

A VISION FOR SALISBURY

***SUMMARY REPORT
OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT***

BDOR Limited
***For Salisbury District Council, Wiltshire County
Council and the South West Regional
Development Agency***

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 During the development of the Vision for Salisbury project (up to the end of 2006) there was a full and varied programme of consultation (or community involvement). In order to support and hopefully justify the emerging Preferred Option for the Vision it has been necessary to keep a thorough record – an audit trail – from the very start of the project. This report and the accompanying File/CD describe that audit trail by covering what took place, the background to it, the results and the relationship between the results and the final framework. This part of the report also includes a summary evaluation of the process undertaken.

1.2 The Report of Community Involvement is in two parts. This part sets the scene and describes the process in broad terms, focusing on the overall pattern of work, the main activities and the flow from initial issues to the final proposals. It is backed up by the second part, a 'Full File' (and CD) that contains specific and full reports from workshops, actual results from exhibitions, details of publicity and the website, ad hoc responses etc. This is all the verbatim, raw material to which this part is the Summary.

1.3 This report was put together by Jeff Bishop of BDOR Limited. Jeff was appointed by the project clients as part of the consultancy team led by Gillespies. Although he (and his colleague Carolyne Haynes) worked fully as part of the project team, this report is presented independently and the opinions expressed in its later evaluation sections are those of BDOR alone.

1.4 Where links are made to items in the Full File they are shown as follows: **ITEM X**. The Full File also contains a folder entitled 'Miscellaneous'. This contains items such as invitations to events that support the main information in the file.

1.5 This report relates to community involvement work only up to completion of the project team's initial contract. It therefore excludes any later, more formal consultation on the preferred option. If this work proceeds it will be reported on separately to form a supplement to this report. It should also be noted that (a) this stage of the work will contribute directly to the Salisbury Area Action Plan and (b) parallel Sustainability Appraisal work was undertaken that included consultation with statutory consultees (English Heritage etc.)

2. GETTING STARTED

2.1 INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

2.1.1 The original brief for this project was received from a partnership of Salisbury District Council (SDC), Wiltshire County Council (WCC) and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). That brief made several mentions of community involvement and its importance to successful project delivery, but did not lay down any process or specific principles or methods.

2.1.2 The brief also mentioned that the Area Development Framework (ADF) as requested in the brief should be developed in such a way that it could form part, or the first stages, of an Area Action Plan. It became clear later that the Area Action Plan (AAP) had been included in the District Council's approved Local Development Scheme as part of the Local Development Framework, but covering all of Salisbury, not just the city centre area to which the ADF was (mainly) to relate.

2.1.3 Although there were, throughout the project, some uncertainties about how exactly the centre-focused Area Development Framework would link with the proposed Salisbury-wide Area Action Plan, the approach taken by the team as a whole, including for the community involvement work, was to make everything as 'AAP-compliant' as reasonably possible within the scope, timetable and budget of the ADF project. The aim was to try to ensure that work would not have to be repeated or done afresh when the wider AAP work was started.

2.1.4 By linking the ADF into LDF and AAP work it became essential to consider the approach to community involvement in relation to the new planning system. This was achieved by referring to the (then) Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) produced by SDC. As will be seen, efforts were made at the outset to ensure that the consultation process would meet the standards set in the Draft SCI and that was borne in mind throughout the process. (Key standards are highlighted in the later 'Evaluation of the Process' section.) The Draft SCI is in the Full File as **ITEM 1**.

2.1.5 Since the work started, greater emphasis has been placed at national level on linking AAP type work to the aims and action plans within any Community Strategy – which includes related consultation. This came late to the ADF project so it was not possible to make strong connections, although the existing Community Plan for Salisbury area was used for initial project briefing. There are also some other principles and standards of consultation in operation across Wiltshire as expressed through the Wiltshire Compact. Efforts were made to also conform as far as possible to these standards. (As above, see the later Evaluation section.)

2.2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

2.2.1 The main consultation work was undertaken by Jeff Bishop of BDOR Limited with support in general and on specific issues from Carolyne Haynes. Jeff attended almost all team meetings, client/team meetings and meetings of the Steering Group (see below).

2.2.2 BDOR's work was reinforced and diversified by a considerable and very positive amount of support from SDC's Marketing, Economic development and Tourism team, notably Graham Gould and Claire Mawson. They took the lead on press and public relations, on advertising and promotion and on creating and managing the project website. There was, throughout, a very close working relationship which added real value to the core consultation activities.

2.3 Steering Group

2.3.1 As well as the more internal Team/Client group meetings, SDC also chose to establish what was called a 'Steering Group' for the project. The group met regularly and was very valuable in helping to guide not just the technical work but also the consultation.

2.3.2 The Full File contains a list of Steering Group members (*ITEM 2*) and Minutes of their meetings (*ITEM 3*).

2.4 PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME

2.4.1 Although the tendering process required submission of an initial proposal for consultation, it was argued that, to follow good practice principles, the initial proposal should be discussed and agreed with some local 'key actors'. There were also issues of roles and budget to be clarified, all of which could possibly require amendments.

2.4.2 A meeting was held with several SDC officers, including the Consultation Coordinator and planning officers, at which an already revised programme was presented, discussed, amended and then agreed. That programme was then shared with the Steering Group.

2.4.3 The agreed programme is in the Full File (*ITEM 4*). It is important to remember that this is as anticipated at the outset. Apart from the addition of E1 (the first Drop-in), the delivered programme was in fact little different. The main stages and activities actually undertaken correspond to the sections in 'Main Activities and Tasks' that follows shortly.

2.4.4. Please note that this programme goes up to but does not include any more formal consultation on the preferred option.

2.5 Previous Consultation

2.5.1 One of the first requests by the project team when they started was to access previous reports, studies, plans etc. that might inform the ADF work. That included a request to see information about and results from any recent consultation initiatives that might have affected the city centre. Although some were made available (*ITEM 5* in the Full File) they did not focus in enough on the scope and nature of the ADF work to be particularly useful.

2.6 Database

2.6.1 An important early task was the preparation of an appropriate database. The Planning Regulations are very explicit and detailed about who must be consulted at various stages in the preparation of any Development Plan Document. In order to be as AAP-compliant as possible, the initial database was developed with the Regulations in mind using information supplied mainly by SDC and assumed to be complete.

2.6.2 What became apparent very quickly however was that many of those one might wish to see in an AAP database were either not listed or could sensibly be considered inappropriate for this stage on this particular project. The final database was therefore very pragmatic but it is not thought that this will create any major problems later in the full AAP context.

2.6.3 The database is in the Full File as *ITEM 6*. As well as listing those contacted in general, it highlights who was invited to and who attended specific events.

3. MAIN ACTIVITIES AND STAGES

3.1 ONGOING ACTIVITIES

3.1.1 As well as events taking place at a particular time, there were a number of regular or ongoing consultation and related activities. They are all different so are covered separately below.

3.2 Website and Newsletter

3.2.1 The project brief did not include for Public Relations and Communications work – as the team pointed out. This remit was picked up by the SDC team (see also next sub section).

3.2.2 One of the first activities was to set up a Vision website linked to the main SDC site. It did not get established, however, until some of the initial work had been completed. To begin with, the site served only to promote the project and raise awareness of it. Once information became available about forthcoming or completed events and consultation opportunities it was used to host short and full reports of those events. The website also hosted the main options questionnaire (see later), providing people who had been at the exhibition – or, more especially, those who had been unable to attend – to give their views electronically.

3.2.3 The Full File contains some illustrative pages from the website. **ITEM 7.**

3.3 PR work

3.3.1 This work was also undertaken or directed mainly by the SDC Marketing, Economic Development and Tourism team working closely with BDOR.

3.3.2 There were several planned occasions when proactive press and media contacts were undertaken, in particular to promote consultation events. There were also a few other occasions where more reactive work was needed as local issues (for example the possible new Council offices) gained public profile and suggested links to the Vision.

3.2.3 The SDC team also ensured good links with all others in SDC and gave considerable help in advertising and staffing events such as the options exhibition. The team's other significant contribution was in promoting the additional workshops with officers and others that are described more fully later.

3.2.4 The Full File contains a selection of Press Releases etc. **ITEM 8.**

3.4 Ad hoc Meetings

3.4.1 In order to advance their more technical work, different members of the project team occasionally needed to (or were asked to) meet with others clearly from outside the narrow circle of clients and their direct representatives. These meetings were, for example, with the Civic Society and Cathedral managers and with potential developers.

3.4.2 In most cases minutes were kept and, where possible, those minutes were shared and agreed between all present. The Full File contains all this material. **ITEM 9.**

3.5 Ad hoc Letters etc.

3.5.1 In addition to responses and contributions received directly from the events and activities arranged by the team, a large number of ad hoc emails, letters, reports etc. were

received either by the consultation team or members of the technical team. As appropriate, responses were sent. Some were not in a form requiring a response.

3.5.2 Although strictly ad hoc and inevitably inconsistent, all this material has been drawn upon in reaching the final conclusions of the project.

3.5.3 The Full File contains key correspondence and, where appropriate, responses given by the consultation or technical team. **ITEM 10.**

3.6 Studies Undertaken by Others

3.6.1 While the project team was working on the issues for the project, some other studies were underway affecting both the project's issues and its area of focus – the city centre. The results of some, notably those initiated by SDC (for example on open space), were potentially of relevance but none had reached completion in an appropriate timeframe for them to inform the Vision project outcomes. None of these other studies had a significant element of consultation that could have influenced the work described herein.

3.6.2 The one study that was completed, and its results used, was of shopper attitudes to the retail offer of the town centre. That was done through an on-the-street sample and interview method. There has been no feedback suggesting that this raised any concerns for people about the Vision project. The results are regarded as technical so are not included here.

3.7 Outreach

3.7.1 The need to 'outreach' to some key, often omitted or perhaps 'hard-to-reach' groups was not identified in the brief. The appointed team mentioned this in their tender, however. Some resources were attributed to this work, although it was explained at the opening meeting with officers about the consultation, that success with hard-to-reach groups always depends heavily on time, commitment and good local knowledge being available from local people (eg. youth workers) who already have the necessary links and contacts.

3.7.2 At the opening meeting about the consultation programme it was agreed that the focus in terms of groups/sectors should be on:

- Young people
- The homeless
- Families with young children

3.7.3 Comments were also made about the military and about two particular residential communities within the project's boundary – St. Edmunds and The Friary (though these could not really be classed as 'hard-to-reach'). Later discussions highlighted a need to consider taxi-drivers, rail commuters and users of the new park-and-ride schemes. This aspect of the work also served to open up a link for the technical team to those managing the city's Charter Market. It was decided, as the project proceeded, that the link to the military was of less importance so was not pursued. Without any formal taxi-drivers group in the city, that link could not be made.

3.7.4 The meeting with the St. Edmunds community is reported separately later. It was not judged to be appropriate to offer any meeting with the community in The Friary during the project period because, by the time that seemed appropriate, the formal study was underway to establish the attitude of all local authority tenants to some form of stock transfer to a Housing Association. Any other event could have confused matters for both initiatives. Meetings were however held with the ward councilor and an officer of the residents'

association. Both meetings were positive and valuable and the two people who were met promised to attend – and encourage others to attend – the options exhibition.

3.7.5 In terms of the rail commuters and park-and-ride users, small surveys were conducted by leaving questionnaires on car windscreens or on buses. The response rate was poor (though this was anticipated) and the results did not show anything of real significance to the project – except for a general wish to improve public transport options generally. The reports are in the Full File as **ITEM 11**.

3.7.6 As will be obvious from what follows, the other attempts to outreach were largely unsuccessful.

Homeless

3.7.7 Acting on local advice, contact was made with John Baker House, the main focus for provision and support for the homeless in the city. A particular contact name had been provided but that person was away on long term sick leave, and despite several attempts and a general willingness to contribute, nobody else felt able to talk about the issues. Staff did however encourage residents to attend the initial drop-on event.

Young Families

3.7.8 As above, a contact was provided to one of the 'Mums and Toddlers' groups operating within the city but no response was ever received

Young People

3.7.9 Two different tactics were used to contact young people. First, via schools, secondly via the youth work teams.

3.7.10 The contact with schools, based on successful experience elsewhere, was with all secondary schools serving Salisbury city and area. To secure their interest the suggestion was made for a day workshop, to be held just in advance of the September Options Exhibition, and to be designed and run in such a way that it would provide educational value to the children as well as generate useful consultation results for the team; (and student interest to pass back to parents to help promote the exhibition). The format was to be a hands-on planning and design workshop based in the city centre, with 1 or 2 small groups coming from each school. Although the invitations went out with plenty of lead time (and awareness of holidays, exam timetables etc.) the first response was zero – not a single reply of any sort. By this time the possible link to the exhibition had almost disappeared but a reminder was sent out. This generated one positive response but not in time to arrange anything. The link to the single school could have been picked up but by then the event would have been only of general promotional/educational value, not consultation value. It was not therefore pursued.

3.7.11 In terms of those involved directly with young people through youth work (mostly at Wiltshire County Council) or other community development work (mostly at SDC) the initial contact details were provided to the team in May 2006 and contacts made immediately. For various reasons (including staff shortages) it took some time to arrange a planning meeting but, following that, a simplified version of the material used at the Drop-in Vision and Issues event (see next section) was produced and sent to the youth workers for them to distribute. We do not know how or when or to whom (or even whether) that was done but no responses have been received. We are however fully aware through other sources of the considerable pressures on the time of those from whom help had been sought.

3.7.12 During the summer period, SDC also launched the 'Yeah but' website, developed for and with young people. Contact was made with the aim of placing simplified versions of the September exhibition on the web with a related questionnaire. Again, material was provided but it is not clear whether or when this appeared on the site. No responses have been received.

3.8 DROP-IN VISION AND ISSUES EVENT

3.8.1 **ITEM 12** in the Full File is the Summary Report of this event (from which several comments below are taken). **ITEM 13** is the Full report with every item ticked and comment made. The Summary report was sent to all who signed in.

Format

3.8.2 This took place on Friday 26th and Saturday 27th May at the Red Lion Hotel in Salisbury. It had not been in the original proposal (for budgetary reasons) but was added at the client's request, with full support from the team.

3.8.3 This first open event shared with members of the public the long list of issues that had been presented to the team when the project started and then elaborated in the first month or so of their work. The aim was to encourage people to agree with the list, disagree, add elaborations to items on the list and suggest new issues. They were also encouraged to respond to some very early ideas and add their own, and to respond to the draft Vision objectives that had been prepared in advance of the project.

3.8.4 The event was titled a 'Drop-in' to suggest that people could come at any time during the two days. Publicity was done primarily through the database and media coverage (press and radio), also through the website. On the day itself, SDC staff went into the city centre streets to hand out cards advertising the event.

3.8.5 As people arrived they were asked by reception to sign in. This was in order to keep a record, ensure they received feedback and enable them to be contacted for subsequent events. Most but not all people were willing to do this. They were also asked to place a dot on a map of the area to show where they lived or worked – simply to get a broad impression of geographic coverage. At reception they received a one page handout about the event which provided some basic background and explained what it was hoped they would do in their time there.

3.8.6 The exhibition started with boards setting the scene for the project – aims, context, boundary, timeframe etc. Participants then moved on to a series of boards in no particular order where known issues and ideas were listed under headings (eg. transport or environment). The boards were deliberately 'basic' in order to encourage people to place ticks and crosses and add elaborations or comments. As well as topic issue boards that applied across the city centre as a whole, there were boards related to the four specific sites the team had been asked to tackle – Southampton Road, The Maltings/Central Car Park, Market Place and Churchfields. Members of the project team, the client team and the Steering Group were on hand on a rota system to ensure that any questions could be answered.

Response

3.8.7 Just over 200 people came to the event. Although it was less than hoped for, this was a good number for a first event and that was more than compensated for by the remarkable amount of time that most people spent and the enormous number of ticks, crosses and comments recorded.

3.8.8 The map on which people placed dots to show where they live or where their business is located showed a fair distribution. Some residents came from the city centre (as did most business people), some from residential neighbourhoods of the city, some from the surrounding area. Quite a few people signed in as members of local organisations, some as individuals with no affiliation. There appeared to be quite a wide mix of people although the average age was probably quite high. There were certainly very few young people. It was also inevitable that the general timing made it difficult for some to attend (eg. retailers) as did the specific timing on a bank holiday, although this can be balanced with the fact that the Arts Festival was on so the centre was very busy with a range of people.

3.8.9 Some additional items or issues added (ie. not on the presented lists) may not have received many supporting comments but warranted further study and checking – for example, the scope for advancing higher education and the scope for taking fuller advantage of local ecology and especially water. That follow-up was undertaken on all such issues

Summary Results

3.8.10 Few significant additional points were noted – those shown by the team (informed by the client group) appear to have captured the major community issues. Many smaller additional points were made.

3.8.11 The only significant additions were to the draft **Vision**. Comments were made that the Vision was particularly strong on economic issues but that, to be genuinely comprehensive, it should also address social and environmental factors.

3.8.12 The items listed under the **Issues** secured, in general, overwhelming support. Those aspects not receiving clear support in terms of the main issues – though all received mixed rather than negative responses - were:

- The by-pass, Harnham Link, Brunel Link
- Removal of city centre car parking (and related to that)
- More/better use of park-and-ride.
- Weekend/nighttime safety and problems.
- Bringing in more national retailers.

3.8.13 The items listed as issues for each of the main **Sites** all received a very positive response. There was however a far more mixed response to the potential options/solutions offered.

3.8.14 Queried options (still producing a split vote rather than a solely negative response) included:

- The Brunel link for Churchfields (hence a preference for major relocation).
- Changing road and cycle alignments/layouts on Southampton Road.
- The need for a multi-storey car park on the Maltings site.
- Relocating the war memorial, realigning the diagonal path and generating more events in Market Place.

3.8.15 The suggestion for creating a coach drop-off point was the only one to receive a noticeably negative response.

3.9 INITIAL OPTIONS WORKSHOP

3.9.1 **ITEM 14** in the Full File is the full, verbatim report of this workshop.

Format

3.9.2 This workshop was held in the Guildhall, Salisbury on 22nd June 2006. The main purpose of the workshop was to begin the process of developing options for the various areas and sites included in the Vision for Salisbury project.

3.9.3 Previous to the workshop, both technical studies and the Drop-in event in particular had helped to build up a robust picture of the issues at play in or for the project and a draft Vision. Though not specifically requested in the Drop-in event format, the results also helped to provide some objectives to underpin the Vision. All these activities had also generated some very initial, and inevitably ad hoc, ideas and suggestions for what should be done about the city centre, Churchfields etc.

3.9.4 The workshop was by invitation only. The invitation list used had been developed by SDC, added to by the project team and checked with the Steering Group. There were around 80 groups on it at the time of the workshop. This group is titled the 'Forum' (see the database) and the intention was that those on the list would be given opportunities to come together once or twice more at key stages to help resolve issues arising.

3.9.5 The format of the workshop was extremely simple:

- Those booking in received in advance a briefing note to set the scene (which included interim results from the Drop-in).
- Following a short introduction a powerpoint presentation was used to reconfirm and elaborate key points in the briefing note.
- Small groups then worked to generate possible options.
- As each group had worked on one area/site only, there was then a 'walkabout' to enable people to see and comment on other areas/sites and options.
- The event finished with a short plenary session raising key points and looking ahead to the stage of short-listing options.

Response

3.9.6 35 people attended. The range of attendees (sector, interest, geography etc.) was very good. The list is in the full report. The report was sent to all who attended and all those sending apologies; others on the Forum list were asked if they wished to see it.

Results

3.9.7 The results were extremely valuable and showed a high level of agreement amongst participants about the options for each site and some of their emerging preferences within those options. The event also raised further questions of information, coverage (eg. to look well beyond the ring road on some issues) and practicalities (eg. funding and timetables).

3.9.8 The actual results are long and diverse (see the Full File for more information). It is however true to say that the results of this event led directly into shaping the options for the next stage technical work and the subsequent options consultation (see later). All significant points were picked up as work proceeded.

3.10 ST. EDMUNDS WORKSHOP

3.10.1 **ITEM 15** in the Full File is the full report of this event. Also see Outreach (3.7).

3.10.2 This event took place on 17th July, 2006. As outlined in the Outreach section, there were two primarily residential communities within the city centre study area which, in the view of the consultation team and SDC officers, warranted special attention. For reasons explained earlier it was not possible to run anything for the Friary area. However an event was arranged for those in the St. Edmunds area.

Format

3.10.3 To avoid arranging a special event an opportunity was offered – and seized – to ‘piggy-back’ on the local Community Association’s AGM (which would also benefit them by attracting more than AGMs usually attract!). As well as expecting interest in the overall Vision as such, it was also apparent that the Vision would generate interest because of recent debates about SDC’s proposal to build their Council Offices on the Bourne Hill site (within St. Edmunds). That too was expected to boost numbers, not least because of continuing suggestions that the offices might be better located on the Maltings/Central Car Park site.

3.10.4 Before people arrived sheets had been laid out showing the issues as raised at the earlier city centre drop-in. People were invited to walk around and a) tick or cross as appropriate in response to the issues and ideas listed and b) add other issues of importance to their particular community. Jeff Bishop did a short introduction and there was also a short question and answer session after the break and the short AGM.

Response

3.10.5 Around 30 people attended the event - a good number and mix according to Association officers. It was also noticeable that the issue of the Council offices did not totally dominate the event as had been anticipated. It was a relevant but not dominant issue.

Results

3.10.6 In terms of the **issues and ideas** listed at the earlier drop-in, the St. Edmunds group came up with very similar results. There were a few aspects on which (given quite small numbers) there was perhaps some difference in view:

- St. Edmunds people were more likely to consider that there is inadequate shopper parking and that parking charges are not high enough.
- Perhaps related (also see later questions) there were mixed views on replacing the current car parks on open sites in the centre.
- St. Edmunds people clearly feel more concerned about what they see as the problem of graffiti and litter.
- There were more mixed views on the benefits (or not) of developing a ‘café culture’ in the centre.
- As compared to the earlier results in favour of more office space, this group felt that no more should be created.
- There was a more uncertain view than earlier about linking economically to the military/defence research industries nearby.
- People felt more strongly about introducing more housing to the centre to keep the vitality and prevent a 5pm shut-down.
- There was some resistance to developing more restaurants to encourage overnight stays, whereas the earlier group had favoured this.

3.10.7 In terms of the **other issues** added to the sheets or to the separate, blank ‘Other Issues’ sheets, several themes emerged:

- Resistance to the Council Offices plan and a clear preference for alternative uses of Bourne Hill (eg. as hotel) and for the sites which would be created (eg. for recreation, not housing).
- (The recent decision by the military to leave their Wilton site suggested another location for the Council Offices.)
- Much of this was linked to concerns about traffic and parking (including park-and-ride) – and these issues are clearly of concern not just for the St. Edmunds area but for the city centre as a whole.
- Encourage more green space and water in the city centre, use the waterways better.
- Do something about Churchfields – apart from improving access, there were several views of what should be done.
- Safety, litter, lighting.
- Encourage and engage the local community.

3.10.8 **Questions and issues** raised in the final session (with brief answers in brackets) covered:

- Use of the ex-military site at Wilton? (Will be ‘kept an eye on’, though outside the current study boundary.)
- Building on flat space car parks – keep as parking, keep open, ‘green’ them? (All options are open at the moment.)
- Looking long term and addressing sustainability? (Have to do so now by law, but would have done so anyway.)
- Who is paying for this study and who will pay for any proposals? (District and RDA are paying for the study. The whole equation for development must add up over time – possibility of cross-subsidising within an overall plan makes this different to previous attempts.)
- Where and how could Churchfields be relocated? (The team has been surprised at how many sites are possible and how many companies might be happy or keen to move.)
- Why not start with some really visionary ideas and then consult? (Prefer to build up a brief from the community in parallel with visionary ideas – watch out for the proposals late September.)
- Isn’t the project timescale too short, is this sham consultation? (No.)
- Will the study look at the empty Council offices?
- Why not also focus on maintaining and improving what’s there now? (Agree – no point in adding shiny new things if the existing is not also looked after.)
- Move the bus station? (On the agenda – also the rail station.)
- Make something happen! (That’s what this team is there for.)

3.11 WORKSHOPS RUN BY SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

3.11.1 Following the Initial Options Workshop, SDC officers felt that there could be value in using the same or a similar format at workshops for their officers and members and with others. The BDOR team agreed with this and provided information and advice. Five such events were run (although one used a new format):

For SDC Officers: the report is **ITEM 16** in the Full File.

For SDC Members: the report is **ITEM 17** in the Full File.

For some occupants of the Churchfields Estate: the report is **ITEM 18** in the Full File.

For SDC Officers (2): the report is **ITEM 19** in the Full File.

For City Centre Businesses: the report is **ITEM 20** in the Full File.

Notes on each follow overleaf.

Officers' Workshop 1

3.11.2 This was held on 26th July 2006. This followed (deliberately) almost exactly the same format as the Forum Options Workshop described above. 29 officers attended, from a wide range of different departments, teams and professions. The results complemented and reinforced what had emerged from the Forum event; there were no significant discrepancies.

Members' Workshop

3.11.3 Exactly as above in format and outcome. This was held on 2nd August 2006. 11 members attended. The results complemented those from other events.

Churchfields Workshop

3.11.4 This was held on 3rd August 2006. Again the overall format was as at earlier events, although on this occasion the focus was on the Churchfields estate only. 9 people from 8 current occupying companies attended the event. Outcomes as above; notable because this reinforced the wider views about the redevelopment of the estate, when a pro-retention view might have been expected.

Officers' Workshop 2

3.11.5 This was held on 23rd August 2006. This is slightly out of sequence here because, by this stage, the three main options for wider consultation had already been developed following earlier work. 26 officers attended, again from a wide mix of teams, and the list included many who had attended the earlier event.

3.11.6 The format for this workshop was developed by officers alone, without input from the consultant team. The format adopted was based around risk assessment. Conventional risk assessment criteria and methodologies were used to evaluate each of the emerging options. This was slightly unfortunate for two main reasons. First, because risk assessment is definitely not a consultation method, and this showed because many of the comments were evaluative of the options not analytical about risk. Secondly because modern consultation is consensus-based and always focuses on benefits alongside risks; never just the latter.

3.11.7 At the same time, the outcomes, if a little blunt, were valuable to the team in terms of highlighting and forewarning about possible views and responses from the wider public up ahead of the open consultation on options.

City Centre Businesses Workshop

3.11.8 This was held on 6th September 2006. It reverted to the earlier options development format and focused on all but Churchfields and Southampton Road – ie. the conventional 'city centre'. 14 people attended. Most were from city centre businesses. Others included a representative of the College and people from Business Link and the Community Foundation. The results were firmly in line with what was at the time emerging within the options for wider consultation.

3.12 OPTIONS EXHIBITION

Format

3.12.1 This took place on the afternoon of Thursday 28th September and all day on Friday 29th September in the White Hart Hotel, then all day on Saturday 30th September in the City Hall. The event was advertised widely in the media, through the website, using the (now far larger) project database, by word of mouth and through information available 'on the streets' of the city centre.

3.12.2 The format was very simple. By this stage three shortlisted options had been generated, drawing from all the previous work, including the consultation results. The options varied, in one of the traditional modes for such things, between **Option 1: Consolidation** (minimal change), **Option 2: Enhancement** (more significant change but still not comprehensive) and **Option 3: Step—Change** (significant development on all main sites and across the city centre as a whole).

3.12.3 Exhibition panels were produced for all three options. In each case the option was introduced and described, partly in text, partly as a plan, and that was followed by notes on implications and possible pros and cons. The whole exhibition was introduced by a few panels which set the scene on the project as a whole, previous work, the current stage and next stages. Around the exhibition the design team had included a medley of photos from other places around the UK (and Europe) to prompt reactions and stimulate discussion. Members of the project team, the client team and the Steering Group were on hand on a rota system to ensure that any questions could be answered.

3.12.4 People attending were signed in as before (including the red dot on a map to show where they lived) and given a copy of a questionnaire. (The questionnaire is **ITEM 21** in the Full File). Spare copies of the options were laid out on tables, a few were available to hand out. People were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot if possible, though many took it away and returned it later. Following the event, the exhibition material and questionnaires were placed on the website encouraging electronic returns.

Response

3.12.5 Around 380 people signed in to the event. In many cases this was two people signed in by one, and some will no doubt not have signed in when reception was very busy. The likely total number was therefore around 400-450.

3.12.6 This was a considerable increase on attendance at the initial Drop-in – over twice the number. As before, it was also remarkable for the amount of time that most people spent looking through the exhibition. Again as before, the map on which people placed dots to show where they live or where their business is located showed a fair distribution. There also appeared to be quite a wide mix of people although the average age was probably quite high. There were, however, a few young people. On this occasion, the longer and different time periods probably did not penalise anybody as they may have done before.

3.12.7 From the event itself, and from later returns either by Freepost or electronically, 243 completed questionnaires were received (and some letters). This is a good response rate. There were no significant discernible variations in response according to age, gender or residential location. Responses were evenly split by gender and showed a good correlation with the spread of red dots recorded at the exhibition itself. Further detailed analysis of questionnaire results would have been inappropriate given the numbers and the fact that, beyond the initial 'choose an option' question, most questions sought qualitative answers.

3.12.8 One issue emerged that may have affected the results; (though there are no obvious signs of this). The size of the exhibition boards, the size of the plans and text, the choice of different colour text on different colour backgrounds and the use of the illustrative examples all contributed to a noticeable number of comments (not fully recorded) about the legibility of the information. This issue is picked up again in the evaluation section.

Results

3.12.9 The summary analysis of results is in the Full File as **ITEM 22**. This summary was sent to all who signed in to the event and to others who sent in questionnaires but were unable to attend.

3.12.10 The chart below shows how many forms were returned each day and subsequently, and which option choices were made.

Option	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Freepost	Electronic	Total
1	0	2	11	2	1	16
2	9	12	23	12	3	59
3	29	27	30	27	4	117
Others	6	14	14	14	3	51
Totals	44	55	78	55	11	243

As can be seen, 243 usefully completed questionnaires were returned. Of those people who made a choice directly between the three options (rather than offering variations or ticking 'none') 61% chose Option 3: Step Change. This result was slightly less dramatic for those returning questionnaires after the event. A few questionnaires were received after the close date but they show no different results to those listed shortly.

3.12.11 The summary analysis highlights main points in terms of:

- General reasons given for this choice.
- Specific 'likes' of Option 3.
- Any 'dislikes' of Option 3.
- Suggested ways to improve Option 3.
- Comments on other options by those choosing Option 3.

It also highlights main points on:

- Option 3 by those choosing other options.
- Options 1 and 2 by those who chose them.

3.12.12 In overall terms:

- The support for Option 3 was clear and strong; in fact a few people suggested that it did not go far enough.
- Even for those supporting Option 3 there were queries about achieving it in a way that enhances rather than damages the city's heritage.
- If this could be demonstrated, some of the arguments against Option 3 would reduce.
- The general reasons given in favour of Option 3 support the reasons for the project in the first place: worry about loss of status re. other places, piecemeal approaches in the past, tackling key problem sites together.
- Two of the specific sets of site suggestions were particularly well supported – for Churchfields (with a query about relocations from Churchfields) and Western Chequers (with particular support for the bus station relocation).
- There was more uncertainty about ideas for Southampton Road, exacerbated by significant queries about whether or not to relocate the College.

- The remaining area that concerned many, challenging the 60% support in principle, was the ideas for Market Place. Although many suggested that improvements are needed, there was a negative response to the idea of any new building and no obvious direction for new uses for the Guildhall (but no other good ideas offered).
- Ideas for the river and for making better use of water were well supported (though possible footpaths across the water meadows raised queries).
- Very mixed views were expressed about traffic, access and parking, including for traffic issues further afield.
- In discussing the city centre, and despite general support for reducing traffic impacts in favour of pedestrians, concerns were raised about a) parking for city centre residents and b) delivery access for the small shops.
- Compared to some other places there was very little of the common 'tackle traffic as a whole first before doing anything in the city' type response.
- More specifically, however, there was a general feeling that any restrictions in the centre ('sticks') should be accompanied – at the same time, not later – by improvements to public transport and park and ride ('carrots').

3.13 FINAL OPTIONS WORKSHOP

3.13.1 **ITEM 23** in the Full File is the full, verbatim report of this workshop.

Format

3.13.2 This workshop took place in the Guildhall on 4th October 2006. The main purpose of the workshop was to consolidate the interim outcomes of the options exhibition held a few days earlier and to brief the project team forwards towards a single 'Preferred Option' in more detail.

3.13.3 There were two main sessions on the evening, with the focus again on work in small groups:

1. Groups were asked to suggest, in the light of the results*, how best to move forwards to a 'Preferred Option'.
2. Groups were asked to develop more detailed guidance for the team on the specific sites/areas.

* An interim version of the exhibition results was presented to people on arrival. This was based on quick analysis of just over 100 questionnaires but later results (as in the previous section) were no different in any significant way.

3.13.4 For the first round session, small groups were formed mixing participants together. As the groups were then fairly large it was decided to create a separate group solely for the consultant team members. Participants were first asked to consider how best the emerging results could be consolidated to produce the outline of a single 'Preferred Option'. They were asked to focus on Option 3 but to add in ideas from other options if appropriate, or remove items as well. Each group took its own notes. The second question took the theme of 'be more ambitious' that had emerged from the interim results. People were asked to suggest what exactly that might mean in this particular context.

3.13.5 For the second main session, new groups were formed. People chose to work further into detail on each of the specific sites (Churchfields etc.) or on the city centre as a whole. Developing and elaborating the site/project brief. On this occasion team members joined groups.

3.13.6 Group by group results were shared through a walkabout between sessions and a quick summarising session at the end. Before closing, people were reminded of the next main stages for the project.

Response

3.13.7 24 people (plus 5 participating team members) attended the workshop. The range of attendees (sector, interest, geography etc.) was good. The list is in the full report. The report was sent to all who attended and all those sending apologies; others on the Forum list were asked if they wished to see it.

Results

3.13.8 As with the Initial Options Workshop, the results were really just lists of specific points agreed by groups and hence difficult to summarise here.

3.13.9 On the basis of the qualifications in the general pro-Option 3 results (for example as in suggested improvements in questionnaire responses), groups made some important but not fundamental alterations to the mix and balance of components within Option 3. They also moved the agenda on towards issues of deliverability, roles of key partners (Council, RDA etc.), design quality and a need (soon) for some imagery, funding and next stage consultation. As will be seen, the majority of these comments have been taken on board by the project team.

4. EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

4.1 Standards for Community Involvement

4.1.1 Although this was not strictly a planning project, the intention to make all work as close as possible to 'Area Action Plan-compliant' meant that the consultation team tried to ensure that, where appropriate, their work operated within the principles of the (then) Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Adapting these only slightly to present here, good community involvement as outlined in the Draft SCI should:

- raise the profile of planning issues at a level of understanding and geographical extent which is appropriate to the matter being considered;
- set out the information being consulted on in a clear and objective manner and make it available in a range of accessible formats and locations;
- maximise the opportunities to involve all sections of the community;
- ensure that those who respond to consultation exercises are informed, in a timely manner, of how their views were considered;
- forge stronger links within the council and community groups so that planning policies are consistent with other community objectives and
- ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the consultation techniques used and the resources (financial, staff time, etc.) which are available.

4.1.2 The District Council also has its own overall Consultation Strategy. Their key principles for their own consultation work are as follows, though not all are applicable to the Vision project as some refer specifically to Council issues (and have been removed from the list):

- **Inclusivity:** We will communicate in a variety of ways to serve the diverse needs of our communities.
- **Openness and accessibility:** We will provide information at times to suit our customers.
- **Clarity:** We will provide information in plain language that is jargon free and up to date.
- **Honesty and Integrity:** We will "tell it how it is" and will share information openly and honestly (unless it infringes privacy and commercial confidentiality).
- **Respectful, Personable and Approachable:** We will respect the individual needs of all our customers and treat them with courtesy.
- **Engagement:** We will encourage the participation of our community in issues that affect them.

4.1.3 Finally, as elsewhere in the country, there is a Compact signed between the County Council (and SDC) about agreed standards for consultation. The list is quite long and has been adapted for this particular context:

- Build consultation into regular planning cycle and be clear about the purpose of consultations;
- ensure that any consultation is announced in advance to maximise opportunities for responding and sufficient time allowed for responses;
- give consultees enough time to respond – a standard period of 12 weeks and a minimum of 8 weeks;
- explain where decisions have already been made – make clear what can and cannot be changed as a result of the consultation;
- consider carefully the right mix of consultation methods in order to get the best spread of views from those most likely to be affected.
- take a positive account of the specific needs, interests and contributions of those parts of the sector which represent the diversity of users;
- prepare consultation documents that are concise, clearly laid out and written in simple language that will be understood by the intended audience, make consultation materials

- available in accessible formats, when requested;
- encourage those consulted to give honest views by assuring confidentiality and
- analyse carefully the results of the consultation and report back on the views that are received and feedback on what has been done as a result.

4.1.4 It would be inappropriate to evaluate the process against all of these because some are not relevant (eg. those specifically about Council activities) and some are almost identical from list to list. In our judgement, the following is a valuable summary list:

- Provide clear information and feedback in an open, honest and engaging style, and ensure it is widely disseminated.
- Provide opportunities for all to contribute, addressing in particular the 'hard-to-reach'.
- Be clear about the specific purpose of the process as a whole and each individual activity, and make clear any limitations.
- Use a variety of methods.
- Give adequate time for people to engage and to respond.
- Ensure appropriate overall time and resources.

4.1.5 These are the main headings against which we comment on the process as delivered. However, one additional standard was added by the team – the need for a coherent, overall process and programme.

4.2 Overall Process and Programme

4.2.1 There was clearly an overall process and programme for the consultation work. This was discussed with key SDC officers and agreed with them.

4.2.2 The programme accords well with the principles of the new planning system by being consensus-based and front-loaded; other aspects of the new system are picked up in the remaining sub-sections.

4.2.3 The agreement by the clients to add the initial Drop-in event was important and very valuable. This ensured an early start to a widely inclusive process and, in particular, allowed input on issues and vision.

4.3 Information and Feedback

4.3.1 Publicity and promotion of the project and its various stages was clear and informative. By working with the local communications team, it was possible to be sharper about targeting this information within the local media and social/group networks.

4.3.2 Materials used at the opening Drop-in event were highly accessible to people and the method allowed a high level of open feedback. The two stakeholder workshops used more technical materials but this proved appropriate for an audience more familiar with the issues and the modes of presentation.

4.3.3 The major query was with the materials used at the Options Exhibition. These generated a large number of negative comments in terms of the size of drawings, choice of font size and colour and background colour, the amount of detail and the sheer amount of information.

4.3.4 Presentation of often quite intricate options, with their supporting detail, is now standard (indeed formally required) practice in projects of this sort and there is now national recognition of the presentational challenges this involves. There is little that could have been done to reduce the amount of information; doing so may have prejudiced the procedural validity of this stage. Styles of presentation can however be varied – larger drawings, clearer

text, breaking down information into more accessible sections etc. The problem on this occasion was also the overall project timescale which demanded a very short preparation period for the exhibition. To some extent there were also budgetary concerns about needing a larger space and considerably more, larger and more expensive exhibition boards.

4.3.5 The commitment of time by those who came to the exhibition may indicate that extra effort was needed to fully understand what was on display. However, the majority of people gave that time and there was no evidence of large numbers of people refusing to stay to complete the questionnaire because of the presentational problems or being unable to comment appropriately.

4.3.6 Feedback to all who contributed, and general feedback to the wider public, was strong.

4.4 Opportunities

4.4.1 Across a 7/8 month programme of this sort, several opportunities need to be provided for people to contribute. The two open public events provided those opportunities around a) issues and vision and b) options. These were the two most appropriate stages. There was no final stage offered because that will be the prime focus of the more formal consultation which will follow as soon as possible after the completion of this stage.

4.4.2 The two opportunities for key stakeholders to engage – the two workshops - were also appropriate and appropriately timed, although the numbers attending were less than expected. (All key stakeholders were also invited to, and many attended, the two open, public events.)

4.4.3 The weakness in terms of opportunities was with the outreach groups. There were particular good reasons why the Friary community could not be engaged specifically, but that should be a priority from here on. There were several attempts made to contact the mums and toddlers groups and the homeless, so the opportunities were made available even if there was (for different reasons) no response.

4.4.4 It appears that all the efforts put in by the team did not (for whatever reason) mean that the relevant information and opportunities actually reached the local young people, (although some young people came to the options exhibition). This is a significant weakness in principle terms and probably needs addressing from here on (when at least the ideas and information become less abstract). However, the fact that the emerging option is the most dramatic of the three put on exhibition, and is the one that experience suggests young people would have been more likely to prefer, implies that nothing has necessarily been lost or is 'wrong' in terms of the final results.

4.4.5 The other point to make in relation to delivering on opportunities is about the balance of who responded. This is not an issue in relation to the invited events and for the open events no formal record was kept of gender, age etc. However, a) the red dot maps used at the two main public events showed a generally good geographic coverage, b) there was no noticeable trend in terms of whether respondents were male or female and c) although people from all age groups attended, the average age could be judged informally as around 50.

4.5 Clarity of Purpose

4.5.1 This process was set up to be as genuinely open and consensus-based as possible. There were very few specific limitations placed on the team at the outset; the limitations emerged almost entirely from the project context: a major historic city, potential sites, traffic problems etc. It was made clear to the team at the outset that any proposals would have to

be largely self-funding and not be a major draw on public, especially local authority funds. It was also made clear that any suggestions for removing uses from the project area (notably from Churchfields) would require achievable solutions to relocation and that that was a responsibility for the local planning authority as part of its Core Strategy and Salisbury Area Action Plan work. All such issues were made clear to people from the start.

4.5.2 For the team, however, issues still remain about the uncertain link in the future to the city-wide Area Action Plan and about the feasibility of promoting solutions strictly within the ring road, when wider traffic issues are such a critical success factor in achieving change within the given boundary. Some of these issues were reflected in uncertainties as seen by participants – notably the challenge of achieving city centre solutions while broader traffic issues remain unaddressed. The other public query with the process as a whole (for some at least) was the fact that the project was not able to deal with alternative solutions for the new Council offices. Finally, for both team and public, there was (and remains) some uncertainty about the project's remit for the city centre as a whole rather than just the specific sites.

4.5.3 All of the above is quite difficult to communicate to people. By ensuring an evolving process it proved possible to clarify things for many involved but the issue as a whole will remain and need further work.

4.5.4 In our view the degree of openness on offer through the different stages was clear enough to all involved and we are not aware of significant queries on this aspect.

4.6 Varied Methods

4.6.1 Across the project as a whole, a range of methods was used whereby people could contribute:

- For the public: Writing on large sheets, annotating maps and small typed sheets, writing letters/emails, filling in questionnaires, talking to (and leaving notes with) team members, checking material at exhibitions and on the website.
- For stakeholders: All of the above plus (at workshops) small group discussions, plenary discussions.
- For all: To comment as individuals, as members of groups, as groups as a whole and through elected representatives.

Time to Respond

4.6.2 As this was an evolving process over 7/8 months it was possible for people to make contributions at almost any time. There were two major public opportunities, both based on exhibitions. No formal or announced time limit was placed on feedback from the Drop-in event because this was about collecting issues and vision objectives and that (for the team as well) was an ongoing process. A time limit of one month from the close of the exhibition was given for people to return questionnaires. Though less than the 6 week requirement for formal consultation in the planning system, and less than the 12 weeks stated in the County Compact, a) this was not formal consultation (that happens next) and b) this was part of an evolving process rather than a one-off event (to which the 6 and 12 week time periods normally apply). Nevertheless, the response time for the questionnaires in particular was shorter than we would have wished, again because of project timetable pressures. At the same time, the clarity of the overall results on options choice (and the fact that late returns showed the same pattern) suggests that this timescale did not have a significant negative effect.

4.7 Overall Time and Resources

4.7.1 The commission was received early in 2006, this report considers a process that was completed in December 2006 (with semi-formal consultation to follow). In our view that was an appropriate timeframe for consultation on a project of this type and scale. There is no evidence that this timeframe limited access to information or opportunities to contribute and no complaints were received on these aspects.

4.7.2 As ever with tendering procedures on projects of this sort, the original budget was developed to be proportionate to the overall project fees – and this had to be competitive. As was made clear, the fee component was based on two key resource assumptions; that others (we assumed SDC) would provide support for communications, PR/media work and accessing hard to reach groups, and that any specific additional requirements would only proceed if agreed with the clients. Extra resources were sought for the requested early Drop-in event and some minor outreach work. With all that in mind the resources and overall timescale can be considered proportionate and appropriate for the project.

5. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS AGAINST RESULTS

5.1 This evaluation is made against the plans and proposals produced in the Final Report of the main stage of the consultancy project, up to but not including any more formal consultation. Conclusions may change if that subsequent consultation work is completed and additional results emerge.

5.2 Issues

5.2.1 As stated in section 3.8.10, the long list of Issues used by the team to present as the starting information for the first drop-in event proved to be largely supported by all who attended. In part this is because that list was itself based on information provided by District and County Councils and groups and individuals contacted by the team in its very first stage work.

5.2.2 No significant new issues emerged. Many smaller points were made, although these were mainly of elaboration rather than being entirely new. Some of these additional issues were also not part of the remit of the team; for example, those about Council tax levels or those about wider traffic and transport well beyond the team's project boundary.

5.2.3 The only point worth noting here is the increased emphasis on social and economic issues – see also next sub section. With that proviso, **the Issues highlighted can be said to be appropriately comprehensive**. Later sections will pick up on whether or how they were all addressed.

5.3 Vision and Objectives

5.3.1 As with the Issues, little was added to the list of Vision 'principles', not least because this was presented mainly as over-arching Issues. The only significant query raised by respondents was the lack of emphasis on social and economic aspects. This raises a key point about the remit for the project as a whole, its policy focus and the nature of the team appointed to carry it out.

5.3.2 The initial brief made clear that the project was focused primarily on physical change and regeneration. This was reinforced by the suggestions for possible team members and by the description of key deliverables; (eg. planning strategy, transport strategy, urban design framework). Socio-economic factors such as child care and support for voluntary organisations were mentioned in the brief but solely in terms of prompting 'development opportunities'.

5.3.3 In building a project team, Gillespies responded by bringing in DTZ Piedad to provide some relevant input on socio-economic factors, but only as a minor element of the team and the work. As the project proceeded, further emphasis was placed on socio-economic factors, especially employment-related ones, via the SWRDA representative on the client group. Further work was then done on these issues but still as a subsidiary rather than main element.

5.3.4 There is therefore a question mark over the extent to which this project (and team) could or should have responded as fully to socio-economic issues and concerns as those linked more obviously to environmental development and regeneration.

5.3.5 The Vision that emerged from the initial consultation was developed, according to current planning methodologies, into an overall Vision supported by some more specific Objectives under sub-headings. This material has not been consulted on in its own right although it was part of the public exhibition during the Options stage.

5.3.6 The Vision is written retrospectively (as if from 2026) and describes Salisbury at that future time, assuming that the ADF has been implemented fully. It is also fairly general and, inevitably (and appropriately) highly aspirational. This all makes it difficult to comment on whether or not the Vision reflects consultation input but, in general, the **Vision statements relate very strongly to points ticked (ie. supported) by people at the initial drop-in event.**

5.3.7 Although the Objectives are more specific, it is still difficult to comment on whether they reflect consultation input. However, three comments can usefully be made:

- The majority of objectives relate directly to issues, ideas, comments etc. supported at the initial drop-in event and reinforced (if indirectly) in subsequent consultation work.
- There are a few objectives – eg. about provision of regional services or developing green tourism – which respond more to professional input than public input but which would probably not be disputed by the public.
- There are a few objectives (also see later) on which views via the consultation were more split – eg. reduction of city centre parking or maximising access to rivers and watermeadows.

5.3.8 With the proviso about socio-economic aspects, it is reasonable to state that **the final Vision and Objectives** – what the proposals should deliver - **relate well to input during consultation.** Whether the proposals to address the objectives also meet the aspirations of local people and stakeholders is the focus for the following section.

5.4 The Framework as a Whole

5.4.1 The proposals to which this section relate are those in the Draft Final Report from the project team. These have been developed, in general, from those put forward in Option 3: Step Change as shown at the main Options exhibition in September 2006. Those proposals were considered again, and amended, through the Final Options Workshop that took place soon after the open exhibition. Since then the project team has worked to move these ideas into more detail, focusing in particular on practical issues, notably implementation (as requested by those at the Final Options Workshop).

5.4.2 Although this final detail has not been consulted upon in its own right (that will happen in the proposed next stage) this report has been building a story of how issues and ideas raised at the very opening events have been considered by the project team and included within their developing ideas. That story line is patently strong and it should be clear that there is a clear and straight line from the overwhelming majority of initial consultation input to most of what is in the final proposals. This is reinforced by the clear results from the public options exhibition and its related questionnaires in favour of Option 3.

5.4.3 To that end it is possible to provide an overall summary statement that, **in general, the proposals are very consistent with the issues, ideas, opinions and aspirations that emerged throughout the community involvement programme.**

5.5 Aspects of the Framework

5.5.1 What follows are some qualifications to the overall summary statement. Though all need to be noted, and some may require further attention, they in no way detract from the statement in bold in 5.4.3.

5.5.2 The suggested relocation of the main Library raised concerns for some consultees, not so much because they were against it but because they felt the argument had not been made for moving something so patently well-located (in general), well-used and relatively new. At that time, no specific alternative location had been proposed. The latest plans show

the Library located around the proposed Fisherton Square with the two other major cultural centres – the theatre and City Hall. In our view, if people were made aware of the improved links between Eastern and Western Chequers via the current Library site, and the suggested new location for the Library, this concern would lessen, perhaps disappear.

5.5.3 Fisherton Square itself is an almost new proposal. It was shown on the plans at the exhibition but not featured strongly. In our view, however, it is an idea that is likely to be well received but needs to be highlighted more clearly.

5.5.4 At the options exhibition, similar concerns were also raised about possible relocation of the College – for example, why do that, do they wish to move and what about their current on-site plans? Views varied about the possible relocations suggested at the exhibition – somewhere in the centre or on Churchfields. It is only since then that, as a result of discussions with the College and the Learning and Skills Council, a specific possible site has emerged; essentially the old bus depot. This has therefore not been consulted upon. Again, showing the relative benefits for the existing site could well shift views in favour of a move and there would be little concern about putting something more acceptable on the depot site. Bringing students into the city centre would probably be valued by many, for example some local traders, but would almost certainly raise concerns from some local residents and other local traders. This in particular needs to be highlighted in subsequent consultation.

5.5.5 The fact that consultation specifically with residents of the Friary proved impossible because of other current concerns for them has already been mentioned. This would have had to be picked up in its own right and as a matter of urgency from here on even if nothing specific had been proposed for the Friary area. However, the plans now include major redevelopment of the housing area and the inclusion of a limited access new entry point. From an external, professional perspective, redevelopment may seem an obvious solution, and it may indeed prove to be the best way forward. However, the fact that these ideas have not been raised to date, will arrive to local people 'out of the blue' and do not guarantee that existing residents will be relocated on site all mean that this is a potentially very high conflict issue to deal with. Specific contacts should be made with Friary residents as a matter of urgency and certainly before the next stage consultation starts.

5.5.6 The other residential area within the study boundary is St. Edmunds. Though the road layout means that the area tends to be somewhat isolated from the commercial centre, and hence protected from some of its pressures, it is important that it and its community are genuinely considered as a part of the proposals as a whole. There is a section on St. Edmunds in the report and many of the general city centre public realm and traffic ideas will benefit the community. However, there is still local tension about the Council offices project so further work needs to be done to sharpen up ideas for the area and to discuss and develop them with residents.

5.5.7 Although the redevelopment of Churchfields as proposed is clearly the preferred approach (including for some within Churchfields) it is inevitable that the general issue of relocation for existing occupants will very soon start to become more urgent and need to be answered more specifically. This raises a challenge to the timescale for the overall Salisbury Area Action Plan if 'planning blight' is to be avoided.

5.5.8 The proposals at the options exhibition made some general suggestions about improved public access to the watermeadows and possible new paths across them. This generated a mixed response and will need to be looked at again at the next stage; not so much in terms of principle as practical delivery.

5.5.9 Since the September exhibition proposals for the station and the area around it have developed considerably and have hence not been consulted upon. It is now an area of quite major change. However, based on all consultation to date, there is no reason to suppose that the newer ideas will be in any way contentious – more likely the opposite.

5.5.10 The idea of a new 'halt' on the rail line to the East of the city centre was raised rather gently during the options development stage and, as a result, was never fully consulted upon. However, as with the main station, based on all consultation to date, there is no reason to suppose that this idea will be in any way contentious – more likely the opposite. There will however be questions about deliverability.

5.5.11 Now that there is no longer any specific proposal for a new building in Market Place, some of the earlier negative reaction to this idea will have disappeared. There is little doubt that existing traders in shops around the area would be quite positive about the proposals. However the market traders and those concerned with the Fair are very likely to be at least more cautious if not resistant, and require more consultation, and probably more detailed ideas to discuss (eg. about access for setting up and on-site parking for key vehicles).

5.5.12 The proposals make a strong suggestion that solutions to the future for the Guildhall will come better from the private sector than from civic uses and interests. Though people are extremely keen to see the Guildhall put to good use, 'privatisation' will undoubtedly be contentious for some.

5.5.13 This leaves the related issues of traffic and parking. These are especially difficult to comment on because they are so heavily dependent on solutions beyond the boundary of the project team's main area of focus.

5.5.14 In terms of parking, very varied views were expressed at all stages about the idea of removing parking from the city centre. This is perhaps the only area on which there could genuinely be said to be a significant variation between consultation results and the final proposals (but then only for some). Some of the concerns were raised – as they are very typically – by people wishing to drive right into the city and park next door to whatever shops they wished to visit. Those same people may well also complain about congestion, safety, pollution and visual intrusion from cars and parking! The cautionary response is in part a reflection of a lack of genuine options; notably a feeling that the Park-and-Ride provision is not yet adequate (but also a reluctance by some to use any form of public bus). Further development of Park-and-Ride and familiarity with it could help change views (as it has done elsewhere).

5.5.15 Concerns about parking were also raised by three particular groups. First, central area small traders, concerned that they will lose trade. Secondly, city centre residents concerned about their own parking and that of their personal visitors. Thirdly, traders again but this time in terms of limitations on service access. The latest proposals have addressed the last two issues to some extent and the first (and the one above) may simply be a matter of demonstrating that alternative approaches work well elsewhere. Though none of these groups is particularly large, these are genuine concerns and need to be addressed more in next stages.

5.5.16 The problems created by traffic generated consistent consultation results yet the proposed solutions generated mixed responses. As with parking above, this was partly the well-known phenomenon of people complaining about traffic impacts until possible solutions affect their own ability to drive where they like, when they like. At the same time, people are correct in arguing about the difficulty of attempting solutions to such a widespread problem just within a city centre; effective solutions are only possible on a wider canvas. This again raises questions for the Area Action Plan which has the potential to look across the city as a whole (although even this will be seen by some as too narrow). Concerns about traffic will continue to be significant and will need further attention, and to a level of detail that was not possible within this project.