

# Preston Regeneration: Consultation Summary (August 2013)

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document provides information about the exhibition which took place at Preston between 14 June and 1 July 2013. It sets out the purpose, the consultation methodology, the findings and the responses to the issues raised.

## 2.0 Purpose of the exhibition

2.1 The purpose of the exhibition was to:

- provide an update on the plans for:
  - the new leisure and community centre and new youth centre,
  - the new housing planned on the current leisure centre site and small parts of the Merland Rise Recreation Ground.
- provide information and seek feedback on:
  - the proposed landscaping and play improvements to the Merland Rise Recreation Ground,
  - the proposed improvements to parking
  - the proposed improvements to the path across Burgh Heath.

2.2 The exhibition was run by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, with input from Surrey County Council and Raven Housing Trust.

## 3.0 Background

3.1 Consultation had previously been undertaken twice in the last two years:

- between November 2011 and January 2012 on the draft Preston Planning Framework<sup>1</sup>.
- between September and October 2012 on the proposals for new leisure, community and youth facilities, new housing and improvements to parking<sup>2</sup>.

## 4.0 Consultation Methodology

4.1 The consultation period ran from 14 June to 1 July 2013.

4.2 The exhibition of the proposals was in the Banstead Leisure Centre reception from Friday 14 June – Thursday 27 June, and at the Epsom Downs Primary School summer fete on Saturday 29 June 2013.

4.3 A number of staffed drop-in sessions were held over the consultation period:

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning Framework has since been updated and was approved by the Borough Council's Executive in April 2012. The approved Planning Framework has its own consultation statement which provides information on that consultation and its findings.

<sup>2</sup> The proposals were subsequently updated and the first two of the parking schemes have since been delivered.

- Saturday 15 June, 11am-2pm at Banstead Leisure Centre, Merland Rise
- Wednesday 19 June, 6.30-8.30pm at Banstead Leisure Centre, Merland Rise
- Tuesday 25 June, 10am – noon at Banstead Leisure Centre, Merland Rise
- Saturday 29 June, noon – 3pm at the Epsom Downs Primary School summer fete

4.4 These sessions were staffed by representatives of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.

4.5 Consultation was also conducted at the Epsom Children's Centre's 'Stay and Play' session from 9.30 – 11.30am on Wednesday 19 June, and with the Phoenix Centre Youth Steering Group from 4.30 – 6.30pm also on Wednesday 19 June.

4.6 A summary leaflet and a feedback form were available for people to take away from the exhibition. They were also available at the Epsom Downs Children's Centre session. Feedback forms could be submitted at the exhibition or online. The exhibition boards and summary leaflet could also be viewed online.

4.7 Various activities were undertaken to advertise the consultation. These included:

- Flyers delivered to all households in the local area;
- Posters put up in and around Preston including at the Epsom Downs Children's Centre, at ASDA and at each end of the Burgh Heath path where improvements are proposed;
- Letters to immediately affected residents to the parking proposals;
- Preston Pride newsletter;
- Council website
- Information was given to the Headteachers of Epsom Downs and Shawley Primary Schools to include in their school newsletters.

4.8 Appendices 1 to 5 provides examples of this literature.

## **5.0 Responses**

5.1 The Borough Council has received 53 responses via the feedback form (paper or online), with the exhibition having been visited by an estimated 100-150 people during the staffed sessions. Staff at the exhibition sessions made a note of comments made. Some emails and telephone calls have also been received. All the comments have been incorporated into the analysis. Several hundred feedback forms and leaflets were taken by visitors to the exhibition.

5.2 29 respondents supplied their postcode. Of these, 24 live in the Preston regeneration area, 3 do not live in the regeneration area (but live within a mile or so of it), and the remaining 2 only supplied a partial postcode so it is not possible to determine if they live within the regeneration area or close to it.

## **6.0 Summary of the main issues**

6.1 The following paragraphs summarise the main points made and outline the response in relation to each of them. The data submitted by the feedback form (either in paper or online) can be found at Appendix 6. The detailed analysis of comments and responses can be found at Appendix 7.

### **6.2 Merland Rise Recreation Ground – Play and Landscaping**

- i) People were asked to select two pieces of additional play equipment from a list of possible additional pieces of play equipment. The responses were as follows:
- 44% would like a scramble climbing net
  - 33.3% would like flat seat swings
  - 30.6% would like the mobilus see saw
  - 27.8% would like the roundabout (rota roka)
  - 19.4% would like baby seat swings
  - 13.9% would like the balance beam
  - 8.3% would like the multi pondo stand on see saw
  - 0% would like the sprung rocking toy
- ii) The playground designs are now being revised to incorporate the most popular choices of additional pieces of play equipment, and to include both flat and baby seat swings.
- iii) Some people, including young people, asked for goal posts and a larger area for ball games. The designs are to be modified to create a larger ball games area in the northern part of the recreation ground (between the football club and the new housing which is to be built in the north east corner).
- iv) Some people asked if the skate park could be bigger. Funding is only currently available to reprovide the existing skate park. However, we will work with the Phoenix Centre Youth Steering Group to try to fund raise to enable more facilities to be provided for teenagers.
- v) A number of people commented that the proposed planting, paths and landscaping would improve the recreation ground, and others felt that the proposals would make the recreation ground feel safer.

### **6.3 Parking Improvements**

- i) There was broad support for the two schemes which have already been delivered, with a few requests for some tweaks to the Chetwode Road scheme and for there to be double yellow lines at the junction of Chetwode Road and Merland Rise to improve the effectiveness of the new Merland Rise lay-by. These suggestions will be explored with Surrey County Council Highways.

- ii) Three of the four new parking proposals were supported, with most support for the Preston Lane lay-by parking scheme (near numbers 73 – 83) to be delivered as a priority. This scheme will therefore be prioritised for delivery, probably in Spring 2014, as planning permission must be secured first. It will probably be delivered at the same time as the other Preston Lane scheme (near numbers 85-107 and opposite numbers 104-108), which was consulted on in September 2013.
- iii) Some people asked for the Preston Lane schemes to be right-angled parking rather than lay-bys, to increase the quantity of cars which can park. Unfortunately this will not be possible because of land ownership issues. However, the proposed new parking court at Homefield Gardens would create additional parking provision in the Homefield Gardens / Preston Lane area.
- iv) The Homefield Gardens parking court proposal and the proposed parking lay-by in Marbles Way received equal support. Discussions will be progressed with Raven Housing Trust with a view to seeking planning permission to implement the Homefield Gardens parking court proposal in Spring 2014.
- v) Design work will also be finalised for the Marbles Way proposal, which is also likely to be delivered in Spring 2014.
- vi) The Acres Gardens proposed parking scheme was not supported. The road is quite narrow for emergency vehicles and will be used by construction traffic when the new homes in the north east corner of the recreation ground are built. The need to deliver the scheme or amend the design will be given further consideration once a developer has been selected to build the new homes on the current leisure centre site and small parts of the recreation ground.
- vii) There was overall support for the idea of replacing damaged grass verges with concrete – support ranging from 52% to 68% depending on the location. Some people did not support the loss of grass and felt that alternative steps should be taken to prevent people from parking on the verges. The locations on Merland Rise all received the most support. 3 of these 4 locations will therefore be delivered by end October 2013, as a pilot, with the other locations potentially to be delivered in 2014. The fourth location on Merland Rise, outside Merland Rise Church, will be put on hold pending the church's planned redevelopment of their site.
- viii) A few people felt that Chetwode Road needs to be widened all the way along, in particular given the new housing that is likely to be developed on the De Burgh site. The Transport Assessment which will accompany the De Burgh planning application will determine what further action may be necessary along Chetwode Road to improve the access to the De Burgh site. This would not, however, entail a widening of the road along its entire length.
- ix) A few people were concerned about the loss of parking associated with the Raven Housing Trust proposed development of the Cuddington Close car park site. Raven

Housing Trust has advised that their proposals would reprovide more parking spaces than were regularly used.

### **6.3 Burgh Heath Path and A240 Footway**

- i) 66.7% of respondents supported the proposal to create a compacted gravel lit footpath across Burgh Heath from Chetwode Road to the A240, 18.5% did not support the proposal and 14.8% did not know / did not have an opinion. The vast majority of people who visited the exhibition and spoke to Council staff about the proposals were in favour of the path being improved and lit.
- ii) Some people did not want any trees to be removed. The number of trees of Burgh Heath has increased in recent years. Removal of a few of the trees and the development of a management plan for the Heath will help to restore more heathland elements to the habitat. The proposed tree removal is limited to low quality trees which, by being removed, would significantly increase the natural light reaching the path, and create a greater feeling of openness. This would be good for wildlife including butterflies and other insects. Letting more natural light in along the path route would also make the path surface itself last longer, as it will dry out more quickly after wet weather.
- iii) Most people supported the proposal for the path to be lit, although some people did not want the path to be lit. 63% of respondents did not feel it is important for the lighting to be on in the middle of the night, for example between midnight and 4am. As most people supported the proposal to light the path, the proposal will be pursued, subject to the findings of the ecological surveys. However, the possibility of turning off the lights for a few hours each night could help to balance the aspiration for the path to be lit with the interests of the wildlife which uses the Heath. The exact timing when the lights could be turned off will be given further consideration.
- iv) Subject to the findings of the ecological surveys, the designs will be finalised and a planning application will be submitted this autumn for the proposals.
- v) 75% of respondents would like the pavement from the Burgh Heath path up the A240 to the ASDA pedestrian crossing to be improved. Further work will be done to pursue this proposal as part of the work to improve the Burgh Heath path.
- vi) A few people made comments about abandoned ASDA shopping trolleys. We have approached ASDA regarding the issue of abandoned shopping trolleys and hope they will agree to install trolley limiters to stop trolleys being taken beyond their store boundary.

### **6.4 New Leisure and Community Centre and New Youth Centre**

- i) A large number of people were interested in the designs for the new leisure and community centre and were pleased with the proposals. Some questions were asked about the non-reprovision of sauna and steam facilities, which is a budget driven

decision. A number of comments were received, details of which can be found in Appendix 7. Given that planning permission has already been granted for the new building, the exhibition was intended to provide an update on the proposals rather than to consult on individual elements.

## **7.0 Impact of the consultation on the proposals**

- 7.1 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is considering all of the consultation findings as part of the process of refining and finalising individual projects. The consultation findings have enabled us to decide which parking improvement schemes to pursue next, to refine the landscaping proposals for the recreation ground and to move forward with the proposals for the Burgh Heath path and A240 footway.
- 7.2 Comments relating to the De Burgh site were passed to Surrey County Council, and comments relating to Raven sites were passed to Raven Housing Trust.
- 7.3 The detailed consultation analysis which can be found in Appendix 7 sets out the response to the comments made, including the reasons for these responses.

## **8.0 List of appendices**

- Appendix 1: Exhibition boards
- Appendix 2: Summary leaflet made available at the exhibition and online
- Appendix 3: Feedback form made available at the exhibition and online
- Appendix 4: Flyer distributed to promote the consultation
- Appendix 5: Posters put up to promote the consultation
- Appendix 6: Details of the responses submitted on the feedback form
- Appendix 7: Detailed analysis of the comments received and Officer responses