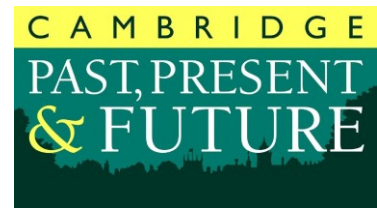


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By email to:

CambridgeMarketSquareProject@cambridge.gov.uk

Sarah.French@cambridge.gov.uk

29/07/2021

Dear Sarah

Cambridge Market Square Project. Proposed Vision and Concept Design - Public Consultation

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxton Watermill.

CambridgePPF has been pressing for improvements to the Market Square since a group of our members carried out an English Heritage Placecheck in 2013, which reminded our team what they love about the square – a vibrant and rewarding place to linger. But they were also struck by how much better it could become in terms of its contribution to the daytime and night-time economies, and in its aesthetic appeal. It was also clear that basic improvements were needed for market traders.

CambridgePPF is supportive in principle of improvements to the square, and we are glad to see the project moving forward. Below we have responded to some of the questions you have asked as part of the consultation, as well as other comments that we would like to make.

Why do you visit the square/likes/dislikes

A selective survey is an odd way to gather this information, which would be better gathered through an observational or site-based survey. We assume the question is intended to identify whether we are a shopper, stallholder, etc. We are responding as a civic society.

In terms of the general uses of, and value of, local markets, this is very well evidenced in "Markets Matter: Reviewing the evidence & detecting the market effect" by Professor Alan Hallsworth, Nikos Ntounis, Professor Cathy Parker and Simon Quin from the Institute of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University (2015). We support the conclusions of this work. We have previously supplied a copy to Joel Carre and attach it again with this response. We would also like to draw your attention to another 2015 report, by

Sara Gonzalez and Gloria Dawson “Traditional Markets under threat: why it’s happening and what traders and customers can do” (a copy is attached with our response).

In terms of what we like about the square:

- **Historic Environment and Heritage:** Grade II fountain base, 19th century railings, the setts, overlooked by listed buildings including two Grade I (ref. Historic Core Appraisal's Market Hill street analysis (also see comments later).
- **Mixed Use:** The historic centre remains a residential area alongside retail and office. (ref. Market Square Feasibility Assessment, 4.2, p. 29
- **Sustainability and Climate Change:** Supporting independent traders for locally produced goods and services which can be easily accessed.
- **Social:** the informal encounters in the market square contribute to a sense of community and friendliness.
- **Sensory:** The sound of music emanating from Great St Mary’s and the sound of clock chimes from nearby churches and colleges.
- **Visual:** The brightly coloured market stalls. In particular the view of them from Great St Mary’s Tower.

In terms of what we dislike about the square:

- **Visual:** the waste/toilet/stand-pipe area is unattractive and unhygienic.
- **Social:** that at least some of the square can’t be enjoyed or used outside of market hours – and indeed that it is unsafe and unattractive outside of market hours. The road around the market is an underused space “no man’s land”.
- **Operational:** there is a lack of seating, especially for users of fast-food which means the fountain is a defacto bench, as are the kerbs around the market. People crowding around the fountain to eat, which is adjacent to the bins, further detracts from the character and ambience.
- **Operational:** cleansing and hygiene as a result of take-away food stalls. Including their proximity to stalls selling dry goods.
- **Operational:** the uneven setts make it difficult to use for people with limited mobility and also to clean [Note that we value the heritage of the setts and we would want to see them retained in a way that can also resolve some of the problems].
- **Operational:** the water tap is a disgrace. At a time when public bodies like the Council are trying to encourage the use of re-usable bottles and also provide a free drink for those on low incomes, this is a missed opportunity.

Pedestrianisation

CambridgePPF supports pedestrianisation in the centre of Cambridge providing cyclists can park nearby and cross-city cycle routes are developed – and that access is maintained for people with limited mobility. The significant population growth planned for Cambridge means that in future it will not be able to safely accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists in areas such as the Market Square. We raised this issue with the Greater Cambridge Partnership and County Cycle team over two years ago but have seen little evidence of any progress. Any pedestrianisation of the Market Square must be part of a wider plan to address this challenge, which falls within the briefs of both the Making Space for People Project and the GCP’s City Access work.

Proposed Vision and Concept Design

CambridgePPF supports the following:

- the reorientation of the layout design of the market to enable key views of listed buildings and orientation towards the sun and reduce the wind channel (however please see our comment below regarding orientation to the sun)
- the removal of the waste disposal unit and street clutter
- the provision of toilets and water supplies
- the considerable infrastructure improvements which need to be made in relation to drainage and water provision (Feasibility Study 4.17 page 54)

CambridgePPF has concerns regarding:

- the practicalities of regular large-scale events due to impact on market traders, vehicle movements, noise/disturbance to residents – which seem at odds with other aspects of the vision.

Demountable Stalls

CambridgePPF welcomes that the Council has provided an opportunity to view the demountable stalls and that a trial of these will take place.

Whether the stalls are satisfactory for stall-holders is a matter for them (and one of great importance for the future of the market) and we encourage the Council to continue to work with them to trial and find a demountable system that is acceptable. This includes whether they are sturdy enough and how easy they are to demount, store and assemble. There has not been information provided as to who would be responsible for demount, store and assemble and it is important that this be clarified (if it is to be the responsibility of council workers then it is they who need to take a view on their functionality).

As well as creating space for use outside of normal market hours, demountable stalls could also help to address cleansing/hygiene issues and also avoid “vacant” spaces when there are not enough traders.

It seems that some of the stallholders require sturdier stalls than others and some of the traders are more permanent than others. We would raise a question as to whether all the stalls in the market need to be demountable for the types of events/activities that are envisaged? If it is not intended to clear the entire square for events, then could the future market be a mix of demountable stalls and sturdy permanent stalls? With careful planning it should be possible to achieve use of space in such a way to release a substantial amount of extra territory by dismantling only the stalls of the occasional users.

Prioritise works depending on budget

1. New underground waste, improved toilets
2. New surface treatment (note that major infrastructure work required below ground to rectify drainage and water supply, electric, service provision)
3. Improved market layout
4. Public seating
5. Demountable stalls

Evening events

CambridgePPF supports the ability to use the space outside of normal market hours providing that this can be achieved without a detrimental impact on the existing market.

We envisage this as night stalls or making use of small areas of the market for evening dining/drinking/café culture, plus occasional use for larger community events. The square does not lend itself to large scale events due to its small size, the proximity to residential properties, the public access required around it and because the market operates 7-days per week. The vision is unclear about the scale, nature and frequency of events

and this has led some people to believe that the stalls will be dismantled every day and/or that there will be large scale entertainment taking place causing disturbance to residents and other users of the city centre, something which CambridgePPF would find it difficult to support.

It is unclear whether the intention is that the entirety of the square is used as an events space or only part of it. We can see that it would be practical to dismantle a number of stalls close to the guildhall in order to increase the space available for community events such as evening cinema or theatre, but for large scale events it is difficult for us to see how the market can operate to normal hours (including packing down) and then be dismantled and a crew arrive to set up staging, lighting, etc for a large scale event in time for people to arrive at say 7.30pm. Even if it might be possible, the high costs and risks of such a rapid turn-around may make such events unviable.

We recommend that the intended use is clarified for the business plan and the next stage of the project – this would need to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve events use without detrimental impact on the existing market.

Other Comments

Design feedback – impacts of sun due to revised orientation

The proposed reorientation of the market stalls from North-South to East-West will mean that some stalls are always in sun and some always in shade, where the present arrangement gives every stall some of both. The proposals could make things very difficult for sellers of items that are vulnerable to heat/sun. We are not aware if this is an issue that has been considered as part of the design process?

Two possible solutions: one is through stall management so that traders with items that are vulnerable to heat/sun could be located in shade, but this assumes there are a sufficient number of shady stalls to meet demand. The other solution could be to retain the North-South layout for the stalls but still provide a central space that is oriented East-West.

Design feedback – Anti-Social Behaviour

Whilst we support the creation of seating and dwell areas within the design there is a risk that during the evening this could attract street drinkers or other anti-social behaviour on evenings when there are no events or evening market activity. We appreciate that the design and lighting is intended to make the central area visible, but will this alone be effective? We are particularly concerned by the triangular seating area which would be more hidden.

It would be wise for the Council to consider what is the Plan B if the design alone is not sufficient to prevent this becoming a problem.

Design feedback – Smart furniture & Display Screens

Our experience of smart street furniture is that it will break down at some point and cash strapped Councils do not prioritise the maintenance of these in the same way as the operators of commercial spaces do. Our public spaces are increasingly cluttered by items which either do not function or which no-one uses. We would prefer to see a focus on high quality, attractive, durable items that are easy and cost effective to maintain.

There is a digital display screen outside Cambridge Station, the footfall is huge, but we have never seen anyone using it. In our view this technology is redundant because people use smartphones to access the information they need. It is redundant street clutter. Investment would be better made in the market's online presence.

Design feedback – Seating

One of the problems with the current market is the cleanliness/hygiene. Therefore, the new market needs to be designed in a way that will facilitate improved cleaning. We question whether the suggested shape and layout of the granite seating lends itself to this? Are there examples of this type of seating in use in similar environments, if so what is the feedback in relation to cleansing?

We appreciate that the design layouts for seating are only indicative but would highlight the need to avoid these becoming a barrier for some people with limited mobility.

We are pleased to see the proposals for more seating both within and around the market but we are concerned that Peas Hill and Guildhall Street have been neglected by this project and look destined to become cycle parks. Is that really the city centre public realm Cambridge wants? We know there is a bigger issue of cycle parking in the city centre, and this is outside the scope of this project and will be addressed through the People & Movement SPD and GCP City Access Project but as both have stalled it feels like some of the decisions relating to the Market Square are now taking place in a vacuum.

Design feedback – appearance of stalls

CambridgePPF is not opposed in principle to a review and refresh of the colours used for the market stalls, but their bold bright wide stripes have become somewhat iconic, and they provide visual texture for the historic buildings. We are not convinced that the softer palette of colours that is suggested in the designs is an improvement. If it isn't broken, then why fix it? Please can the existing palette/character be reproduced or enhanced (on either the existing or new stalls)?

Historic Environment and Heritage

CambridgePPF is supportive of the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal's Market Hill Street Analysis (<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1520/historic-core-appraisal-2016-market-hill.pdf>) which has been the subject of public consultation and formally approved by the Council. The Council's Market Square web page says under "Stage 3: Detailed Design" that "The [Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal](#) will inform any detailed design assessment". We are also aware that the Council is updating its historic core management plan, which CambridgePPF is also very supportive of.

Sustaining a market during any improvement works

During the feasibility work that CambridgePPF carried out, we identified that one of the major barriers for this project is the ability to sustain the market during any improvement works. An alternative area will be needed which is in the city centre, where there is limited space. Numerous times through this project we have asked the Council to say how they will address this problem, but we have not yet seen any solutions proposed. It is important that this problem is addressed in the next stage of the project and that solutions are discussed and agreed with traders, as well as other users of the city centre.

Surrounding Buildings & Streets

It would be fantastic if this project could also consider improvements to some of the surrounding buildings and streets.

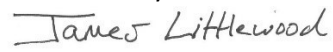
Process & Stakeholder Group

When this project was conceived it was envisaged that a stakeholder group would be formed to help advise the project team. This would have included representatives from the market traders, Cambridge BID, University, disability, etc as well as community groups such as CambridgePPF. A decision was made not to form this advisory group, we understand due to the large number of stakeholders who might have wished to be involved. In hindsight, it seems to us that such a group would have raised some of the issues that are now being debated very publicly and it would have ensured that these issues were considered earlier in the

process. This project still has a way to go, and we would ask the Council to reconsider whether a stakeholder advisory group could be of benefit to this project.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration when progressing this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Littlewood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the first letter of the first name.

James Littlewood

Chief Executive