

Planning Committee

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There has occurred so much in the last quarter with decisions that will affect Dover for future generations and we have been active with all items.

Dover Western Docks Revival (DWDR)

I outlined this in my last newsletter and whilst the community has lost the historic Prince of Wales Pier it is important that pier leisure activity is provided in the new scheme. Dover Harbour Board (DHB) has recently submitted application for consent to alter the listed Esplanade Quay to provide access from the New Marina to Wellington Dock, this will be known as "The Cut". We have made comment with regard to the materials as no detailed plans of "The Cut" are provided with the application, also that it should not be constructed until the new marina (under phase 2 of development) is completed, this in order to ensure the marina and alternative pier facilities are delivered before construction of the cargo distribution centre (Phase3). Otherwise, any shortfall of funding could result in the infill of the tidal basin and enable phase 3 to be constructed without providing the new marina. We continue to press DHB for "quality" within the project

Dover Leisure Centre

Consultation of the replacement of Dover Leisure Centre by Dover District Council (DDC) has been underway. The DDC Cabinet had recommended the facility be located at Whitfield and initially no consultation process was proposed. Following public concern this has taken place to seek what facilities the

community want and the preferred location between Whitfield and the former Buckland Mill site, this being included to appease the strong feelings that Dover is losing a leisure facility. A Project Advisory Group was set up and consists of DDC Cabinet members and a community representative who has already publicly declared Whitfield as the ideal location.

I have attended both Advisory Group meetings as a member of the public and it is clear from the latest meeting (19th May) that only Whitfield is being considered as summarized by the DDC Director of Environment and Corporate Assets "Remains as Cabinet preferred and consultants are working on this".

The timescales are for DDC Cabinet to have details of proposed facilities for July Cabinet meeting and details of site location in the September Cabinet meeting.

The Dover Society has made strong representation for Buckland Mill location as the only Dover proposed site and also sought that if the "District" Leisure Centre is located at Whitfield the community of Dover, which is over 30,000, should have a similar facility as enjoyed by the community of Deal. In Dover nearly 40% of residents rely on public transport whereas Whitfield is 11%. We emphasise the need for facilities in a town suffering from deprivation and as such require a "local and accessible" facility.

DTIZ (St James Development)

Site now cleared and, as in mid-May, work commenced on the hotel area. No details

of any of the "under offer" tenants of the shopping area. 69% of the site has either been signed up or under offer.

In clearing the site the cobbled street stones have been put in store and we are seeking these be used within the landscaping of the area.

Castle Street

This is possibly the most important street in Dover, a tourist route from Market Square to the castle and regularly photographed and featured in media. Most properties are Grade II listed and sit within the castle conservation area. Formerly a "commercial hub" over the last few years has seen these properties no longer function on a commercial basis as businesses relocate, often to Whitfield.

Recently planning applications to seek change of use from commercial to residential have been submitted and the Society fully supports this rather than see buildings of historical importance fall into disrepair and the resulting eyesore. However any residential use must be for family occupation and not sub-letting through HMO's.

However, all applications are for high density one bed flats. We have opposed this as there is grave concern it will move in the same direction as Folkestone Road with resulting rubbish accumulation and anti-social activities.

Over the last five years I have sought DDC to restrict the development of "shoe-box" one bed flats and Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) as these are a major contributory factor to the increase of deprivation levels in Dover. Thanet has had these problems and placed such restrictions but sadly DDC ignore this

problem area.

Section 215 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990

We pioneered this in Dover with remarkable success seeing nearly 100 properties improve. We have sought to continue this with DDC but our efforts to date in seeking an update and further action have failed to stir DDC. The small group that I have on this project are, naturally, concerned at the apparent lack of interest from DDC.

Other matters

We continue to press for intermediate care facilities at Dover Hospital, seek improvements to A2 and A20 with support for the third Thames crossing and the introduction of variable speed in the current 40mph area on the A20.

Chair of Dover Society Planning Committee

At the AGM it was announced I had resigned as Chair a decision I had great difficulty in reaching. Since the AGM I have received many calls from members asking me to continue and I have advised the Society Executive that I am prepared to do so. However, the Planning Committee needs another two members and ideally one from River and one from Whitfield so if you can help please let me know.

I have enjoyed my chairmanship over the last six years and shall continue to attempt to deliver the core objectives of the Society as per its constitution, also to recognize and adhere that planning is non-political and must not be influenced by biased pressure and favour.