

# Consultation Report

Land off Cockreed Lane, New Romney

Shepway Core Strategy -  
Proposed Strategic Development Area

October 2010

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 This report has been produced to profile the engagement work undertaken with key stakeholders and the wider population of New Romney as part of a process to produce an Indicative Masterplan for a proposed Strategic Development Area for New Romney identified through the Council's Core Strategy process.
- 1.2 The land area identified comprises land bordered by Cockreed Lane, Rolfe Lane and Ashford Road but excludes the KCC playing fields. In addition, the draft strategic land area also includes the former Potato Factory site on the northern side of Cockreed Lane, which is the subject of a current planning application for 55 dwellings. The area previously excluded the Potato Factory and included an area of land to the west of Ashford Road. However, due to local flooding issues, the Council proposed a land swap. The draft strategic land area is identified on the plan contained at Appendix 1.

## APPENDIX 1

- 1.3 The purpose of the consultation exercise was to explain to residents how the land could potentially be developed in the future. In undertaking the consultation, the promoters have sought the views of key stakeholders and local people and used the findings to inform, modify and improve the Indicative Masterplan proposals.
- 1.4 The approach taken to engagement is consistent with the approach identified and sought by Shepway District Council officers. Indeed, the approach and timetable for consultation was agreed with officers at the end of July 2010.

## 2. ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

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- 2.1 The promoters have engaged with a variety of stakeholders as part of the Masterplan and their views have fed directly into the process. This section highlights the local stakeholder consultation that has been undertaken.

### a) Local Political

- 2.2 The promoters met with the Mayor of New Romney and the Clerk to the New Romney Town Council on 3 August 2010. This was supplemented with a presentation to the New Romney Town Council on 1 September 2010. Constructive feedback was received from Councillors on a range of issues including the challenges and opportunities facing the town.
- 2.3 We met local ward members Carol Waters and Alan Clifton-Holt on 3 August 2010 and a further meeting took place with District Councillors Carol Waters, Alan Clifton Holt, Toby Clifton Holt, David Stevenson and County Councillor William Richardson. These meetings provided an opportunity to discuss local issues and for the promoters to gain a better appreciation of what the key issues are for New Romney in advance of the public exhibition.
- 2.4 In advance of the public exhibition, letters were sent to all cabinet members in the District notifying them of the exhibition and explaining the process that was being undertaken. Additionally, letters were sent to Lydd, Ivychurch, Dymchurch and St Mary's in the Marsh Parish Councils notifying them of the Masterplan process and related exhibition and encouraging their participation in the process.

### b) Local Stakeholders

- 2.5 There was a meeting held on 9 September 2010 with Jean Hayles, Centre Manager at the New Romney Day Care Centre. We have also had preliminary and subsequent telephone and e-mail correspondence. Off the back of these discussions, the Masterplan team has garnered a much better understanding of elderly persons' needs in New Romney as well as the issues and challenges facing the Day Care Centre.
- 2.6 Two meetings have been held with the Marsh Academy. The promoters met with the Head of the Academy, Marion Emptage, on 9 September 2010 and there was a follow up meeting with the manager of the Marsh Academy Leisure Centre on 16 September 2010 to understand the community offer provided by the Leisure Centre. It was evident from these discussions that the School has a vital community function beyond its role as the secondary school for New Romney with the majority of sports and leisure provision available to the wider community.
- 2.7 The Promoters met with the Chairman of the New Romney Sports and Social Club on 16 September 2010 to understand the Club's aspirations and objectives both now and in the future.

### **3. PUBLIC EXHIBITION - 16 SEPTEMBER 2010**

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- 3.1 A public exhibition was held at the Assembly Rooms in New Romney between 2pm and 8pm on 16 September 2010. In advance of the exhibition, the promoters sent notices to residences on local roads that are most closely related to the strategic allocation area. A map showing the catchment area for written notices is provided at Appendix 2 together with a copy of the notice that was posted. Notices were sent to 173 addresses.

#### **APPENDIX 2**

- 3.2 In addition to the written notices, notices were displayed at key public locations around the town in advance of the exhibition. To further publicise the event, Shepway District Council published an advert regarding the exhibition in the Folkestone Herald two weeks in advance of the exhibition. A copy of the advert is contained at Appendix 3.

#### **APPENDIX 3**

- 3.3 The exhibition took the form of three main presentation boards which are contained at Appendix 4. The boards were devised to communicate the following:
- To identify the allocation area
  - To set the historical context (i.e. how the area had been identified through the Core Strategy process)
  - To highlight the technical studies and reports being undertaken to support and inform the Masterplan
  - To provide contextual analysis of the area so that people can understand the key features and characteristics that have influenced the indicative scheme
  - A summary of consultation being undertaken with local stakeholders
  - An indicative layout showing how the land might be developed in the future

#### **APPENDIX 4**

- 3.4 The exhibition was manned by three planning consultants representing the landowners, the masterplanners appointed by the landowners as well as officers from Shepway District Council. A precise figure for the number of attendees was not possible to collate due to sudden influxes of numbers at busy periods but we believe circa 170 people attended over the course of the event.
- 3.5 Every attendee was encouraged to complete a Resident Response Form. These could be completed at the exhibition or submitted to the process by 16 October 2010 i.e. within a month of the exhibition. In total 39 response forms were received.
- 3.6 A copy of the Resident Response Form is provided at Appendix 5. It was specifically designed to identify the following:

- A good indication as to what the most important local issues are at present in New Romney amongst local people
- The views of local people as to the housing types and building materials that would be most appropriate for the proposed Strategic Development Area
- Particular hotspots within the local transport network
- Ways in which the indicative layout could be improved

## **APPENDIX 5**

- 3.7 The exhibition was on public display at the New Romney Garden Centre until Friday 1 October 2010 – a period of two weeks after the exhibition had been held. This information was provided in the written correspondence that was sent to all District ward members and local residents, as well as on public notices around the town.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF RESIDENTS' FEEDBACK

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- 4.1 There were a total of 39 Resident Response Forms submitted, which was substantially lower than the figure expected and hoped for following the strong level of turnout for the exhibition. Nevertheless, the data has been collated, analysed and graphically presented to help inform the Masterplan document and the proposals going forward. A series of charts and graphs are presented at Appendix 6 which profile the responses received and the issues raised.

### APPENDIX 6

#### a) Existing Issues in New Romney

- 4.2 The Response Form firstly sought to understand what the existing issues are in New Romney and therefore asked residents to highlight the key issues relating to existing facilities in the town. Before considering the issues raised, it is worth highlighting the number of responses received for each issue and this is shown in the table below:

Issue	Responses Received (/39)
Schools	10
Doctors	23
Dentists	14
Local Shops	19
Public Transport	20
Community Space	15
Child Care	2
Elderly	12
Affordable Housing	11

- 4.3 Given the relatively small sample size, it would be dangerous to draw conclusions directly from this information but it is evident that if child care provision is a key issue in New Romney, local people are not aware of it. In contrast, it is evident from the level of responses received that doctors provision and public transport are high on the consciousness of local residents.
- 4.4 From analysis of the types of issue raised (Appendix 6), it is clear that the existing Doctors is at capacity with a number of respondents elaborating on the response forms that it can take up to two weeks to secure an appointment. As a result of this, the Promoters re-consulted with both local doctors' surgeries

and the PCT after the exhibition to understand whether they consider the provision to be adequate and to explore potential solutions.

- 4.5 Despite the small sample size, there was an overwhelming response to public transport with 17 of the 20 respondents on this issue (85%) concluding that the current infrastructure is poor and needs improving. Responses indicate that the connectivity to Ashford is especially poor and therefore, this issue will need to be considered further as part of any future development proposal.
- 4.6 The response on schools and dentists was more muted with 10 and 14 views expressed respectively. Eight respondents consider existing schools to be at capacity or to be insufficient at present but this is only 20% of the total number of respondents and contrasts with the advice of the local education authority. Feedback on dentist provision revealed that 6 respondents consider there to be insufficient provision but 4 respondents believe that a newly opened dentist has helped to address the problem.
- 4.7 Of the 19 responses concerning shops on New Romney High St, 11 people (58%) consider the shops to be insufficient with a need for more/better shops. Another 5 (29%) express the view that they need support. There can be little doubt that further development in New Romney will help to sustain and improve shopping in New Romney.
- 4.8 Of the 12 responses received on existing elderly provision, every response indicated there was a need for improvements – principally in the amount of elderly persons housing, but also the physical environment and the specialist facilities/staff. This issue will need to be considered further in future development proposals.
- 4.9 It was evident from the affordable housing feedback received that there needs to be more affordable housing in New Romney at present including affordable housing for young people.
- 4.10 9 of the 15 responses (60%) consider the existing community facilities to be unfit for purpose and/or in need of expansion/investment.
- 4.11 The Response Form seeks local peoples' views as to current traffic/road hotspots in New Romney and this information is presented in Appendix 6. The data reveals that the roads around the development area are an existing problem with Cockreed Lane the worst affected. This information has been analysed by the appointed transport consultants and they have in turn advised the masterplanners. The transport consultants have advised that further, more detailed work will need to be undertaken in the future to consider the impact of development on these roads and junctions and to identify mitigation measures including traffic calming, lowering of the speed limit, road widening, new pavements and junction improvements.



**b) New Romney in the Future**

- 4.12 Respondents were asked whether they supported the concept of a new or enhanced large scale, multi-purpose community facility for the town. This question emanated from discussions with local stakeholders who indicated that the town lacks a destination suitable for a celebration or event for between 70 and 200 persons such as a wedding or a christening.
- 4.13 21 of the 33 people who answered the question revealed that they support the concept, which equates to 64%. This is comparable to the 60% of people who indicated that the existing community facilities in the town are unfit for purpose and/or need enhancing.
- 4.14 Whilst this shows clear support for new infrastructure of this type, it should also be noted that 9 people (27% of respondents on this issue) were against the concept and so there is not universal support for this proposal. This is reflected in the feedback to Question 3 which asked respondents to rank potential investment areas in terms of priority between 1 and 10 (with 10 being the highest). The mean score for a new Station Rd community/sports/recreation venue was 4.5 out of 10.
- 4.15 Whilst this figure is low, it is broadly comparable to the mean scores of 4 of the other 5 potential investment areas. In this regard, the mean scores for potential investment areas were as follows:
- |                                       |   |     |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----|
| • Improved bus service                | - | 6.1 |
| • Town Centre improvements            | - | 4.8 |
| • New Station Road community facility | - | 4.5 |
| • Affordable housing                  | - | 4.8 |
| • Local play/open space               | - | 4.7 |
| • CCTV in town centre                 | - | 4.7 |
- 4.16 These figures indicate that local people would want to see an improved bus service for the town ahead of any other benefit with no clear preference given as to which other benefits should be prioritised.
- 4.17 The Response Form seeks residents views on housing need/mix, house types and materials. With regard to house types/sizes, there was a clear preference for more elderly accommodation with 61% of all forms identifying elderly accommodation as being particularly appropriate. There was little support for house with 5+ bedrooms but considerable support for 2, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes.
- 4.18 Residents were encouraged to provide their views on particular features of housing that should be used in the area. The following views were articulated:

Feature	Responses Received
Materials as per surrounding area	7
Use of brick	6
Varied styles/heights	5
Bungalows	3
(Local Kent) Tiles	3
No 3-storey homes	3
Timber Cladding	2
Traditional	2
Minimise plastic material	2
White weather boarding, spacious plots, low maintenance housing, sustainable, Kent materials only	1 a piece

4.19 Respondents were asked their views as to the level of affordable housing. 6 felt that the 30-35% requirement was appropriate, 6 felt it should be higher and 8 thought it should be lower. However, 22 of the 33 responses received on this question (67%) are of the view that affordable housing should be provided to meet local need only. As a result of this, the Masterplan has researched the level of housing need on the Marsh.

4.20 Residents were asked how the proposals might be improved. Consistent with responses to previous questions, the most popular response was to improve the bus service. Of all the feedback received, this is the one definitive view received.

**c) Residents' Concerns**

4.21 There were a host of concerns provided both at the event and in the response forms that were completed. The relevant chart in Appendix 6 lists these and consistent with feedback received at the event, the three areas of greatest concern to residents are transport (pedestrian safety, traffic, transport network capacity), flooding and the lack of employment opportunities in the area. Whilst the employment issue is beyond the control of the site promoters, it is imperative that transport and flooding concerns are addressed in any future development proposals. The advice received through the Masterplan process by technical experts indicates that a technical solution does exist but further work will need to be undertaken as part of any future planning application in tandem with residents to ensure a safe and high quality development is delivered.