

**PRINCES STREET/GEORGE STREET
URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK AND MASTERPLAN
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the responses to the draft Urban Design Framework and Masterplan for the Princes Street/George Street area and to consider the Council's response. A revised document is recommended for adoption as Interim Planning Guidance (IPG).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Urban Design Framework amplifies the advice provided in earlier documents relating to the disposal and re-development of the County Council-owned land in the Princes Street area, notably the 'Development Guidelines' adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in July 2002. The Framework provides more specific guidance on matters relating to site analysis, promotes high quality design and provides options for re-development in the form of a phased Masterplan.
- 2.2 The adoption of the Framework and Masterplan as IPG is an important step towards achieving the most appropriate form of re-development for this important town centre site and it will ensure that forthcoming schemes will be of a high architectural and urban design quality.
- 2.3 The draft document was approved for a period of public consultation on 6th May 2004. As part of the consultation exercise, a public exhibition was held over a 3 day period in the Commemoration Hall in July 2004. Over 200 members of the public attended and 58 questionnaire responses were received. The exhibition material was also displayed in Huntingdon library. A notice was published in the Hunts Post and residents and businesses in the immediate area were informed of the proposals by a leaflet delivered to each premises. In addition, formal consultation with the statutory agencies and the Town Council was undertaken.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 Over 125 written responses were received from statutory agencies, local organisations, businesses and members of the public. A summary of the respondents is contained within Annex 1. Many responses have expressed positive interest in the benefits of developing the town centre but a number of significant concerns have also been raised. A full summary of comments received is presented in Annex 2 and 3. A summary of questionnaire responses received at the public exhibition is provided in Annex 4.

- 3.2 The most significant concerns relate to issues of parking, building height, tree loss and the impact of development on the historic character of the area. Both these and the other concerns expressed have been fully considered and addressed either in the form of amendments to the document or, where amendments are not considered appropriate, in the form of a reasoned response.
- 3.3 The issue of the bus station arose in responses received. It is interesting to note that despite the number of written objections to its relocation, a greater number of questionnaire responses favoured its relocation and the re-development of the site.
- 3.4 If the proposed responses and amendments contained within Annex 2 and 3 are acceptable to Cabinet, they will then be incorporated into the revised, adopted document.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That the Cabinet considers the responses to comments presented in Annex 2 and 3 and agrees to adopt the revised Urban Design Framework and Masterplan, incorporating the specified changes, as Interim Planning Guidance.
- 4.2 That any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations that are necessary as a result of these changes be delegated to the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft Princes Street/George Street Urban Design Framework and Masterplan
Report to Cabinet 6th May 2004
Civic Trust Regeneration Unit 'Huntingdon Town Centre: A Vision and Strategy for Growth and Quality' 2000
John Martin Associates 'A Vision for Re-development Part 1: Context and Part 2: Development Guidelines' 2002

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