public Realm and Green Facades

1) The panel were pleased to see the inclusion of a projection screen within the square. Given the orientation of the square the panel queried if tree planting would help to bring life while

- also creating some urban heat island cooling to the square, making it a more pleasant environment to be in during the warmer summer months. Similarly public seating would provide a rest space. Perhaps a water feature would help to enliven the space further.
- 2) On the whole, the size, shape and feel of the new square appear right. The panel were particularly pleased to see how the market and cinema block has been pulled back to allow Storyhouse to also become an additional enclosure to the new square. There is the making of a very distinct Chester urban quarter which the panel are keen to see grow.
- 3) The panel asked whether the Council can go further with the green facades and explore opportunities for passive cooling while also helping to create insect habitat, whilst being mindful of ongoing maintenance requirements.
- 4) The Panel queried whether there are there other examples in this climate zone that can provide a precedent for the specific requirements of the green wall that will need to be considered for the successful establishment and ongoing maintenance of this feature. Whole life cycle costs need to be considered at this design stage. Perhaps opportunities for roof gardens could be exploited to enhance the visitor experience within the Northgate development.
- 5) The panel were not convinced that smaller pockets of green space within the first phase of the scheme will work. Additionally, in terms of the arcade access the panel would like to see more investigation into to the extent of the demise over the first floor forming the ceiling to the arcade. They suggested that it may be possible to extend the cover the whole width of the arcade.

Summary

6.3 This section has summarised the feedback received from stakeholder groups during the pre-application consultation undertaken by the team. All comments received have been taken into consideration.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 The Applicant has carried out a comprehensive programme of pre-application consultation which goes beyond the requirements of both local and national planning policy guidance for development of this scale and nature.
- 7.2 The Applicant has engaged with the local community and key stakeholders in a variety of different ways to ensure that their opinions have been considered within the design evolution of the scheme. The SCI provides an overview of the consultation that has been carried out.
- 7.3 The Applicant is committed to delivering a scheme that incorporates the views of the local community and has endeavoured to mitigate, as far as possible, comments raised whilst ensuring that the proposed development is viable and deliverable.
- 7.4 Further details on the evolution of the design and how feedback has influenced this can be found in the Design and Access Statement, prepared by AHR Architects, which is submitted as a part of this application.

Appendix I List of Supporting Documents

Discipline	May 2016 EIA Chapter	July 2016 EIA Addendum Chapter	New EIA Chapter / Standalone Report	Consultee
Townscape, Heritage and Visual Impact	Chapter 7.1	Chapter 3.4	Chapter 7	Conservation Officer
Traffic and Transport	Chapter 7.2	Chapter 3.3	Chapter 8	Kirsty Henderson Highways Paul Parry
Socio-Economics	Chapter 7.3	No chapter in July 2016 ES Addendum. Refer to May 2016 ES	Chapter 9	Planning Cathy Reay
Air Quality	Chapter 7.4	Chapter 2.2	Chapter 10	Environmental Protection Ian Nadin
Noise and Vibration	Chapter 7.5	Chapter 3.2	Chapter 11	Environmental Protection Pete Hargreaves
Biodiversity and Ecology	Chapter 7.6	No chapter in July 2016 ES Addendum. Refer to May 2016 ES	Chapter 12	Ecology Ann Evans Laura Hughes
Ground Conditions and Contamination	Chapter 7.7	Chapter 2.3	Chapter 13	Environmental Protection Louise Siddon
Surface Water Drainage and Flooding	Chapter 7.8	Chapter 2.4	Chapter 14	LLFA Welsh Water Environment Agency
Archaeology	Chapter 7.9	Chapter 3.5	Chapter 15	Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service - Mark Leah
Wind Micro- Climate	Chapter 7.10	No chapter in July 2016 ES Addendum. Refer to May 2016 ES	Chapter 16	Environmental Protection – Martin Doyle

Sunlighting and Daylighting	Chapter 7.11	No chapter in July 2016 ES	Chapter 17	Planning –
		Addendum. Refer to May 2016 ES		Cathy Reay
		2010 20		

Appendix II Summary of Consultee Feedback

Conservation (Kirsty Henderson)

Kirsty is very supportive of the changes proposed to the scheme going forward. She is keen to assist in developing the scheme. The project team has met with Kirsty on a bi-weekly basis to keep her up to date on progress of the scheme.

Kirsty has been supportive of the design of the Market and Cinema buildings and welcomes the green wall proposals.

LPA (Cathy Reay)

Bi-weekly catch-up meetings between Cathy and the project team have taken place together with other consultees e.g. Historic England.

Cathy is hoping that the quality of the planning submission will enable her to process the application within the target timescales.

Archaeology (Mark Leah)

Mark is wholly supportive of the approach to archaeology being adopted on the Northgate project and is greatly relieved with the anticipated reduction of intrusion into the archaeology in Phase 1 compared with the approved scheme.

Environmental Protection (Martin Doyle and Ian Nadin)

Martin and Ian have been very glad to be involved in discussions with the project team from an early stage.

Key changes in circumstances to note since the 2016 hybrid planning permission include:

- An AQMA has been designated within Chester city centre and the Northgate site is wholly within the AQMA;
- An AQMA Action Plan is currently in development. This will be a formal strategy adopted by the Council;
- In September 2018 the Council published its new Low Emissions Strategy, which need to be adhered to:
- EPT Officers will expect the Traffic Assessment levels to be checked and be correct;
- Two scenarios will need to be modelled/ compared in the EIA addendum in respect
 of how the new MSCP would impact on block NG17 uses of either (1) existing hotel
 or (2) approved new retail unit.

Highways (Paul Parry, Sue Begley and Andy Coward)

Paul, Sue and Andy are fully versed in all highway matters relating to Northgate and across the city. They have been cooperative in working with Vectos and other consultants to achieve the best solution for the local highway network. Numerous productive meetings have been held.

The key focus of their interest is Hunter Street and how the MSCP will impact on the local highway network.

They are also keen to see the eastern section of Hunter Street treated in a different manner to the western end so that it will act as a visible marker for a change in priority/ use.

Highway Officers have suggested that the exit from Hunter Street (left turn radius) could be wider to enable a bus stop to be created on St Martin's Way in a southerly direction.

Biodiversity (Laura Hughes & Alun Evans)

Discussions have taken place with Laura Hughes and Alun Evans who have identified all new/updated legislation since the 2016 permission and are working with the team to direct how any new requirements can be appropriately addressed in the EIA addendum.

LLFA (Esther Goodship, Atkins)

Esther has attended meetings with Betts, Welsh -Water and the Environment Agency so that the best drainage solution may be found and agreed between all parties.

Civic Trust

The Civic Trust have expressed their support for the Council in bringing forward the Northgate development.

SPEN (Helen Settle & Steve Edwards)

Meetings have been held between the project team and SPEN.

Climate Change (George Ablett)

Numerous meetings have been held to discuss Climate Change. Details of Climate Change can be found within the submitted Supporting Planning Statement.

Landscape (John Seiler)

John is supportive of the approach being adopted by the development team and is keen to encourage the creation of a human context within this area of the city.

Welsh Water (Alaw Jones, Miriam Wasik-Evans & Henry Jones-Hughes)

Welsh Water are content that the new planning applications for Phase 1 can be submitted on the basis of the design that was agreed for the hybrid planning permission. They would seek for the planning conditions to be replicated directly onto any new planning permissions for the MSCP or the Section 73 amendments.

Historic England (Andrew Davison (sub-structure) & David James (super-structure))

Andrew is comforted that considerably more data is now available to inform the archaeological plane and is happy with how that information is being communicated in sectional form and 3-d modelling.

David is supportive of the changes proposed in super-structural design.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (Andy Hagan & Mark Abram)

Cheshire Fire and Rescue are promoting the introduction of sprinklers everywhere throughout the scheme.

Appendix III Design Panel Review Feedback

Cheshire West and Chester DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Dominic Manfredi AHR 5th Floor 55 Princess Street Manchester M2 4EW

Thursday 28th March 2019

Dear Clare, Judith, Dominic and Richard

We would like to thank you and the team for bringing the Chester Northgate development proposals to the Cheshire West and Chester Design Review Panel and for your detailed presentation at this pre-application stage.

The panel congratulate the council for their continued commitment to the Northgate scheme. It is a huge undertaking and the technical and economic issues are challenging but the panel is pleased the ethos of the approved masterplan is now being made real.

The panel are particularly encouraged by the collaborative approach developed between Cheshire West and Chester Council, the design team and the preferred contractor.

The following points are identified for the attention of the Project Team and the Local Authority, and we hope that these can be considered as the design details progress.

1) Architectural Approach and Localism

The panel would firstly like to say that the quality of information presented to the panel and for public consultation was exemplary. The computer generated imagery viewed, particularly of the proposed square were compelling. Likewise, images of the proposed market space.

The panel would also like to applaud the use of cross-sections to illustrate the scheme. It has helped the Design Review Panel to better understand the complexity of scheme in the short time available within the review session.

Questions were asked regarding the spatial quality of the market particularly as it is located under the main cinema box above. The panel feel that the design team have a good understanding on how keep the market hall bright and spacious. The continuous diagonal timber grid, which would control light, change, was a particularly good solution.

The panel did warn against the overall impression of the scheme in terms of form, and material feeling like a 1990's shopping area. Within the context of localism, the panel would suggest further thought on how the scheme can be adjusted to reflect the locality more creatively.

Cheshire West and Chester DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The panel consider that the least successful piece within the architectural arrangement is the cinema entrance. The entrance sequence to the cinema needs to be re-thought. Given this is where the main stair event is located overlooking the square and town hall there is a significant opportunity to create a distinctive experience linking new building, square and city centre together.

The panel is not convinced with the application of the curvy green on the car park. The vertical green walls are great but it comes across as a graphic image, rather than an architecturally designed building. The panel really like the green stuff but would like the design team to celebrate that it is a well-designed car park. Be brave!

2) Highways and Arrival Experience

The panel would recommend the preparation of a Transport Plan to further support decisions in respect of transport. In particular, the panel would highlight the need to ensure that vehicular and pedestrian priorities are reviewed on Hunter Street, to ensure that most of the traffic goes to the car park and not through to Storyhouse and beyond. A junction to the east of the car park entrance would help to address this.

The panel would also recommend the inclusion of a ramp down Princess Street to improve access for cyclists, buggies and mobility scooters. A review of the pinch point on the corner where the pavement narrows on St. Oswalds Way is also recommended.

3) Sustainability

The panel would strongly recommend the preparation of an energy and sustainability strategy, to clearly show the thinking behind the scheme's green credentials.

The developing narrative for cycle storage is really encouraged by the panel and thought should be given to ensure that additional facilities for cyclists, such as showers and associated facilities are built in to the scheme, to ensure full value for Chester's cycling residents.

4) The Public Realm and Green Facades

The panel are pleased to see the inclusion of a projection screen within the square. Given the orientation of the square the panel wondered if tree planting would help to bring life while also creating some urban heat island cooling to the square, making it a more pleasant environment to be in during the warmer summer months. Similarly public seating would provide a rest space. Perhaps a water feature would help to enliven the space further.

On the whole, the size, shape and feel of the new square appear right. The panel were particularly pleased to see how the market and cinema block has been pulled back to allow Storyhouse to also become an additional enclosure to the new square. There is the making of a very distinct Chester urban quarter which the panel are keen to see grow.

The panel would ask whether you can go further with the green facades and explore opportunities for passive cooling while also helping to create insect habitat, whilst being mindful of ongoing maintenance requirements.

Cheshire West and Chester DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Are there other examples in this climate zone that can provide a precedent for the specific requirements of the green wall that will need to be considered for the successful establishment and ongoing maintenance of this feature. Whole life cycle costs need to be considered at this design stage. Perhaps opportunities for roof gardens could be exploited to enhance the visitor experience within the Northgate development.

The panel aren't convinced that smaller pockets of green space within the first phase of the scheme will work.

Additionally, in terms of the arcade access the panel would like to see more investigation into to the extent of the demise over the first floor forming the ceiling to the arcade. Perhaps it could be extended to cover the whole width of the arcade?

In summary, the panel applaud the council's commitment to this scheme, the quality of ambition and the collaborative approach taken to develop the first phases of the Northgate Masterplan. The panel look forward to further engagement with the project team as the masterplan proposals progress.

On behalf of the Panel I would like to thank you again for your time and hope that the above comments are helpful in the review of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Timpson

Chairperson

Cheshire West and Chester Design Review Panel

Contact Details

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