

**Extracts from the Minutes of the Sustainable Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 December 2010**

**SCOSC/10/56 Local Development Framework (South): Dunstable Town Centre Strategy
and Masterplan**

In accordance with the Public Participation Procedure, as set out in paragraph 2 of Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution, the Chairman of the Committee invited those members of the public who had registered to speak on this item to address the Committee. Each speaker was allowed a maximum of three minutes.

Representations were received on behalf of members of the Dorchester Close Residents Action Group and residents of Dorchester Close. These speakers raised issues in relation to the uncertainty and stress of their current position and the process for serving a compulsory purchase order. It was commented that whilst residents did not want to leave their properties they were amenable to talking to the Council about a possible compromise although they would seek compensatory costs. Residents also commented on the level of communication they received from the Council. It was queried whether alternative locations had been considered for the proposed site of the multi-story car park.

Concerns were raised by a speaker on behalf of Dunstable Baptist Church in relation to the quantity and accessibility of car parking for visitors that was proposed in the masterplan in the vicinity of the church.

Two residents of Kingscroft Avenue also raised issues in relation to the proposed multi-storey car park and suggested this would result in blight to properties and increase anti-social behaviour and traffic in the area. Several questions were also raised in relation to the current location of the Asda store and information that had been requested from the Council.

In response to questions the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development stated that the Asda store in Dunstable meets the standards set out in the Local Plan 1995. The relocation of the Asda store was not considered as part of the masterplan exercise nor was there any case to substantiate a move of the store. Funding for the masterplan exercise was through the growth area fund and as such there was no cost to the ratepayer. Commercial partners would be sought by the Council in order to provide the funding to deliver aspects of the Masterplan, there would be minimum funding provided by the Council. The Portfolio Holder further stated that compulsory purchase orders were a last resort and they were only considered if it was in the public's interest. The Council would seek negotiation before considering serving a compulsory purchase order.

The Chairman commented that once the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the Masterplan its recommendations would be considered by the Executive which would consider whether the Masterplan should be

adopted. The Committee then received a presentation from Mr T Bridgman from the consultants AECOM regarding the Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan. He outlined the proposals, consultation responses and implications for the Masterplan. It was also commented during the presentation that if proposals for a multi-story car park come forward as part of a planning application for redevelopment, any impact on adjoining properties would need to be carefully assessed, and this would be the subject of a further public consultation.

Following the presentation Members discussed the proposals in detail and raised issues in relation to a number of aspects including integrating the four quadrants of the town centre together and the concerns of residents in relation to the siting of the multi-storey car park and the properties at Dorchester Close. Members also queried issues in relation to traffic and freight movement in Dunstable and the importance of integrating the proposals for the Masterplan with the Local Transport Plan 3 and the Local Area Transport Plan for Dunstable.

In response to questions the Major Project Officer stated that the Council was appointing a specialist consultant to advise on matters relating to the acquisition of properties. Compulsory purchase of the properties at Dorchester Close would only be considered as a last resort. The officer also stated there was presently no intention to gain access to the proposed multi-storey car park from Kingscroft Avenue or Kingsway.

Officers stated that they would clarify if there were any inconsistencies between the Masterplan and the Local Transport Plan in relation to car park access. It was also commented that further communication would be undertaken with residents in the area regarding the proposals.

In summarising the discussion the Chairman commented that the turnaround in retail in Dunstable town centre needed to be reflected in the masterplan and there needed to be some elaboration on the principles of shared space.

NOTED

the consultation responses received to the draft Dunstable Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan.

RESOLVED

that the Executive be informed that it is the view of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Dunstable Town Centre Strategy and Masterplan should be endorsed.