

Cross Party Working Group for Town Centre Regeneration – Consultation Sub Group

Minutes: seventh meeting – 7pm, Monday, 2nd June, 2008

Venue: Civic Centre, Dartford in B12

Attendees:

Cllr Jeremy Kite (Chairman of the Group)

Cllr Geoff Prout

Cllr Tony Martin

Cllr John Muckle

Cllr Patsy Thurlow

Dr Howard Stoate MP

Bob Heasman (Town Centre Partnership)

Graham Harris – Dartford Council

Rob Scott – Dartford Council

Christopher Borkowski (St James's Investments)

Patrick Stones (Tesco)

Kelly Edwards, Nick Bohane (Green Issues Communications – community consultation)

By invitation: Richard Rees (BDP), David Page (Page and Park), Paul Appleton (Allies and Morrison), Justin Nicholls (Make), Paul Dennison, Derek Beck (Tweeds)



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1. **Standing item: Project Planning Update** – Christopher Borkowski, (MD, St James's Investments)

Mr Borkowski raised the issue of the Glentworth Club. He hoped that the Glentworth Committee Members would soon feel able to come to a decision as to whether to recommend changing the status of the Club and linked to that, whether to accept St James's investment proposals with regard to the new proposed clubhouse. There was a concern that time was moving on and that the timeframe for a decision to be made by the Club is narrowing quickly. Mr Heasman felt that a viable business plan – which would allow the Club to move forward with confidence – needed more work, and he had volunteered to help with the process in any way that he could. Cllr Thurlow asked if the Glentworth Club had advisors on board to assist them in the decision making.

Cllr Kite raised the issue of the period of time that retailers in Lowfield St would have to move out of the proposed development during any construction phase and that he understood that some retailers were concerned about this issue. Mr Borkowski said that the envisaged timetable would mean an estimated 30 month construction phase for the Page and Park and Allies and Morrison designed blocks from later in 2009.

2. **Update on Design Proposals** (Richard Rees (BDP), David Page (Page and Park), Paul Appleton (Allies and Morrison) and Justin Nicholls (Make))

Richard Rees from BDP introduced the architects. It was explained that Adrian Judd from Whitelaw Turkington was ill and unable to update the Group on the landscape strategy but would re-present at the next meeting.



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Cllr Kite mentioned that a 'Garden of Remembrance' might be appropriate, located near the current position of the Glentworth Club.

David Page provided an update on the Page and Page designed block nearest the town centre. The Group asked David Page to consider various aspects before coming back to the Group. It was noted that the design iteration presented at this meeting had become a little 'inward facing' and should perhaps return to a more outward facing demeanour, for example, with more windows, a reduction in the wall heights facing the park and a more open, friendly access through to Lowfield St from the park side. English Heritage is currently reviewing the frontages on Lowfield St although Page and Park is anticipating a new build on the corner of Lowfield St/Market St.

Paul Appleton from Allies and Morrison updated on the middle block which contains Tesco. The presentation was well received and it was emphasised by Paul Appleton that Tesco itself hardly 'touches' the outside of the development. Cllr Muckle's view was that he was expecting to see greater variation and/or 'undulations' in terms of the Lowfield St frontages. He had been particularly attracted by the 'Amsterdam' style frontages presented at the previous meeting – he did not wish to have uniformity. Paul Appleton said Allies and Morrison would revisit the frontages.

Towards the end of the meeting, Cllr Prout asked a question as regards the size of the new Tesco. Patrick Stones from Tesco responded that the planned size would be in the region of 120,000 sq ft and it would comprise a planned 60% non-food items and 40% food.

Justin Nicholls from Make updated the Group on the residential scheme that forms the Southern end of the site. He informed the Group that Make is settling on the smooth treatment of the pebbles as the central design theme.



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Make has been working hard on reducing the impact of Cranford Road residents and had succeeded in moving the development 1.6m away from the left hand side of Cranford Road. There had been a great deal of focus on the design of the town houses which would be built directly opposite the existing Cranford Road dwellings. A workshop was planned for Cranford Road residents to comment further on the evolving proposals. It was confirmed to the Group that car parking spaces would not be offered to Cranford Road residents. Justin Nicholls said that there was internal debate, as yet unresolved, in the project team as to whether certain buildings, areas of buildings or levels should be allocated to specific demographic and/or lifestyle groups, for example, 'Golden Years' living.

3. Update on Public Consultation (Green Issues Communications)

Green Issues recommended that there should be an exhibition to accompany the submission of the planning application, a proposal which was supported by the Group.

Cllr Kite commented that such an exhibition, run just prior to the statutory consultation period, would give members of the public the maximum opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Provisional dates would be 14/15/16, 21/22/23 or 28/29/30 August. The key dependency would be the date of submission of the planning application – currently it is planned for 12th August.

As mentioned above, Green Issues is planning, with Make, a workshop for Cranford Road residents.

4. AoB

Transport



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Dr Stoate mentioned that he still has concerns over the level of car parking provision in the new scheme. He thanked Colin Buchanan for providing a very useful car parking note which compares Dartford's parking provision with other large Kent towns. The point was made that the note explains that Dartford compares favourably with other Kent towns after taking account of Lowfield Vision's proposals. It was agreed that Cllrs Muckle and Prout would attend a meeting with Colin Buchanan to gain a more detailed overview of and insight into the transport strategy accompanying the Lowfield Vision proposals.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place at the earlier time at 6pm on Monday 21st July at the Civic Centre.

