

Minutes

Civic Quarter Liaison Group

Date: Tuesday 16 July 2025

Time: 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Location: Guildhall and MS Teams

Chair: Ben Binns (BB), Assistant Director of Development (in place of Cllr Rosy Moore, who sent apologies)

Attendees:

A list of attendees who provided their name and organisation is included as an Appendix.

Elected Members Present in Room or Online:

- Cllr Simon Smith
- Cllr Katie Porrer
- Cllr Tim Bick
- Cllr Naomi Bennett
- Cllr Richard Swift
- Cllr Simon Smith

Cambridge City Council representatives:

- Ben Binns – Assistant Director of Development (Chair)
- Tom Conlon – Senior Development Manager – Civic Quarter
- Paul Boucher – Project Manager

Design and Engagement Team:

- Richard Griffiths – Cartwright Pickard
- Louise Bradley – ECF (online)

Introduction: BB welcomed attendees and noted he was chairing in place of Cllr Rosy Moore. The purpose of the session was to provide headline feedback from the second round of engagement and to open the floor to questions. Louise Bradley then presented the headline findings from the engagement session.

Questions and Responses:

- **Clarity on Consultation Data:** Multiple attendees asked for detailed statistics rather than references to "broad support." LB reaffirmed the headline findings had been presented only and confirmed the full report (due in August) will include quantitative survey results, coded qualitative responses from the survey, and other detailed responses from stakeholders.

- **Demountable Stalls:** Attendees, including John and Kati Preston and some traders, raised strong objections to the demountable stalls. Concerns focused on poor stability, unsuitability for weather, and lack of security. LB confirmed that this feedback was well represented in the trader section of the consultation report. Tom Conlon added that design discussions especially in relation to demountable stalls are ongoing and that one-to-one engagement with traders will continue into September.
- **Storage and Transition Logistics:** Jocelynn Scutt queried how evening events and demountable stall storage would function, given traders often pack up as late as 6:00pm. BB responded that the Council is developing operational solutions, including possible additional staffing, and is committed to designs that maintain flexibility for the market while allowing alternative use of the space in evenings.
- **Guildhall Chamber Heritage Concerns:** Multiple speakers, including Cllrs Tim Bick, Cllr Richard Swift and Jocelynn Scutt raised strong concerns over proposed changes to the Guildhall Chamber. They stressed the historical significance of the space and its furniture. While 55% of survey respondents supported a more flexible layout, several attendees opposed any redesign that would compromise its heritage character. Richard Griffiths confirmed the Chamber's listed status is fully recognised and that the aim is to balance flexibility, accessibility, and heritage. Tom Conlon acknowledged the need for further discussion.
- **Cycle Parking and Active Travel:** Josh Grantham from Camcycle expressed disappointment that no significant commitments to cycle parking were visible in the consultation materials. He noted reduced provision in some areas and called for clarity on locations and secure facilities. Richard Griffiths assured attendees that final cycle parking numbers would match or exceed current provision and be refined through design development and stakeholder engagement.
- **Coordination with Other City Developments:** Wendy Blythe asked how the Civic Quarter relates to other city and university projects, including the local plan and initiatives like Project Agora. BB explained the Civic Quarter is a City Council-led project. While the design team engages with stakeholders such as colleges and developers, the project remains under Council control, coordinated through local planning policy.
- **Tourist Information Centre (TIC):** Cllr Naomi Bennett read a statement from the manager at the TIC who expressed concern about their future in the Guildhall, a lack of communication, and uncertainty regarding the TIC's inclusion in redevelopment plans. TC clarified that the TIC is a subtenant of Allia and that the project team has monthly meetings with Allia. The Project Team have met the TIC in the past and are happy to speak directly with the TIC management to discuss the questions raised.
- **Decanting Market Traders:** John Preston asked how the Council intends to maintain trade during redevelopment. BB confirmed the Council is exploring ways to decant traders as close as possible to the current site. This work includes identifying necessary infrastructure and ensuring accessibility.

- **Public Realm and Tree Locations:** Concerns were raised about the placement of new trees potentially obstructing servicing and access routes, especially at the rear of the Guildhall. BB acknowledged the feedback and said tree locations are indicative and subject to revision.
- **Use of Guildhall Large and Small Halls:** John Preston also questioned why these spaces weren't considered for public uses currently proposed for the Chamber. BB confirmed these spaces are included in the design work, with upgrades to fabric, cloakrooms, and kitchens to support events and conferencing.
- **Perception of Market Removal and Cultural Value:** Glenys Self and Ruth Lambert raised strong objections to the perception that the market may be removed or downgraded. Concerns included loss of intangible heritage and the need to showcase local produce rather than hot food. BB reiterated that the current designs retain the same square trading meterage as today and that the Council is committed to a seven-day-a-week market.

Next Steps:

- Full consultation report to be published in August.
- Feedback will be used to inform final designs.
- Cabinet decision expected 25 September.
- Next liaison meeting will coincide with publication of the Cabinet report.

Appendix – Attendees:

List based on MS Teams attendance and in-person participants (excluding unidentified):

- Louise Bradley
- Darren Tarrant
- Daphne Lott
- John Preston
- Kati Preston
- Cllr Simon Smith
- Cllr Naomi Bennett
- Victoria Beechey
- Josh Grantham
- Mark Taylor
- Ruth Lambert
- Professor Tony Watts
- Amanda Nilsson (External)
- J Cheney (Unverified)
- Alistair Wilson
- Sarah Nicholas (External)
- Maria Manion (External)
- Karen Arrandale (Unverified)
- Navin Sankersingh (External)
- Josh (Unverified)
- Simon Stoddart (External)

- John (Unverified)
- Clare Garner
- N Dickerson

In person attendance

- John Preston
- Kati Preston
- Gaynor Mear
- Karen Colbert
- Paul Colbert
- Martin MacWhinnie
- Josh Grantham
- Anna Williams
- Wendy Blythe
- Glenys Self
- Jocelynne Scutt
- Zoe Hardinge
- Henry Hardinge
- Cllr Richard Swift
- Cllr Katie Porrer
- Cllr Tim Bick
- Glenys Self

Addendum Added 31st July 2025

The following point raised in the meeting was left off the notes in error.

Accessibility: The Council Access Officer raised concerns about poor accessibility across the Market Square due to cobbled surfaces, questioning why the setts were not mentioned in the engagement feedback headlines, and also questioned the effectiveness and popularity of the proposed platform lift on the Guildhall. LB clarified that feedback on the setts and level surfaces was received and is reflected in the report, with a preference noted for smoother and wider surfaces. She also stated that survey views on the platform lift were mixed, with 34% supporting it and 47% unsure, and that additional engagement with stakeholders, including the Access Officer, has been fed into the final report.