

Q & A – Consultation Results

1. The consultation took place earlier in the year – why have you only just published the results?

We wanted to engage as many people and organisations as possible to comment on the proposals. We are pleased to say that it resulted in hundreds of responses, which of course have taken some time to examine and collate into a meaningful form to be published.

2. Lots of responses opposed the proposals for development – why is that?

With any major regeneration plans as we have for the two towns, naturally there will be concerns about how the proposals will affect where people live, where they work and the businesses they run. It is our responsibility to listen to the concerns, make appropriate changes and to keep up a flow of information on what is happening. This year we have had some issues with effectively communicating with parts of the business community but through regular meetings and the establishment of a Business Forum we are confident of more effective dialogue in the future.

3. Isn't this just a 'paper' exercise and you will go ahead with the proposals despite anyone's concerns?

Not at all – the purpose of the extensive consultation is precisely to seek views of the public and national organisations and make sure the points they raise are listened to. Not everyone will agree with all the projects but we will modify plans and will work towards a consensus. Regeneration means change, but the opposite of regeneration is degeneration and no-one wants that.

4. Aren't you more concerned with developer's interests rather than local people and employers?

Plans remain plans unless they are attractive to potential developers. We need to encourage new investment from local, regional and national businesses to create new wealth, provide new jobs as well as new homes, but it's a balance. We are insisting on well designed and efficient workspace and offices, high quality new public areas and more green space. We want the development but not at any cost.

5. What about the proposed river crossings – we've been promised action for years?

These are big infrastructure projects and they take time. Both towns gave strong support to the idea of bridges as part of the plans. But, lifting bridges, to allow river traffic, don't come cheap and estimates are at least £70m for each crossing. Projects of this scale need national funding and a case has to

be made. Great Yarmouth is ahead of the game and the third crossing is expected to receive funding - but currently not until 2016. The aim now is to try and bring this forward and the regeneration plans provide a strong argument for this. In the case of Lowestoft, the need is as great but process is further behind. But big projects do happen. Look at EastPort (U.K.) this is good example of an idea that was around for many years - now its a reality.

6. What happens next and what is the timescale?

The regeneration plans will be revised as a result of the consultation and then sent to the government for approval. After that there will be a public enquiry. But the regeneration plans are not the only developments or planning documents being considered by the local authorities. One of these documents, the Core Strategy, has to go to the government first, so the Area Action Plans cannot be submitted until some time in 2008. Less important than the timing is making sure the plans are ready. Some of the responses from the statutory agencies such as the Highways Agency said that more study work needed to be carried out to understand more clearly how the developments impact on the road network.

Lowestoft

Peto Square

1. A significant number of people raised objections to the proposal to move the Railway station in Lowestoft – does that mean it won't happen?

More responses were in favour of Peto Square than were against. At the heart of the Peto square project is the desire to link the town with the waterfront with public access, provide an area for new homes and shops and create a new public area. There are some obvious obstacles to achieving this – the A12 for a start, but with a new bridge, that traffic could be diverted. In the case of the railway proposals the idea is to provide an attractive new station, linked to a good public transport interchange, surrounded by the new shops and homes and leading to the new public square. The proposal to move the station has certainly been the most controversial and some rail groups have organised opposition to the idea – and this is reflected in the letters to the press and in the responses to the consultation. Some of the concerns raised demonstrate that 1st East and its partners have not successfully communicated the project idea. For instance several comments suggested that new station would be 400m further away from the town centre but the idea is actually to bring the town centre up to the new station. The response demonstrates how sensitive this issue is and we have recently met again with rail groups and are committed to continued consultation.

Kirkley Waterfront

The public consultation period coincided with the issuing of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) on businesses at the riverside business park. 1st East is a strong supporter of the Waveney Campus (which would be the first phase of the Kirkley Waterfront) and we became the focus for a lot of the legitimate concerns raised by those businesses adversely affected. We believe that there should be proper compensation for businesses asked to relocate and 1st East has worked with partners involved in the CPOs and encouraged fair settlements. If these can be reached, there are indications that some of the current opposition will turn to support for the overall regeneration. Waveney Campus is the subject of a public inquiry examining all aspects of this project.

Great Yarmouth

Runham Broad

The proposal of a major new tourist attraction to provide new leisure facilities and create jobs was the most popular regeneration idea during the consultation in 2006, both with statutory agencies as well as the general public. In 2007 a majority is still in favour of the project but some businesses located on the Eurocentre, unsure of the implications for their own activities, formed an interest group, 1st Euro. Constructive talks have followed trying to find the right balance between maintaining the integrity of the Runham Broad idea, provide investment certainty for businesses that do not wish to relocate but providing flexibility for those that might see an advantage in switching land use to residential or leisure activities.