

## Press Release

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### **City Council to face judicial review of decision on Cambridge Market**

**Local campaign group says council acted unlawfully by deciding not to consider public consultation responses before decision was made**

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CAMBRIDGE — A decision made on Thursday by Cambridge City Council to advance controversial proposals on the redevelopment of Market Square is to be challenged by local campaigners in the High Court.

Fews Lane Consortium, a planning and environmental advocacy group active in Cambridge and the surrounding villages, alleges that the council acted unlawfully by failing to consider the public's responses to last year's consultation on the future of the square prior to making Thursday's decision.

Papers published by the city council indicate that 1,165 responses were received from the public in regards to the Market Square consultation. However, excerpts from only 38 responses were provided to councillors in advance of Thursday's decision. A report published made clear that the final analysis of the consultation responses has not yet been completed.

The council's decision, to revise an adopted vision statement for the resign project and to delegate all further consideration of design of the scheme to council officers, was made by Cllr Rosy Moore, Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre.

Speaking on behalf of Fews Lane Consortium, the group's director, Daniel Fulton, said, "When a public authority decides to engage in a public consultation, those members of the public who take the time to read and consider the proposal and offer their views on the scheme can, at minimum, expect that their responses will at least be considered before a decision is made."

"In this case, the city council promised engagement in the form of a public consultation. Over 1,100 individuals took the time to provide the city council with their views on the redesign of the square. For the city council to now refuse to consider those 1,100 responses prior to deciding to move the project forward is an act of pure political hubris and represents a fundamental betrayal of the bonds of democratic trust that exist between residents of Cambridge and the city council."

John Preston, former Historic Environment Manager for Cambridge City Council, addressed the council's environment and community scrutiny committee meeting last week on the Market Square project, raising concerns about the council ignoring feedback from public engagement.

Contacted after the meeting for comment, Mr Preston expressed surprise at the council's decision, "I am shocked at the city council's continuing disregard for their public. They didn't consult two years ago on the feasibility study. Now they've compounded an inadequate consultation by agreeing a vision without waiting for the full results. Worse still, delegation to an officer cuts the Cambridge public out of vital stages in the evolution of the Market Square project."

According to Fews Lane Consortium, the High Court will make an initial decision on the group's claim for judicial review in the next few months.

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