

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL
REPORT
of the
HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
to
THE CHERRY TREE AREA PANEL

THE CHERRY TREE AREA FORUM MEETING HELD ON 23rd SEPTEMBER 2008

1. Introduction

The Chairman, Councillor Evans welcomed residents to the Cherry Tree Area Forum.

He explained that at a Special Area Panel meeting had been held on 23rd July 2008, the members of the Panel had agreed to hold a Special Area Forum meeting to discuss and consult with residents within the Cherry Tree and Parklands Area Forum boundaries to the Blackpool Core Strategy Issues and Options.

Mr Graham Page, Group Planning Officer, Tourism and Regeneration Directorate was cordially invited to attend the Forum and provide residents with information on the Blackpool Core Strategy and how they could submit feedback and comments.

2. Theme – Blackpool Core Strategy Issues and Options

Mr Page explained to the residents that the Blackpool Core Strategy Issues and Options document was approved by Council in June 2008 and was at present out for consultation for a period of 10 weeks. The official deadline of the consultation was outlined as 26th September 2008, although it was emphasised that although this was an advertised deadline, comments and responses would be accepted upto several days after to allow maximum involvement.

The purpose of the Core Strategy was to set out key strategic decisions that would be made about Blackpool's future development that would create a framework for a more prosperous and healthier Blackpool by 2025. A core requirement was for locations to be identified for around 7,500 new homes. This subsequently would address the housing market imbalances and revive inner areas whilst providing a wider mix of more affordable housing. In addition, approximately 40 hectares of new employment land would need to be identified. This would diversify the economy by the provision of quality opportunities for new development to provide more and better paid jobs.

The Core Strategy outlined other key issues for consideration such as the resort as a whole and in particular, ways to sustain a more all year round visitor market and provide new high quality attractions and improved accommodation. Addressing the poor quality of the urban environment, developing sustainable, safe and healthy neighbourhoods with a diverse range of services, balance the requirements for new development with environmental factors and make better connections to and from Blackpool with easy access to jobs and local services, and new developments that would be well served by sustainable modes of transport.

The six Spatial Options were outlined to the meetings with the main emphasis focused on the Marton Moss Urban Extension and the Wider M55 Hub Growth Point.

The Marton Moss urban extension would look at what extent the town could meet its expansion needs beyond its existing urban area, but more singularly focusing on growth on Marton Moss.

Prior to any decision being made each of the different Options would need to be looked at in great detail and specialist criteria would need to be fulfilled. The key aspects were outlined as:

- how would the Option best meet development needs and safeguard important land resources
- how would the option effect service and infrastructure provision

Questions were raised with regards to the status of the land situated in and around Marton Moss area that was outlined as a preferred option and whether it was indeed Green Belt land. Mr Page explained that the land was not Green Belt land but was protected as a Countryside Area. The land had been protected against development for the length of the Local Plan that was in force. The Plan had now expired therefore the area was now under review.

It was explained that once a preferred option had been identified then it was likely that some lands would need to be purchased by the Council to make way for any developments. The preferred option would not be identified until mid 2009, however the Council was committed to work with the residents to achieve the best outcome for all concerned.

Many residents raised concerns with regards to the long history of the flooding in and around the Marton Moss and Wynedyke Farm lands. In recent weeks there had been heavy downpours subsequently leading to flooded gardens and a threat to properties. Mr Page explained that in accordance with information from Environment Agency the lands identified for potential growth had not been outlined by the Agency as being at risk. However, it was noted that as statistics showed that 75% of flash floods in recent years were a result of heavy prolonged downpours, the infrastructure for the development must be passed by United Utilities and adequate drainage would be installed in the area.

Residents highlighted increased traffic and access in and out of any proposed development as a major cause for concern. Mr Page explained that the traffic flow and access points to any of the developments had not been discussed as of yet, however such detail would be addressed once the area for development had been decided upon.

Mr Page reiterated that the options were indeed outline details and the finer details such as property type and services would be considered at a later date. He urged residents to take part in the Consultation process and feedback thoughts and comments on the Core Strategy Issues and Options by:

- Visiting the Council Portal and entering their details at <http://consult.blackpool.gov.uk>
- Writing direct to: Development Plans and Projects Team
Planning Department
Blackpool Council
PO BOX 17
Corporation Street
Blackpool
FY1 1LZ
- Email comments to: development.plans@blackpool.gov.uk
- Or by completing a comments form and returning to the address shown above

It was noted that although the official deadline for receipt for feedback was advertised as 26th September 2008, this had now been extended to the 3rd October 2008 to allow for maximum participation.

3. Conclusion

The Chairman urged residents to take part in the Consultation process and it was agreed that once a development option had been determined then it would be beneficial for all residents living within the Cherry Tree and Parklands Area Forum boundaries to receive an update from Mr Page, with regards to the next steps to the developments.