

10 December 2014

Ordinary Council Meeting

William Hunter Way Consultation

Report of: *Philip Ruck, Contract and Corporate Projects Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** At the Extraordinary Council Meeting 7th April 2014, it was agreed that a consultation be carried out on the potential development of the William Hunter Way car park site.
- 1.2.** Since 7th April 2014 and before the issue of the consultation, the William Hunter Way Working Group (WHWWG) met on three occasions (14th July 2014: 4th August 2014: 11th August 2014). At all (and subsequent) meetings invitations were issued to all members. The meetings were also open meetings, where participation from residents was actively encouraged by the Chair and members of the WHWWG.
- 1.3.** The consultation was carried out between 1st September 2014 and 5th November 2014.
- 1.4.** 30,516 resident questionnaires and over 1,400 business questionnaires were issued either into homes, business addresses or via email.
- 1.5.** This report is based upon the receipt of 5,695 resident questionnaires and 106 business questionnaires returned to the council.
- 1.6.** Officers have been able to consolidate large elements of the raw data from the consultation, there are also over 5,000 rows of comments that have analysed and categorised into supporting themes.
- 1.7.** The attached paper (Appendix A) is the final report on the findings of the consultation and contains the full analysis of the data collected.
- 1.8.** Also attached to this report (Appendix E) is the approved (at Audit & Scrutiny meeting – November 2014) William Hunter Way Procurement Task and Finish Group report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To re-market the site for development using a refreshed development brief. The development brief to allow for the receipt of both capital and a regular income for the Council.**
- 2.2. That the Head of Planning for the Council prepares a refreshed development brief taking into account the outcome of the consultation exercise and this is brought back to Ordinary Council for approval.**
- 2.3. That a competitive tender be prepared and issued for the expert additional resources that will be required to deliver the project and provide assistance in the preparation of the development brief.**
- 2.4. Should the Ordinary Council subsequently approve the development brief then the following actions will be undertaken:**
 - I. That the governance of the project be determined by the Asset and Enterprise Committee who are to ensure that all key stakeholders are involved and that key Ward members are engaged and kept informed of the process.**
 - II. To ensure that the development is not prejudiced, the Brentwood Car Wash licence to occupy part of the site should not be renewed at expiry on the Licence Agreement on the 6 April 2015. The Licensee should be provided with appropriate notification, at least 3 months before the expiry date of the 6 April 2015 , to give them adequate notice to vacate the site.**
 - III. That negotiations between Barclays Bank and officers, in relation to the Car Park owned by Barclays Bank currently sited in the area of development, be concluded, subject to a maximum cost to the Council of £250,000 including legal costs**
 - IV. That members note that a maximum sum of £1.2 million has been earmarked within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15 – 2016/17 for this project.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1.** The Town Centre Renaissance Strategy (May 2010) contains the following statements:

.....to conserve the qualities of Brentwood Town Centre while enhancing and improving the negative aspects of the function and appearance of the town.

To create a vibrant town centre which balances the requirements of retail, residential, office and leisure uses around an efficient network of public transport and a high quality High Street

Following on from the success of the High Street improvement scheme a vision for the future development of William Hunter Way should be produced.....

- 3.2.** The above are a clear indication of the stated need to develop the William Hunter Way site. This is also supported by the priorities listed under “A Prosperous Borough” in the Brentwood Borough Council Corporate Plan 2013-2016

- 3.3.** The attached appendices will provide Members with the current status of the consultation:

Appendix A - The attached paper is the final report on the findings of the consultation

Appendix B – is the questionnaire issued to residents

Appendix C – is the questionnaire issued to businesses

Appendix D – is the “Approach to Consultation”

Appendix E – is the approved (at Audit & Scrutiny meeting – November 2014) William Hunter Way Procurement Task and Finish Group report

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

Appendix A, details the findings of the consultation. The main observations contained within the report are shown below. (These

comments are fully supported by the data contained within Appendix A and reflect the views of the respondents to the consultation).

4.1. Town Centre

- The Town Centre is well used by respondents and provides a well used resource for residents and shoppers.
- Visitors are drawn to the Town Centre for a broad variety of reasons but food retail, non-food retail and leisure provide the greatest attraction.
- The Town Centre is at its most visited during the daytime and on weekdays. The evening economy is less of a draw for respondents.
- The car dominates transport to the Town Centre, with walking a distant second. Public transport is less well used still.
- The Town Centre is afforded good transport access enjoyed by the majority of respondents.
- The vast majority of respondents stay in the Town Centre for short stay periods.

4.2. What would you like to see on the site

- Support for a cinema scores highest although it is noticeably weaker the closer respondents live to the site. Opinion is divided amongst those who agree to a larger car park, a supermarket, a fashion store and those who would like to change nothing. The groups had similar thoughts on that which they most strongly disagree to have on the site, new homes scored highest. Opinion was mixed again for the ranking of supermarkets, restaurants and a larger car park. Those in the immediate local region (ILR) show significant strong disagreement to a cinema.
- Opinion was divided on the provision of a supermarket on the William Hunter Way site. Whilst high end grocers were preferred by many, there was also strong support for a heavy discounter supermarket
- It is clear that a mix of retail facilities would be welcomed, particularly a department store and fashion.
- Brentwood benefits from a great number of eateries and bars. For any more to be welcome in the town, they should provide a different offering.
- An improved retail offer appeals to the majority of respondents to make them stay longer, with cheaper parking and improved leisure facilities other significant draws. Improved range of restaurants, pubs and cafes and improved public transport are less likely to make respondents stay longer.
- Whilst all respondent groups valued choice of shops, safety and local specialist shops, it's clear to see that the closer

respondents live to William Hunter Way, the less important they see a cinema and the more important they see the greener, pedestrian environment. Least important across all groups are late night shopping, outdoor events and restaurants.

4.3. Design Considerations

- The relationship with nearby homes and the height of the development are considered most important by more respondents in the Wider Local Residents and Immediate Local Residents groups. Whilst public access is also considered particularly important to those in the main respondents group. Next important across all groups is the overall size of the development (the bulk). Less important for the main group of respondents is the height of the development and the relationship with nearby homes, which is in contrast the local residents groups, which rank pedestrian linkages and public access as least important.
- Whilst the majority of respondents thought that the site should sympathetically reflect the Town Centre's existing architecture, a number questioned the architectural style of the Town Centre. This could be due to the mix of styles in the Town Centre, from medieval to 1960s.

4.4. Should the site be developed

- Whilst the majority of respondents in all groups do not believe the William Hunter Way site should remain a car park, it is clear those nearest the site are more inclined to think that it should remain a car park.

4.5. Does a cinema have to be on the site?

- This result was incredibly evenly split amongst respondents. Echoing earlier results, those closest to the site are less likely to want a cinema to be on the William Hunter Way Site.
- With the exception of a cinema, there were very few negative views given specifically to providing leisure and entertainment facilities in the town and the William Hunter Way site.
- Many commented that such leisure facilities would be particularly welcome for children and young people, as well as adults, and would not necessitate travel to Chelmsford, Basildon or Romford

4.6. Parking and Transport

- It is clear that any development on the William Hunter Way site will require considerable parking provision, including during construction.
- Although not mentioned by any of the respondents, the loss of revenue for the Council from car parking whilst in the

construction phase of any proposal for the William Hunter Way site would have to be factored in with any developers

- Any development would need to take into account an increase in traffic. Adequate public transport would also be required, not least in the evening if a cinema, bowling or restaurants were including in the offering

4.7. Safety

- Whilst recent statistics show that crime is decreasing in the Borough, it is clear that fear of crime is of concern to respondents

4.8. Housing

- Any plans for housing would need to be considered and linked in to the Local Development Plan.

4.9. Impacts

- It is certain that any development in the town or in William Hunter Way would impact upon the population, most notably those living close by, but also those who visit Brentwood for shopping or leisure. Opinion is divided amongst those who feel development to be an opportunity and those wish Brentwood to retain a more traditional market feel

4.10. General Comments

- The way in which respondents would like to be informed of developments spans a variety of media. When planning future communications, consideration should be given to employing a number of different methods
- Although the majority of respondent did say that they wished to be included in future consultation on the Town Centre and William Hunter, it is suspected that some respondents simply did not wish to provide their personal details.
- Although Brentwood residents were the target group for consultation, a number of respondents came from outside the Borough
- A greater proportion of respondents were female.
- The consultation reached a good spread of age groups from those aged 26 and over. Those aged under 25 were less well represented in the consultation
- Disabled respondents were well represented in this consultation

5. Reasons for Recommendation

The recommendations provide for regeneration impacts and supports the development of the site. One desired outcome being both an injection of capital and a regular income stream.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1. The William Hunter Way scheme supports the Prosperous Borough theme within the Corporate plan – in particular the following key priority

.....Promote a mixed economic base across the Borough, maximising opportunities in the town centres for retail and a balanced night time economy.....

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland – Acting Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312712 / Jo-Anne.Ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1. Members to note that a maximum sum of £1.2 million has been earmarked within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15 – 2016/17 for this project. This budget will be used to finance the external project support requirements outlined in the recommendations.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312860/Christopher.Potter@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.2. Should Members wish to proceed with the project, then the expert additional resources needed for the project and development brief must be the subject of a proper procurement process to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the Council's agreed and laid down procedures set out in the Council's publically available Constitution. Failure to follow due process would open the Council to risk of legal challenge.

8. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - is the final report on the findings of the consultation

Appendix B – is the questionnaire issued to residents

Appendix c – is the questionnaire issued to businesses

Appendix D – is the “Approach to Consultation”

Appendix E – is the approved (at Audit & Scrutiny meeting – November 2014) William Hunter Way Procurement Task and Finish Group report

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