

15th February 2013

Indoor Market Proposals consultation

Dear Peter,

1. I am writing as chair of, and on behalf of, the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission to respond to the presentation we received on 6th February on your proposals to redevelop the indoor market.
2. On behalf of the Commission I'd like to thank you for coming to the meeting and answering a number of points raised during what I thought was a thoughtful and balanced debate on the proposals.
3. I would also like to pass the thanks of the Commission to Nigel Stephenson and Adam Parker, of Greig and Stephenson, who were very helpful both in the way they presented the information, and the detailed and courteous way in which they responded to questions from members of the Commission.
4. I would like to take issues relating to the development under the following headings.

Time scale

5. We noted the comparatively short time scale involved in this development. Nigel Stephenson referred to the submission of a planning application on, hopefully, 1st March following the end of consultations on 22nd February. At the meeting he said the design was constantly changing in response to consultations, and cited the realignment of the wall line of the new development to reflect the line of the Corn Exchange.
6. This is a significant design amendment, and we note that there will be further negotiations with consultees, including English Heritage, after which further design changes might take place. *A lesson learnt from the Curve project and applied successfully to the Phoenix development was to ensure costs did not go out of control because of design issues (complexity of design, cost of materials, changes to design during the construction phase).*
7. It would be reassuring to know that the design will be signed off and costs agreed before contracts are let and construction work begins. However, the timetable does acknowledge the urgent need to redevelop the current indoor market which a previous scrutiny task group review noted was no longer fit for purpose. To that extent we welcome the speed at which the project is proceeding.

Design

8. You will have heard that the Commission welcomed the spirit and scale of the design, and in particular the efforts made to embed the new building into the environment both of the existing covered market and the adjacent Corn Exchange.
9. The spatial and materials relationship with the Corn Exchange building is clearly important and a still-developing element of the design. We welcome the willingness of the architects and the council to negotiate with English Heritage (EH).
10. While recognising that both sides may be able to negotiate further, we also recognise that E.H. is a consultee rather than an agency with overall responsibility and powers to direct a project, and also recognise that a wide range of consultations with many interested parties are and have been taking place.
11. The Commission welcomed the choice of materials proposed, and the sustainable nature of the design, both in terms of building elements and the energy-efficient nature of the proposed hall. The “bold nature” of the architecture was also welcomed by members of the Commission.
12. The Commission welcomed the open nature of the proposed space, which is a common feature of traditional covered markets. The Commission noted the like-for-like space in respect of the new building and the existing covered market.
13. It also accepted the premise that construction of the new market in the proposed location would be the best and most cost-effective solution for existing traders who will not be required to make the two moves, with associated disruption, that building a temporary hall would involve.

Consultation

14. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to comment on the proposals and notes the wide range of consultees who have already responded. In particular it was important to be in continuing touch with market traders and users of the market to obtain their views and keep them informed.
15. I hope this comment from the Scrutiny Commission is of assistance in the process.

Yours sincerely

Sue Waddington

Chair of the Economic Development Culture and Tourism Scrutiny
Commission