

Carrickfergus Draft Town Centre Masterplan

Findings of the Public Consultation Process

15 January 2010

1. Introduction

This report serves to summarise the process and findings of the Public Consultation process conducted for the Draft Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan in September and October 2009.

The aim of this non-statutory plan is to set in place a 15 year vision for the development and physical and socio-economic regeneration of Carrickfergus Town Centre. The Masterplan was commissioned in January 2009 by the Department for Social Development (DSD) with Carrickfergus Borough Council (The Council) and the Carrickfergus Development Company. It is being prepared by a consultant team, led by The Paul Hogarth Company, who are also the authors of this report.

2. Consultation Process and Methodology

2.1 Background

A draft masterplan for Carrickfergus Town Centre was prepared by the consultant team over a 9 month period. This draft masterplan was based on a process of in-depth survey, analysis and design and involved a total of 31 separate consultation meetings with key stakeholders during its development. In addition, the masterplan progress was reviewed through regular meetings with an Advisory Group comprising of representatives of the three commissioning bodies.

2.2 Objectives of Consultation

From the outset the client and advisory group placed importance on the people of Carrickfergus helping to shape the masterplan as it develops. DSD therefore established a 6-week consultation period during which members of the public could review draft proposals and submit their comments. The comments would then be taken into consideration by the consultant team and advisory group and where appropriate, proposals amended accordingly.

2.3 Consultation Period

The Public Consultation period lasted 6 weeks, from its launch on Thursday 3 September 2009 until Thursday 15 October 2009 inclusive.

2.4 Planned Consultation Format

2.4.1 A total of 11 A1, colour presentation boards were prepared by the consultant team, presenting the masterplan process, analysis and draft proposals through range of text, plans and illustrative techniques. The boards were also accompanied by one other board provided by DRD Roads Service, showing the extent of works for the proposed public realm scheme.

2.4.2 One set of the consultation boards was displayed in Carrickfergus Civic Centre for the entirety of the public consultation period. Another identical set was displayed in the new offices of Carrickfergus Development Company from its opening on 21 September until the end of the consultation period.

2.4.3 Digital PDF versions of the boards were also made available to download from the DSD website: <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/consultations/consultation-carrickfergus-masterplan.htm>.

2.5 Additional Consultation Activities

2.5.1 Employees of the Carrickfergus Development Company provided assistance to members of the public in understanding the content of the boards and answering any queries in person at their office on West Street.

2.5.2 Due to public demand, a set of accompanying notes to the boards were prepared by the consultant team and made available to the public from 23 September.

2.5.3 In response to the volume of public interest, a day of public consultation workshops was arranged for 8 October at Carrickfergus Town Hall. The day involved one 2 hour session with local 6th form pupils, who undertook a number of exercises about the plan. This was followed by 3 2 hour sessions with members of the public during which proposals were explained and discussed at length. (See Appendix B)

2.5.4 Carrickfergus Development Company also recorded a video interview with James Hennessey of The Paul Hogarth Company, during which he was asked questions about the draft plan. This video was made publicly available on 8 October on the internet at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZsa4hQ_2l0.

2.5.5 An evening consultation workshop was held on 12 October at the Clarion Hotel, with private landowners with land in the town centre that would be affected by proposals. The draft plans were presented and a facilitated discussion held thereafter. (See Appendix C)

2.5.6 Another evening consultation workshop was held on 15 October with members of Carrickfergus youth groups. The draft plans were presented and a number of exercises undertaken thereafter. (See Appendix D)

2.5.7 It also understood that individuals and organisations from the town held their own meetings, some of which were open to the public, to discuss the draft masterplan and to formulate responses.

3. Feedback Format and Methodology

3.1 Feedback Forms

A4 Feedback forms were placed at both exhibitions and on the DSD website. These invited members of the public to answer a series of questions and provide comments. (See Appendix E). The questions were intentionally open in format to encourage respondents to elaborate on their opinions. The provision of a name and contact details were optional requirements of the form.

3.2. Feedback Process

3.2.1 Members of the public were invited to post their completed feedback forms in boxes provided at both exhibitions, or directly to The Paul Hogarth Company by mail or a dedicated email address.

3.2.2. In addition to feedback forms, letters, reports and petitions were also submitted and accepted as consultation feedback.

3.2.3. Some members of the public chose to correspond directly with DSD and The Council regarding the draft masterplan. This information was relayed back to the consultant team as appropriate.

3.3. Processing of Feedback Responses

All submitted public consultation feedback was collated, read, numbered and filed by The Paul Hogarth Company. Key points from each response were recorded on a spreadsheet, with a tally system used to calculate the number of responses per topic (See Appendix A.) The Paul Hogarth Company then summarised these findings by way of this report to the project client and advisory group.

4. Public Consultation Feedback

4.1 Quantity of Feedback

4.1.1 A total of 328 separate consultation responses were submitted by individuals and organisations. This may include multiple responses from one party, although evidence suggests that there were relatively few instances of this occurring. This figure does not include individual signatures contained in petitions. (see 4.3)

4.1.2. Of the total responses received, 59 (18%) chose exceed 1 page of A4.

4.1.3 The digital version of the consultation boards was downloaded a total of 1018 times from the DSD website and the accompanying notes 803 times. (by 13/10/09.)

4.1.4 The Youtube interview about the masterplan was viewed a total of 382 times (by 9/11/09)

4.2 Late and / or Rejected Feedback

4.2.1 At the time of writing, 5 feedback responses were received after the end date of the Public Consultation Period. It was decided by the client and advisory group to accept these responses and to consider their content accordingly.

4.2.2 None of the feedback received during the consultation period has been rejected for any reason.

4.3 Petitions and Group Responses

- 4.3.1 A total to 2 signed petitions and 1 submission from a group of individuals were received.
- 4.3.2 Each Petition and Group Response document has been counted as 1 submission in the total figure of responses given in 4.1.1.
- 4.3.3 1 petition sent by Carrickfergus Joymount Presbyterian Church contained 149 signatures in support of the following statement:

“We object to the Marine Gardens proposals in the Carrickfergus Town Centre Draft Masterplan. The Gardens should be modernised into a new community park to provide much needed amenities such as public toilets, open space for group activities, gardens, picnic area and an up to date modern children’s adventure area and play-park. We also object to the removal of the car park opposite the library and the marine highway being reduced to two lanes.”

- 4.3.4 1 petition accompanied by an anonymous cover letter, was delivered in full to Carrickfergus Borough Council and sent incomplete to the consultants, contained 2365 signatures (recounted from a stated 2332) in support of the following statement:

“I object strongly to the Marine Gardens, presently unspoilt open spaces being used as a development site of apartments and businesses. The gardens should be modernised and turned into a new community park, designed by the community, providing much needed amenities such as public toilets, open space for group activities; gardens, picnic areas & children’s adventure areas. I also object to the development of the Fisherman’s Quay which ought to be retained as a water – sports area & beach. The proposals for the Marine Gardens area should be removed from the masterplan.”

- 4.3.5 One feedback report entitled “Gloria Prisca Novatur 2010” was submitted under the names of 18 individuals.

4.4 Feedback from Organisations

Feedback was received under the name of the following 14 organisations (followed with the type of feedback in brackets)

- Broad and Broad Consultancy Limited (Letter)
- Samuel Wilson Design Associates (Letter)
- The Parish of Carrickfergus, St Nicholas Church (Letter)
- Carrickfergus Joymount Presbyterian Church (Petition)
- Turley Associates on behalf of Sainsburys (Letter)
- Carrickfergus Central Residents Community Association (Report and Letter)
- Disability Action (Letter)
- Carrickfergus Sailing Club (Letter)
- Greenisland Heritage and Environment Group (Report)
- First Carrickfergus Presbyterian Church (Letter)
- Carrickfergus and District Historical Society (Letter)
- Coast Road Hotel (Letter)
- Carrickfergus Borough Councils (Report)
- The Regimental Association of the Ulster Defence Regiment (Letter)

4.5 Feedback Content by Quantity

4.5.1 From the 328 responses, the consultant team identified 370 different topic points raised as consultation feedback. (see Appendix A)

4.5.2 The 370 different topic points can be split into the following broad subject areas.

Split of Feedback by Subject Area (Ranked by Percentage of All Topic Points)

%	Subject Areas	Total
31%	General Issues Town Centre relating to the entire Town Centre	116
18%	Transportation	68
16%	Historic Core	59
13%	The Masterplan / Consultation Process	48
12%	Waterfront	44
7%	Joymount	27
2%	Irish Quarter	8

4.6.2 From the 328 responses, a total of 29 Topic Points received more than 9 mentions from different respondents. These are shown below, ranked by percentage of the total responses.

Most Popular Issues Raised (Ranked by Percentage of Total Respondents)

%	Topic / Point Raised	Total
34%	Oppose Marine Garden Proposals (excluding petitions)	111
29%	More and / or better shops are needed	94
28%	Oppose narrowing Marine Highway	94
23%	Vacant and / or Derelict Properties must be redeveloped	73
16%	Object to more apartment developments	53
13%	Oppose Fisherman's Quay Proposals	43
8%	Rates for shops are too high and / or should be reduced	25
8%	Welcome Masterplan Initiative	25
7%	Masterplan / Town needs more for young people	24
7%	Support the Town Wall Proposals	22
6%	Retain Car Parking at Lancasterian Street	21
6%	Town Centre parking should be free	19
5%	Beaches should be improved	17
5%	Poor condition of streets	16
5%	Masterplan to only benefit developers	16
5%	Like historic charm / character / qualities	15
4%	New businesses must be encouraged to the town centre	14
4%	Oppose Spine Road proposal	14
4%	Prioritise the historic core	14
4%	Concerned over vehicles on pedestrian areas	12
4%	Oppose removing cinema *	12
4%	Provide bridge or underpass to castle	12
3%	Views to the Castle must be retained	11
3%	Overall drab / dreary / shabby look of town centre	11
3%	Support narrowing Marine Highway	11
3%	Reject / Oppose The Masterplan	11
3%	Concerned over who will pay for projects	10
3%	Support Greenway proposals	10
3%	Disagree that the Marine Highway is a barrier	10

(* = Not proposed by draft masterplan)

4.6 Notes

- 4.6.1 Statistics are provided to highlight the issues raised by respondents who participated in the public consultation process. They should not, however, be interpreted as a vote on proposals, due the consultation methodology employed.
- 4.6.2 Topics / Points raised by less than 10 respondents are not necessarily less important or valid than those that appeared more frequently. All comments received will therefore be taken into account.
- 4.6.3 Insufficient information exists to determine the background of respondents and therefore if they are representative of the entire population of Carrickfergus
- 4.6.4 A number of lobby groups arose during the course of the consultation period and their activities may have influenced the outcome of responses.
- 4.6.5 The Client and Consultants teams wish to thank all who took time to participate in the public consultation process.

Appendices

Appendix A – Topic Area tally list

Appendix B - Feedback from Consultation Events, 8 October 2009

Appendix C – Feedback from Consultation Event, 12 October 2009

Appendix D – Feedback from Consultation Event, 15 October 2009

Appendix E – Feedback Form

Appendix F – Photographs of Consultation Process

Appendix A is contained within this document.

Appendices B – F are available to view at Carrickfergus Development Company, 8 West Street, Carrickfergus.

<u>HISTORIC CORE</u>		Focus on High Street	1
Refurbishment of old buildings/unused	73		
More/better shops needed	73	<u>IRISH QUARTER</u>	
Uniqueness of retail offer	2	Support links	4
support walls proposals	21	Poor quality	6
Rates too high/reduce rates for shops	25	Support proposals	5
Poor conditions of streets	16	Extra Vision not in keeping	2
Shops too 'cheap' in offer	20	Pedestrian link Tesco with two rail stations	1
Historic charm/quality	15	Victoria St. too narrow for trees	1
Prioritise historic core	13	Need more proposals for this area	1
Support Heritage trail	1	Welcome shared surface	1
Park in front of St. Nicholas	1		
Like harbour car park	1	<u>WATERFRONT</u>	
Council should be open	1	No tall buildings/more lower buildings	3
Delivery vehicles an issue	2	Remove derelict boats	1
Trees in High Street	1	Extend Marina	5
Living above shops good	1	Markets on East Peir	1
Retain car park on Lancasterian Street	22	Visitor conference centre bad idea	5
Like compact town centre	3	Remove co-op building	2
Move charity shops	1	Radar station should be removed	5
Wetherspoons problem	1	Improve castle lighting	1
Overall 'shabby' look/dreary/messy	11	Water channel link not a good idea	1
Support Davy Street extension	1	Oppose development at Sainsburys	2
Vehicles on pedestrian areas	12	Support all proposals	1
Lack of nightlife	1	Support Plaza	3
More cafes	4	Can't walk around Marina	1
Better lighting	1	Oppose Bridges across Marina entrance	2
Like castle	4	Need centre for disabled sailing sail ability	1
Like Shops	1	Reject west pier changes	1
More craft shops	2	Oppose historic ships	2
Oppose steps at castle	1	Upgrade Legg Park	1
Remove south of West Street	1	Allow free access to castle courtyard	1
Harmonise shop units	1	Remove pontoons from West pier	1
Oppose Development at St. Nicholas Hall	2	Improve water quality	1
Don't obscure views to St. Nicholas	1	Sailing club land "not properly illustrated"	1
Redevelop De Courcey Centre	1	Support castle proposals	1
Renovate north gate	2	Support walking routes	1
Access to Belltower	1	Put frontage on south side of Marine Highway	1
Traders agree to management regime	1	Make Marina accessible to local people	1
Lack of facilities	1	Support improving area	2
Narrow streets	3	Need facilities for anglers	1
Upgrade shopfronts	5	Oppose water channel	3
Widen old streets	4	Accommodate cruise ships	1
Purchase Albert Rd/St Brides properties by wall & remove	1	No more buildings	4
New building on wall at Irish Quarter (remove)	1	remove existing buildings	1
Oppose extension of Antrim Street	1	Like Legg park/object to changes	2
Oppose additional retail units	1	Put tourist office at castle car park	1
New Square at Town Hall	1	Need jet ski facilities	2
Extended castle opening times	1	Don't separate maritime museum and ships	1
Ownership concerns of vacant buildings	1	Oppose development at harbour car park	2
Oppose access on walls/wall proposals	3	No tall buildings	1
Oppose Development near St. Nicholas	1	Support Park Street expansion	1
Widen pavements	1	Question water round castle	2
Oppose Market Place proposals	1	Co-op should have northern frontage	1
Move cinema to historic core	3	Keep public toilets	1
Need ideas for Town Hall	4	Don't demolish hotel	1
Dislike figurines at castle	1	Oppose all waterfront proposals	1
Dislike Town Hall colour	2		
Youth centre needed	1		

JOYMOUNT

No building on Marine Gardens (see petitions)	109	Need to encourage new business	14
Oppose marina at Fisherman's Quay	42	Need to encourage new residents	1
Support mews development	3	More toilets	2
Support linking parks	1	Like walking routes	1
Watersports at Fisherman's Quay	7	Urgent delivery needed	1
Oppose moving boat yard to new location	2	Too ambitious	1
Support Fisherman's Quay proposals	6	Improve xmas lights	1
Don't block sunlight	1	Post office should be in town	3
Support developing Marine Gardens	1	Housing - needs more	2
More info on Fisherman's Quay proposal	3	"Concrete jungle"	6
Access Shaftsbury by Woodsides	1	More open space/green space	8
Reinstate Shaftsbury water feature	1	too many pubs	1
Use Culvert between Woodsides & McKeens Ave as a link	1	No need for residential	3
Inconvenient location of boat yard	1	Need more for young to do	24
Support Shaftsbury Park proposals	1	Need more for local people	5
New slipway opposite PSNI station	1	Don't change town centre	2
Contradicts Planning policy (Marine Gardens)	1	Need more consideration of churches	1
Courtyard an asset	3	Bias to developments, not car users	2
Oppose links to Tesco	1	Lack of leadership	1
Need toilets at Martine Gardens	5	Litter/graffiti	5
More detail on links to Health Village	1	Disruption during construction	2
Improve Cenotaph	2	Improve market	3
More trees	1	Concern over skateboards	3
Council already relocating bowling club Dunluskin	1	Town centre 'dead'	5
do not develop Woodsides	1	Lack of taxi ranks	2
Divert Marine Highway towards Joymount	1	Castle views retain	1
Concern over future of war memorial	1	Like openness	5

GENERAL TOWN CENTRE

Too much demolition	3	Bowling	5
Too costly - who will pay?	10	ice rink	3
Bridge from Castle to High Street/underpass	11	Putting green	1
Disabled access need consideration	1	Don't get rid of cinema	12
Less apartments	2	Don't get rid of Sainsburys	8
Less Town centre residences	1	Need Design Criteria	1
No apartments on Masterplan	53	Increase population	1
Less hotels on Masterplan	2	Oppose increase population	1
More play areas needed	6	Create jobs in town centre	5
Light pollution	1	Improve disabled access	2
Railing colours bad	2	Improve signage	2
Retain castle views	11	No development at seafront	1
No more museums	4	More for local people	1
Loyalist perception an issue	2	Power station an issue	2
Support connecting town & castle	7	Loss of character due to plan	1
Tescos an issue	6	Support greenways	10
Need more green/wildlife space	2	Indoor market	1
Frustration with council	5	Writers museum	1
Need rain shelters	4	Lift up Kilroot chimney	1
Need activities	1	Museum to Belgian Soldiers	1
Keep the courtyard	1	Open St. Nicholas	1
Untidiness/litter	2	Gaol as museum	1
Ban smoking	1	Need to improve nighttime environment	1
Ban chewing gum	1	Like seafront	3
Improve beach	16	Object to hiding Kilroot	1
No town centre	4	Skateboard parks	4
		Entice civic pride	1
		Get 'rid' of banks (move)	4
		No more hotels	1

APPENDIX A

CARRICKFERGUS DRAFT TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Can sewerage infrastructure support development?	2	No multi-story car parks	3
Commercial viability	1	Parking should be affordable	3
Oppose shared surfaces	1	Too many vehicles	1
More seating for elderly	1	Busy bus re-introduction	2
Emergency points	1	Solve traffic	1
Town centre maps needed	1	Support Spine Road	4
Continuous shops between Sainsburys and town centre	1	Free parking for first 2 hours	2
Support additional housing	2	Oppose renaming Marine Highway	4
More music venues	1	Support P+R	4
Extend seafront walk both ways	1	Improve B90 as a by pass	4
More inclusive events/festivals	1	Oppose transport proposals	4
recreate medieval architecture	1	Support underground parking	2
Need theatre/arts centre	4	Support 1-way proposals	1
Campsite/caravan park	1	Oppose 1-way proposals	1
Need to think about winter use	2	Improve road crossings	1
Need better housing	1	More coach parking	1
Need better lighting	1	No more car parks	3
Train staff centrally in welcoming tourists	1	Parking for new residents	1
More tours	1	Retain car parks	1
More for families	2	Leave B90 alone	3
Better nightlife	2	Improve public transport	1
More for Arts/culture	3	Multi-story must be low	1
Crazy golf	1	Tourists to park at St.Brides	1
Oppose greenway	1	Some free car parking	3
No mention of conservation area	1	No multi-story	8
Remove ad hoardings	1	Need bike lanes	6
Improve links to Woodburn Glen/Knockragh	1	Rent a bike scheme	2
Buildings too close together	1	Oppose P+R	1
Improve safety/address to antisocial behaviour	4	Oppose pedestrian areas	1
Support town centre living	2	Parking for churches	2
Commercial validity of proposals	3	Revise white badge scheme	1
More emphasis on retail	1	Make Spine Road a by-pass	1
Development should be 'slow'	1	Support cycle lanes	1
No more shops	1	Do not move car parks	2
		Taxi rank essential	1
TRANSPORT		Oppose on street parking on Marine Highway	2
Bus station needed	1	Improve underpasses	3
More info on parking needed	1	Shops too far from centre	1
Narrowing Marine Highway should be opposed	94	Like accessibility	1
Spine road will bypass town centre	6	Oppose underground cark parking	1
Support narrowing Marine Highway	11	More underpasses	1
Parking should be free	19	Accidents at Mckeens Avenue	1
Remove Marine Highway	3	Remove underpasses	4
Traffic wardens an issue	2	Stop illegal parking	3
Marine Highway NOT a barrier	10	Too many cars	2
Traffic islands needed	2	Support multi-story	1
Oppose Spine Road due to traffic in housing Areas	14	more blue badge/disabled parking	2
P+R at Downshire - where?	2	Concern over traffic at Tesco's	1
Barrier is an issue	4		
Clipperstown for P+R	1		
Widen Taylors Avenue	1		
Need safe crossings	1		
Road surfaces need improved	2		
Must not remove car parks/reduce	3		
Plan will create new barriers	1		
More parking needed	1		

PROCESS

Venues unavailable/not open	4
Drawings difficult to read/understand	7
Sketches poor	1
Welcome/support Masterplan initiative	25
Give final MP to everyone in Carrick	1
"Hidden agendas"	1
Question no. 3 notes missing	5
"Reject" Masterplan or "oppose"/redo	11
Lack of thought	1
Charter for developers to make money	16
Waste of money	8
Need to involve community more	2
Want to view plans again in draft	3
Feedback form inappropriate	1
Consultation sessions needed more publicity	1
How will this be funded?	3
Colour code Streets	1
Need to change	4
Make sure its delivered	3
Consult youth	1
should have been more consultation	2
Lack of hard copy consultation docs	1
Equality not addressed	1
Ownership of proposals need clarified	1
Timescale for actions?	1
Need to ID quick wins	1
Welcome consultation	2
Albert Road should be included	1
Too much development	3
Consultation period too short	3
No public meetings	1
Too ambitious	1
No-one available to talk to	1
Not enough detail/annotation	2
Churches more than heritage assets	2
Council should be credited	2
Bias to sailors	1
What will happen to owners of land?	1
Community should have been consulted at the beginning	2
Don't change anything	3
Concerned plan will raise rates	2
No info on building heights	1
Need more publicity	1
Improve links with all public bodies	1
Vision statement should be shorter	1
New objective "regen of TC to act as catalyst to town & boro	1
Council guidance on use of MP needed	1
Feedback form needs more questions	1