

**SAPLEY EAST PREFERRED OPTIONS PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND
COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE**

(Heads of Planning and Financial Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has been working with local people and stakeholders to prepare a master plan on land mainly to the east of Sapley Square including the legal and funding arrangements for a Community Enterprise Centre. Members are asked to note the work that has taken place over the last 6 months in working towards a masterplan and to consider its approval as informal planning guidance

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The master plan area covers open land at Oak Drive adjacent to the Oak Tree Centre, and land bounded by Nene Road, Coneygear Road and the Medway Centre. The area comprises managed green space, footpaths, under-developed land and six buildings: the Medway Christian Centre; Kingdom Hall; Golden Knight PH; Medway Court; St Barnabas Church and the Medway Centre.
- 2.2 The Council has undertaken two rounds of consultation: 'Issues and Options' and a 'Preferred Option'. On 18th December 2008, Cabinet received a report on the 'Issues and Options' consultation and a proposal by EEDA to part fund a Community Enterprise Centre within the area.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS
Issues and Options stage

- 3.1 Under the 'Issues and Options' consultation, the Council presented a plan of the area as it stands together with three alternative development options, all of which offered the potential to develop:
- ❖ up to 60 homes, including the upgrading and reconfiguration of housing for the elderly;
 - ❖ new faith buildings;
 - ❖ a Community Enterprise Centre for small scale employment, skills development and learning opportunities to meet community needs such as long term unemployment;
 - ❖ safer routes through the area;
 - ❖ more usable open space.

3.2 Through the 'Issues and Options' consultation held at various locations between 9th September and 21st October 2008, over 300 local people gave their general support for the principle of development but raised concerns about proposals which could directly affect their homes and interests, most notably in relation to faith buildings.

3.3 These messages from local people and stakeholders informed and shaped the design of the 'Preferred Option' in the following ways:

i) Faith Buildings:

- St Barnabas Church: shows the retention of the church with the opportunity for expansion of faith facilities and or residential use
- Kingdom Hall: identifies a possible relocation site in Medway Road
- Medway Christian Centre: identifies possible relocation sites – one as an extension of the Medway Centre, the other on the site of the St Barnabas Learning Centre

ii) Community Enterprise Centre:

- identifies a site for the centre in two phases, and including the possible relocation of the St Barnabas Learning Centre

iii) Family and Supported Housing:

- identifies housing with one group having access off Nene Road and a second housing group with access off Medway Road

iv) Access and Car Parking:

- removes the proposal to link Medway Road with Nene Road; and
- retains the footbridge across Nene Road.

v) Oak Drive:

- proposes improved landscaping and footpath linkages

vi) Open Space and Play Area:

- proposes a linear park to provide safer routes through the area to Medway Road and the 'Courts' and
- designs out a former play area adjacent to Medway Court

vii) Pub: proposes the removal of the existing pub with no site for its relocation.

Preferred option stage

3.4 The consultation on the 'Preferred Option' involved over 140 local people and stakeholders held at various locations between 3rd February and 4th March 2009. The programme, which included events dedicated for those most affected by the proposals, is listed in Annex A. The comments of those who wrote in at this stage are listed in Annex B.

3.5 Overall there was strong support for investment in improving the area, providing more work and community opportunities and making better use of the open spaces. The following arose from the exercise to inform the masterplan.

i) Faith Buildings:

- St Barnabas Church: the local church authorities have confirmed they wish to remain in-situ.

- Kingdom Hall: the principle of the relocation site was endorsed with the main concerns raised about the siting and access of the building to maximise security and the amount and location of any car parking
- Medway Christian Centre: the church is concerned about the tenure of any new building and the availability of car parking but has undertaken to review the available options

ii) Community Enterprise Centre:

Consultees raised questions about

- the final size, use and look of the building, and how much car parking would be needed, and
- whether the St Barnabas Learning Centre needed to move

iii) Family and Supported Housing:

Consultees raised questions about:

- the number of houses and the mix of these houses by size and tenure as this will influence the demands for access, car parking, open space and the overall cohesiveness and integration of the area
- the quality of the design of the houses and their environmental performance
- the impact of the phasing of development on residents of Medway Court,
 - the timetable for delivery including risks arising from the private housing market and public funding

iv) Access and Car Parking:

Consultees raised questions about:

- the impact of the phasing of development on car parking and access for emergency vehicles

v) Oak Drive:

Consultees were happy about:

- no further traffic generation uses being allowed off Oak Drive

vi) Open Space and Play Area:

Consultees raised the need for:

- the routes through the linear park to be short, safe and manageable with good lighting and overlooking
- the need to design defensible space between the public realm and private gardens with fencing designed to enable overlooking and contribute to the area's environmental amenity

vii) Pub:

Consultees had contradictory views over whether the pub should stay or go.

4. THE MASTERPLAN

4.1 In response to comments made by local people and stakeholders, the following amendments to the design and layout of the 'Preferred Option' are proposed for the masterplan:

i) Faith Buildings:

- St Barnabas Centre: to note the variety of options available to the church authorities including remaining in-situ and/or the possibility of

the existing learning centre being used as a faith building and/or possible residential use of the site

- Kingdom Hall: to explore with Huntingdon Town Council the possibility of sharing the existing access and expanding the car park to the north of the Medway Centre to enable the early development of the new Kingdom Hall

ii) Community Enterprise Centre:

- to confirm the location of the first phase of the centre up to 600 sq m with provision for a second phase of approximately 200 sq m, and to clarify the general location for the area of current car parking that would be lost to the development

iii) Family and Supported Housing:

- Nene Road: to identify this area for mostly two storey family housing with some two and three storey flats
- Medway Road: to treat this areas as a self contained housing scheme that through its size, tenure mix, design, layout and landscaping combines to protect the residential amenity of the existing residents at Medway Court

iv) Access and Car Parking:

- expand the existing car park to the north of the Medway Centre, see (i) above, as part of the new Kingdom Hall scheme
- retain 18 car parking spaces at Nene Road
- allocate further car parking provision in accordance with the Council's approved car parking standards

v) Open Space and Play Area:

To incorporate within the design of the linear park:

- a footway and cycle path linking the Coneygear Road foot bridge with Nene Road and Humber Road via pocket parks
- lighting and CCTV
- fencing to allow for overlooking as well as security and visual amenity
- the closure of the alley at the rear of 22 – 28 Nene Road and provision of car parking spaces for these houses via the access from Nene Road

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Finance

- 5.1 The principles set out in the Oxmoor Action plan, whereby the receipts from the sale of the land in the ownership of the District Council were pooled together with the planning obligations arising from the betterment of land and together ringed fenced for the benefit of the Oxmoor community, will be applied in the implementation of this master plan.
- 5.2 In these circumstances it would be appropriate to seek a tariff from each new house as the total planning obligation as described in the Local Investment Framework. The tariff (between £10k-£15k) will be required for the improved walkway (transportation contribution) and open space (recreation and open space contribution). Affordable housing will be provided as part of the scheme. Discussions with the

appropriate service provider will be needed as to whether an education and health contribution will be required.

- 5.3 Additionally the Council will be seeking grants towards the cost of the community enterprise centre from EEDA and other bodies. To support the applications a business case is being prepared to demonstrate its viability.

Phasing of development

- 5.4 It is proposed to bring forward the comprehensive development of the area in four phases as follows:

1) Community Enterprise Centre: to establish the business case, put together the funding and prepare a scheme together with a timetable for EEDA grant funding, a planning application and construction

2) Faith Buildings: to progress the relocation of the Kingdom Hall and Christian Medway Centre

3) Nene Road Housing: to negotiate a mixed tenure predominantly family housing scheme

4 A) Medway Road Housing and Linear Park

- to progress the acquisition of the Golden Knight PH by private treaty and failing that the possible use of the Council's Compulsory Purchase Powers

- adjacent to Coneygear Road: to provide for family houses and apartments

- adjacent to Medway Court: to provide for housing which protects the environmental amenity of Medway Court

- develop the linear park

4 B) Medway Road Housing and Linear Park

- to progress most of the above housing and linear park should it not be possible to acquire the Golden Knight PH

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is recommended that cabinet

(i) Note the progress through various stage of consultation and endorse the proposed amendments to the 'Preferred Option' for the Master Plan as set out in section 3 above in response to comments made by local people and stakeholders during the consultation held during February and March 2009;

(ii) approve the master plan document, attached Annex C, as informal planning guidance for the comprehensive development of the land mostly to the east of Sapley Square;

(iii) endorse the principles of implementation set out in section 5

ANNEX A

Time and Date	Group	Venue
3 rd February	Oxmoor Community Action group	St Barnabas Learning Centre
4 th February	Huntingdon Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses	Kingdom Hall
8 th February	Medway Christian Fellowship	Medway Centre
8 th February	Huntingdonshire Community Group	Medway Centre
11 th February	Norfolk and Essex Road Residents Association	Maple Centre
12 th February	Medway Court residents	Medway Court
12 th February	Open event	Maple Centre
4 th March	Oxmoor Community Action Group	Maple Centre

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Oxmoor Action Plan
Consultation documents on Issues and Options stages

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