**CASTLE SITE, CASTLEGATE**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

**7TH to 20TH NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

1. **Purpose of the report**
   1. This report provides a summary of the public engagement undertaken between 7th and 20th November 2022 to inform the concept design for the Castle Site.
   2. It sets out the key findings from the engagement exercises and how these have been incorporated into the development of the design for the scheme.
2. **Introduction**
   1. The Castlegate area have been in decline for many years yet it remains a main gateway into the City Centre, linking hotels, businesses and other organisations based around the canal, Victoria Quays and the Wicker, to the rest of the City Centre.
   2. Sheffield City Council secured funding from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in October 2021 to transform the Castle Site, which was once home to Sheffield Castle and Castle Market. Since the market was demolished some time ago it has been hoarded up pending redevelopment.
   3. The grant funding will be used to create a new public space on the castle site, celebrating the area’s rich heritage, re-establishing Castlegate as a vital part of the city centre and providing the necessary infrastructure to support future commercial development.
   4. An initial engagement programme informed the early development of the project proposals. This included discussion with the Castlegate Partnership and a series of Community Stakeholder Workshops held in June 2022, resulting in the production of the Castlegate Common Manifesto that included 13 recommendations from the community to inform both the Castle site project and later development.
   5. A further comprehensive Public Engagement Programme took place between 7th to 20th November 2022 on the proposed vision and plans for the site. The findings of the consultation were used to inform and refine the detailed design which was submitted for planning in February 2023 (23/00493/OUT).
   6. A summary of the findings of this latest Public Engagement Programme is set out below. A list of the full reports is included at Annex A. Copies of the full reports are available on request from [**lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk**](mailto:lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk)**.**
3. **Public Engagement Programme November 2022**

3.1 An extensive programme of engagement was undertaken during November 2022 which included:

1. An Exhibition of the new concept plan for the Castle site within the Moor Market, 9am until 5pm Tues 8th until Friday 11th November staffed by Sheffield City Council
2. An online consultation platform [www.sheffield.gov.uk/Castlegate](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/Castlegate)with details of the proposals, a list of Frequently Asked Questions, an online survey and the ability to submit detailed comments via email
3. Establishment of an ‘Urban Room’ on Exchange St run in collaboration with Live Works (University of Sheffield) where displays, activities, and discussions were held with the local community, stakeholders, and the public about the transformation of the Castle site and their hopes for the future of Castlegate more widely. The Urban Room was open: Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th (11am – 4pm); Thursday 17th & Friday 18th (12-6pm) and Sat 19th & to Sun 20th Nov (11-4pm);
4. Three workshops coordinated in the urban room by Live works:

* Arts, Heritage & Place making (13th November)
* Outdoor City (19th November)
* Future Partnerships (20th November)

1. Three sessions led by Sheffield City Council explaining the detail of the proposed Concept Plan and timescales on 12th & 18th November, lunchtime presentation (in the urban room) and 17th November, evening event (virtual)
2. A wide-reaching social media campaign led by Sheffield City Council as well as press releases to the local media (Sheffield Star and Telegraphs) and information on Sheffield City Council website
3. Letters/ leaflets sent out to 10,000 Sheffield homes (postcodes in or near Castlegate).
4. A workshop with the Castlegate Partnership held on 24th October 2022

3.2 The objectives of the public engagement programme in November 2022 were to:

* seek the views on the proposed concept plan
* seek additional suggestions/other features suitable for the space, including public art
* explore the reasons for visiting and use of the newly created space
* explore aspirations about Castlegate’s future, including nearby buildings.

3.3 A draft ‘Concept Design’ was drawn up for consultation purposes, illustrating the initial ideas for the Castle Site which included:

1. The creation of a **riverside park** -de-culverting and re-naturalising the River Sheaf to create a quieter and more nature focused area
2. The establishment of a **central route through the site** responding to the site’s challenging topography and providing a clear well lit route and an opportunity to reveal the medieval archaeology
3. The creation of **a central green area** that can be used for occasional events and reflects the past use of the site as a bowling green in the 1700’s.
4. The creation of **opportunities for play** to encourage people to explore and interact with the environment and strengthen and enhance the area’s contribution to The Outdoor City.
5. **Revealing the major areas of archaeological interest from Sheffield Castle** to the public
6. The creation of an **area of hard surface that allows views of the river Don** from the top of the ‘wall of Castlegate’ which can be used for cafes/commercial ventures as well as occasional street markets
7. A **public art strategy** that will engage local communities to interpret the site’s history and embrace fresh ideas
8. **Consultation responses**
   1. Thousands of people accessed the proposals as a result of the different consultation activities and over 1,500 individuals were directly engaged. Copies of the full consultation findings and reports are available on request from [lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk)
   2. In summary:

* 340 online surveys and over 2000 comments were officially submitted via Sheffield City Council’s Citizen Space/online questionnaire
* 788 people visited the exhibition in the market during the 4 days resulting in over 300 contributions
* Detailed contributions were received from key stakeholders attending the Castlegate Partnership
* 200 people visited the Urban Room, and took part in Live Works workshops and SCC led sessions.
  1. From the online survey results, an overwhelming 87% of respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” with the vision put forward in the concept design for the future use of the Castle Site.
  2. Analysis of the results revealed the following themes:

1 Access / Transport links

2 Heritage/history/archaeology

3 River Sheaf/Deculverting/access to river/ fishpass

4 Maintenance/ Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

5 Play area/ outdoor activities

6 Public space/ park (agree with vision)

7 Events space

8 Public toilets

9 shops/ cafes/ restaurants/bars

10 Visitor Centre/shelter

11 Art

12 Biodiversity/ ecology

13 Seating/ shelter

14 Development Plots/ site layout

15 General comments/ linkages to wider area

* 1. When asked to state which aspects were of most important to them:
* 30% were particularly in favour of a green park or public space.
* 25% said that de-culverting of the river Sheaf including re-naturalisation of habitats, access to the river, and adding a fish pass was most important to them.
* 20% stated that revealing the Castle remains and explaining the history of the site ranked highest for them.
  1. On heritage issues:
* 31% felt more information was required in the proposal, and that the focus should be on the key features of the castle remains and its history.
* 25% of respondents requested design improvements in relation to the heritage. These ranged from showing the Castle footprint on the site, to information boards, facilities for education, and time trails.
* Many people felt they would visit the new Public Realm specifically for the Heritage. With more than 50% of the respondents concerned that the heritage would be dealt with as an afterthought.
* The other 50% said that the emphasis should be about the important history of the site “it should tell the fascinating history of Sheffield”; and they want to “learn more about the Castle” when they visit.
* Although the consultation group was aware of the risk from vandalism, a desire was expressed to expose as much of the archaeological remains as possible yet ensuring their protection
  1. Live Works produced a summary and a final report “Castlegate Futures Public” which makes four categories of recommendations:
* activation of the new public space
* physical and visual porosity across the site
* access to rivers and nature
* an inclusive approach to planning and use of public space

**5. How has the Consultation been used?**

* 1. The public feedback and responses from stakeholders have been incorporated where practicably and financially possible into a revised concept design. In particular, the design has sought to address specific concerns and incorporate the following features raised during consultation process:
* an aspiration to make as many of the spaces as accessible as possible including a path from Castlegate to the river Sheaf’s edge as well as a central route through the site with access to event spaces and Waingate
* provision of an adequate lighting strategy and CCTV to ensure the space feels safe
* inclusion of as much seating as possible throughout the space
* consideration of “plug and play” facilities for year-round events.
* incorporating a rock ramp and fish pass into the deculverting works
* adding activity spaces
* development of a Design Code for the future development plots as part of the planning application to address some concerns expressed over the potential impact of future development on the proposed public space
  1. Some suggestions such as the inclusion of kayaking access to the River Sheaf haven’t been included, despite many design options being evaluated due to financial constraints and safety concerns.

1. **Conclusions and Next Steps**

6.1 The engagement process demonstrated overall support for the vision and proposals and a wide range of views, suggestions and ideas were put forward. There were over 200 suggestions for additional features which could be included in the project design. Some of these have been incorporated into the current design (such as information signs), others will be incorporated if budgets allow or if further funding can be secured.

6.2 The Council is committed to ongoing dialogue with stakeholders as the project develops. A number of actions have been identified and will now be progressed including:

1. Development of detailed proposals for revealing the archaeology in partnership with the Friends of Sheffield Castle and University of Sheffield
2. Continuing the work on Heritage Interpretation and Public Art with a dedicated group of stakeholders to include the suggestions received during the consultation
3. Exploring public/community access and use of the space with local partners
4. Consideration of maintenance and management of the space once built
5. Commissioning a developed design (RIBA Stage 3)
6. Procuring contractors to start works on site during summer of 2023

6.3 The development of the Castle site will be one of the first projects to be delivered to regenerate the Castlegate area. The project forms part of a long term approach for the area which will seek opportunities to secure improvements to the public realm (around Waingate, Haymarket, Exchange St and Castle St) as well as key buildings (such as Canada House and the Old Town Hall). The Council is committed to working alongside local businesses and stakeholders to secure the areas ongoing development.

**Copies of the full reports are available on request from Lucia Lorente (**[**lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk**](mailto:lucia.lorente@sheffield.gov.uk)**)**

1. Castle Site Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Concept Design materials for consultation
2. Castle Site online surveys response analysis
3. Castle Site LUF – Moor Market responses analysis
4. FOSC Detailed Consultation Response
5. SPRT Detailed Consultation Response
6. Live Works Castlegate Futures Initial Report
7. Live Works Castlegate Futures Initial Report - SCC response
8. Castle Site LUF Concept Design sessions report
9. Castlegate Partnership meeting on Castle Site LUF Concept Design 24 October 2022
10. Castle Site LUF Consultation – responses via email