

Design Workshop 2 - Emerging Masterplan - Wednesday 20 August 2014

The purpose of this design workshop was to review and develop the Emerging Masterplan which has been updated to reflect the feedback provided by the local community at the Milestone 4 Options Workshop. The Emerging Masterplan comprises the preferred features of the Pocket Parks, Village Green and Water Gardens design concepts.

Attendees

Project Team

Eleni Stathi - Lead Designer
Natalia Roussou - Landscape Architect
Gelina Menville - Regeneration Manager
Pamela Kovachich - Consultation Manager

Residents

Albert Drive (1)
Bentham Avenue (1)
Dartmouth Avenue (1)
Devonshire Avenue (1)
Heron Walk (2)

Stakeholders

Councillor Raja - Ward Councillor
Smith Court (1)
Woodlands House (1)

Discussion and Actions

1.0 Emerging Masterplan

- The Emerging Masterplan includes a 'swale' creating a linear water feature that predominantly follows the path of the historic Rive Ditch which lies beneath Sheerwater.
- This proposed feature will create a link between the Basingstoke Canal to the west and the new community playing fields to the east of the regeneration areas
- The swale will also form part of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System.
- Participants raised some concerns regarding the depth and maintenance strategy for the water feature
- Participants supported the creation of a variety of neighbourhood parks, ensuring that play options cater for the needs of children of differing ages.
- It was felt that a larger central play area providing a range of play options in one space might work better
- Participants supported the idea of a Village Green that provides a large space for hosting community events. This should be overlooked to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- The location of any public toilets should be carefully considered to ensure that the current problems of anti-social behaviour are not repeated

Actions for the Project Team

- Develop proposals for a 'swale' to ensure it is a sustainable feature
- Consult further on the design of play and open spaces to ensure they meet the needs of the community
- Consider the provision of public toilets and suitable locations which would reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour

2.0 Open space

- Participants questioned the loss of the recreation area as one big mass, with particular concerns over dog walking. It was noted that a couple of residents felt strongly about large open spaces not being overlooked as this is what provides solitude to the area. The Project Team pointed out that providing open spaces which are overlooked creates passive surveillance providing a much safer environment. This is an important tool used in designing out crime and anti-social behaviour
- Some participants believed that the regenerated Sheerwater and the new ASDA supermarket may attract more visitors to the area. This will need to be considered in the design of the green space, canal area, and parking provision
- One of the participants suggested that the new open space could create a pedestrian walkway with green space and picnic areas to create a loop through Sheerwater and along the canal. The Project Team were asked to ensure that pedestrian walkways are designed to be wheelchair accessible

Actions for the Project Team

- Explore and test the idea of a 'green pedestrian loop' within the Masterplan proposals
- Consider the needs of dog walkers when designing the green spaces
- Explore how areas of solitude could feature in parts of the green spaces

3.0 Ecology

- Participants were concerned about the trees along the canal edge and were keen to understand how they will be affected by the regeneration proposals
- The Project Team confirmed that it is in discussion with the Canal Authority and will not be building directly up to the edge of the canal
- Parts of the canal have been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) due to the quality of its water and flora/fauna. The Canal Authority is currently investigating ways to ensure that the SSI designation remains in place. This may include thinning or removing some of the existing trees which are causing excessive cover and impacting on the water quality

Action for the Project Team

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- Work closely with Canal Authority and ecologists to protect the quality of water, vegetation and wildlife habitats along the canal

4.0 Drainage

- The participants have extensive local knowledge and experience of flooding and drainage problems in Sheerwater. They have concerns about how these will be managed in the future
- The Project Team confirmed that its initial site investigations had identified a high water table
- The team agreed that once the site investigations have been completed it will be useful to have an additional Design Workshop to discuss drainage in more detail

Action for the Project Team

- Organise the additional Design Workshop. The date has been set for Wednesday 1 October 2014

5.0 Parking

- One of the participants suggested that parking should be provided at access points to the canal to avoid visitors and dog walkers parking on the roads and causing congestion. This situation currently occurs when there are sports events at the existing football and athletic clubs.
- Participants also raised concerns about the number of vehicles per household which put pressure on parking provision and result in cars being parked in gardens, on roads, and on grass verges

Actions for the Project Team

- Circulate the previous design workshop meeting notes to the community
- Consider resident parking allocation/provision
- Consider visitor parking provision

6.0 Bus Routes

- The participants would like to see the proposed bus route pass through the residential areas of the regeneration proposals. They suggested that the route could loop around the estate to increase access.
- Participants asked the Project Team to pursue discussions with bus operators and Surrey County Council (SCC) to develop a proposal which is backed by the community

Actions for the Project Team

- Pursue discussions with bus companies and SCC
- Keep the community informed of all future developments