

Regarding Call in of SMDC Cabinet Report on 'Cheadle Town Centre Projects 6th October 2020' on the 18th Nov 2020

I would like to make the following representations regarding the recommendations set out in Section 2 of the Report
The following comments are a limited set of collated comments given current lack of consultation to date.

Regarding 2.1 It is not yet appropriate to form Delivery Board and Stakeholder Panels

Regarding 2.2 It is not yet appropriate to detail progress on Cheadle Town Centre Projects.

The reasons are as follows:

Background

Two rounds of consultation firstly with FMG and then Cushman and Wakefield appear to have already taken place over a four year period without any local community engagement. No consultation has taken place on the opinions of the local community of Cheadle and its Hinterlands or with Cheadle Town Council on a plan that includes radical proposals for many Cheadle Community assets including the Community Hospital, the South Moorlands Leisure Centre, Newlands Care Home and the main car parking facilities for the town (herein referenced as 'community assets'), that is, the primary users of these facilities, who should be considered major 'stakeholders'. Consultation with the community should inform the basis of any brief to engage external consultants. This does not appear to have happened and should be a pre-requisite to the process.

Opinion

There has already been significant objections expressed directly to Cheadle Councillors, via social media and through the local press regarding the presentation of a prescribed set of options that exclude the maintenance and refurbishment of the existing facilities, further, options for Tape Street car parks have radical implications for the parking facilities for local residents and for access to the High Street facilities as is the case for our local Hospital and care facilities. User/Stakeholder opinions should be included to inform the process from our Local Schools, U3A, sports and fitness groups, local residents, local businesses in and around our High Street and Chapel Street, Cheadle Community library, Morrisons and Asda and social and health care services to name a few (herein referenced as the 'affected community').

Therefore regarding 2.1 it is not yet appropriate to form Delivery Board and Stakeholder panels because:

1) The Views of the local community and directly 'affected community' must inform any consultation brief and be on the table before formation of any Stakeholder Panel and Delivery Board.

How might the 'affected community' of these facilities contribute to the Cheadle Town plan and the Stakeholder Panel and Delivery Board? The Stakeholder Panel (Appendix A) appears to provide no direct representation for the 'affected community' of the facilities other than through councillors or Team Cheadle. They must have a proportional weighting in the decision process and provision be made for inclusion in the Stakeholder Panel.

Further the structure provides far too much power to the Delivery Board and not enough to the Stakeholder Panel. For example 3.1 details the Delivery Board are 'supported by' the Stakeholder Panel, in 3.5 it states the [Delivery] Panel will merely '*have access to the views and resources of the stakeholder groups*'. There appears little opportunity for the Stakeholder Panel to ensure an appropriate outcome from the Delivery Board. The Delivery Board is made up of SMDC, SCC, NSCCG and the Chair of the Stakeholder Panel. Therefore, the Stakeholder Panel views are outnumbered by 3:1 on the Delivery Board. This would not be reasonable if for example the Stakeholder Panel position was simply to maintain the status quo but was in effect over-ruled and this had a negative impact on the quality of life or facilities available to the community.

Therefore regarding 2.1 it is not yet appropriate to form Delivery Board and Stakeholder Panels because:

2) The makeup of the Stakeholder Panel and the makeup and interaction structure with any Delivery Panel should be decided after 1) above

The Report draws on a set of prescribed options outlined in a Cushman and Wakefield consultation report. The brief that went into this document and a preceding document from FMG including the findings of these reports have not yet been released and should be, to inform the community. The responses from the local community highlight their dismay at the potential loss of these existing 'community assets'. Further, customer satisfaction for example for the Leisure Centre is high and there is no significant indication that there is any drive to change these assets by the community, which would carry a significant environmental impact and high carbon footprint in any demolition and rebuild process. Further there is every indication that any new facilities would provide lower specification and fewer facilities for the town including sports facilities, parking provision and hospital and health care spaces which sit at odds with the local plan which plans a housing and Population growth of up to 25% to 2033 and an SMDC Growth Strategy (Appendix A) *'To be a place where improved health and wellbeing is experienced by all'*

Therefore Regarding 2.2 it is not yet appropriate to detail progress on Cheadle Town Centre Projects because :

3) Plan options do not yet include options for retention and refurbishment of existing facilities

3.10 States *'Should all or parts of both Tape Street and Well Street Car parks be redeveloped, it will be important to ensure that a review of parking in Cheadle is undertaken to ensure that adequate parking provision remains in the town'*. It is clear that parking provision is likely to be an issue and would impact on accessibility and on Morrisons and Asda with what could be potentially very limited parking. A parking provision study is therefore a pre-requisite of any plan for developing on the Tape and Well Street car parks with consultation with the appropriate members of the 'affected community'.

4) The Options appraisals require a car parking feasibility study prior to any options that consider building on existing car parks.

The Document references the One Public Estate (7.32 and 7.4 4) a government initiative which draws on the Land Release Fund (LRF) a programme which *'enables councils to bring forward surplus Council Owned land for housing development'*. Housing minister, Christopher Pincher, references the LPF as follows: *'This new funding will help councils right across England to turn unloved, unused land into new homes and communities where they are needed most'*.

How this funding is applicable to the proposal is not clear. However it is not likely to be considered applicable to the identified 'community assets' if that is the intent, in the context of the One Public Estate and the Land Release Fund.

5) There should be clarity in potential funding opportunities and the sites to which they can be applied.

The High Street Task Force (HSTF) have not yet carried out assessment of the High Street

6) Potential Improvements to the High street as Identified by the HSTF should be used to inform the process alongside completion of Points 1-5 above feed into a process of stakeholder focused delivery.

Regarding Corporate Priorities (4) and Alternate Options (5)

7) Recommend Item 5.2 Option 2, that the council does not adopt the establishment of a Cheadle Town Centre Delivery Board / Panel of stakeholders until completion of items 1-6 above and that the end objective is a stakeholder focused delivery driven by the 'affected community' regarding the 'community assets'.

It is our understanding that the two commissioned consultant reports date back at least 4 years and in that context timescales moving forward that include the community must be proportionately realistic.