



Report for Executive Committee Meeting on 7th March 2016

Transform Leatherhead - Stage 2 Consultation report

The Masterplanners and MVDC have been determined to demonstrate that they are consulting the 'stakeholders' of Leatherhead – i.e. the residents, retail businesses, commuters and large commercial companies with significant premises here. 25,000 postcards were distributed; the Website was visited 3,716 times by 2833 individuals and 5883 responses were received. Facebook reached 1,339 recipients and there were 24,139 Twitter impressions.

The following table lists the responses for the Ideas. Note that the online voting and the Questionnaire covered ideas in different ways. It is interesting that the overall responses to both the vision and the ideas were identical (75% and 69% respectively).

Ideas floated	Online votes & Short Questionnaire	Full Questionnaire responses
Agreed with the draft vision.	75%	75%
Agreed with the draft master plan ideas.	69%	69%
Agreed with redevelopment of Swan Centre	93.7%	
Agreed with Bull Hill development	75.3%	
Agreed with new riverside park	92.3%	
Agreed with idea 1 Full re-introduction of 2 way system on existing road network	67.8%	40%
Disagreed with idea 2 New diagonal link road across Bull Hill site.	60.6%	90%
Agreed with idea 3 A new vehicular link at Randall's Road / Waterway Rd	61.4%	50%
Agreed with ideas to improve town centre spaces		69%
Agreed with access between Church St through High St onto Bridge St to be considered		75%
Agreed with cycling and pedestrian movement ideas		62.4%
Agreed with ideas to improve parking		60.8%
Agreed with design & development principles re Swan Centre and High St		63.7%
Agreed with extending town centre		69.1%
Agreed with design and development ideas re Bull Hill site		57.1%
Agreed that town centre living would increase vibrancy		67.2%
Agreed with enhancement ideas for Church St		74.2%
Agreed with ideas for a new riverside park		83.7%

Clearly there was significant support for most of the ideas.

Two interesting diversions of opinions emerged:

- there was strong support for redeveloping the Swan Centre (93.7%) but less support for the design and development ideas put forward to date (63.7%);
- there was strong support for developing Bull Hill / Red house Gardens (75.3%) but less support for the design and development ideas put forward to date (57.1%)

We therefore hope that the eventual detailed Masterplan proposals, to be presented by July, will address these differences.

Transform Leatherhead - Draft Final Report

The Draft Final Report (Work In Progress) was published on the MVDC website in advance of its March Scrutiny Committee Meeting. Much is the same as the previous reports with most of the same concepts but with more detail.

Just a few points to highlight:

1. Church Street

Your Community Reference Group members (Hubert Carr & John Wilson) insisted that the current Church Street redevelopment should dovetail with the Masterplan. This is largely in the hands of Surrey CC, using W S Atkins to redesign the road and its furniture. We agree with the Masterplanners' vision of a shared surface scheme and the removal of the large brick planters and outside trees in them. We pressed the point that, as there was significant support for opening up from Church Street to Bridge Street and North Street, the Church Street Masterplan should be seriously considered.

We understand that Waitrose is expected to open for business sometime in November 2016. In the meantime there will be some inevitable disruption and displacement and this disruption will continue into the future if the Waitrose delivery vehicles are not enabled to exit down Bridge Street/North Street. (At the proposed delivery times the High Street is usually very restrictive to commercial vehicles because of parked cars.)

2. Bull Hill/Red House Grounds ('The New Urban Quarter')

We had previously, in writing and in a private meeting with Nick Gray (Deputy CE of MVDC), Paul Brooks (MVDC Project Coordinator) and Martyn Williams, expressed our concern that any significant retail development on the Red House Grounds could take trade away from the High Street. We were assured that they were fully cognisant of this possibility and were keen to enhance the attraction of the Swan Centre and High Street to overcome this. We also questioned whether there was an appetite for other comparison retailers to set up in Leatherhead. We were told by the MVDC Officers that they were confident that there was sufficient appetite to make both the Bull Hill/Red House Gardens and the Swan Centre/High Street viable providing there were suitably sized retail units available.

It is our judgement that development on this site is inevitable, providing the finance and developer appetite are available. Therefore, it is important that the balance between and location of retail, residential and parking is sympathetically designed in relation to the environment and surrounding areas, and with particular emphasis on restricting the heights of the developments.

3. Accessibility & Parking

We consider that Accessibility is equally as important as the actual developments themselves – which, without satisfactory access, the town will continue to be under-utilized. Traffic analysis and modeling should be undertaken and the willingness and finance secured for alterations to the roads before any 'sod is turned' on developments.

The current parking capacity is near to its practical limit. Further provision needs to be made for the anticipated increase in shopping.

4. River Quarter

We support the idea of sensitive development of this particular stretch of River. However control of the water levels will be essential if this recreational area and key attraction is to be exploited to its full potential.

5. Delivery and Implementation

This section of the report lists potential projects and differentiates them into three time categories: Short Term (0-3 years); Medium term (3-5 years); Long Term (5-10 years).

This is a sensible approach. Short Term projects are important to demonstrate that 'something is happening'. The majority of projects are identified as Short or Medium Term.

Long Term Projects depend upon other authorities and organisations but are vital to ensure the successful completion of the Transformation of the Town.

Hubert Carr & John Wilson