

# **BEESTON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN/AREA ACTION PLAN**

## **ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### CONSULTATION REPORT

#### Purpose of report

This report summarises the outcome of the public consultation carried out in April 2006 on the Beeston Town Centre Area Action Plan. This plan forms part of the local development framework which accords with all the corporate objectives of the Council.

The appendix to this report lists the main points of consensus that emerge from the analysis of the questionnaire responses. It can be seen that there is broad support for retail expansion and for refurbishment of any parts of The Square that would remain after redevelopment to the south. There is some support for mixed uses in areas that have been traditionally "employment only" areas such as the Bartons and Myfords sites off Chilwell Road. There is encouragement for more leisure use in central Beeston and a wish to continue to provide free car parking in the town. Some responses were predominantly anti-tram and anti-Tesco, although the leaflet was not specifically seeking views on this.

### **APPENDIX**

#### Beeston Town Centre Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Consultation

#### Summary of main points of consensus in responses to questionnaire leaflet

##### Shopping

The introduction of an improved range and quality of retailers in the town centre was strongly supported by respondents. Generally it was recognised that in order to achieve this there would be a requirement for larger stores. The consensus was that this requirement was for comparison rather than convenience goods.

A significant number of respondents supported the creation of larger stores within a redeveloped Square. A slightly smaller number of respondents supported larger stores on both the High Road and The Square, some suggesting that there should also be a mix with smaller units.

##### The Market

Almost all respondents had a view about the market; only a small number felt that there was no longer a requirement for a market. A number of people considered the existing market should run on only one day. Many were in favour of a regular farmers' market and other speciality markets. Overwhelmingly, respondents considered that the market should be relocated- and the majority of these suggested that a new market facility should be created at The Square. A number of other locations were also suggested including: Sainsbury's car park or precinct area, the Foster Avenue car park; the Willoughby Garage site (Wollaton Road); Villa Street; the Broadgate areas; and the Tesco site.

### Shops outside the town centre on Wollaton Road and Chilwell High Road

The majority of respondents considered that the shopping areas on the edge of the town centre had a role to play, either as a local shopping function or for providing specialist or "niche" shopping. The issues raised, which were supportive of retail in these areas, revolved around the importance of parking and the need to improve the attractiveness of the areas.

Amongst a wide range of matters raised under "other retail issues" there were some themes which were mentioned a significant number of times. A recurring theme was the need for an improvement in the quality and range of retailers locating in Beeston. Generally respondents considered there to be no need for new supermarkets and a significant number said they did not wish to see the Tesco development proceed.

### Public Transport Issues

The majority of people wanted to keep the bus station in its current location. An overwhelming majority believed the bus station should be integrated with the tramstop. A common remark was to ensure that the toilet facilities are maintained or improved in the new bus station and that it is under cover.

Many people requested better connections to the train station which is currently "out on a limb".

### Car parking

The largest response in this category was to keep the multi-storey in its current position. A number of the respondents expressed concern that the potential loss of the multi-storey car park would have a detrimental impact on the town centre shops.

The predominant location suggested for additional car parking was the Tesco site, while other suggestions included Sainsbury's, Willoughbys Garage site, the Fire Station site, and Foster Avenue.

Several people made the point that parking should be kept free in Beeston to attract shoppers to the area. There were also several calls for separate car

parking to be situated at the north and south sides of the town centre to accommodate people arriving from either side without having to cross the centre.

#### Traffic through the shopping centre (Wollaton Road/Station Road)

A large number of people believed that the current road layout/traffic lights at this location were perfectly adequate but a significant number stated that traffic should be discouraged whilst a smaller number believed merely that traffic measures to slow speeds should be introduced. Some observed that in their view the only current problem is that cars can become stranded in the middle of the crossing due to the lights changing when traffic is already queuing through the junction. A small number of people stated that no through traffic should be allowed here at all and others suggested that more pedestrian crossings should be available on other parts of Wollaton Road and Station Road. Overall, those believing that measures need to be taken at the crossing were evenly balanced with those stating that the current arrangements are acceptable.

#### Leisure uses

A significant number were in favour of redeveloping The Square for “evening uses” while others were in favour of providing new evening activity at other key areas - Broadgate proving to be a popular suggestion. Conversely, a large proportion stated that there was no need for further evening activity, a popular comment being that if residents wanted “night life” they would go into Nottingham city centre for the evening. Some had concerns for security, mentioning the problems that extra night life would bring and concerns about the lack of policing to deal with them. There were several requests to create something for teenagers to do in the evenings. The most popular suggestions were for a cinema, a multi-purpose centre for arts/cultural events/community centre, a leisure centre/swimming pool/gym and cafes/terraces.

#### Housing

There were more respondents against than in favour of the need to identify sites for new high density housing and student accommodation. Many people specifically stated there was no need for more student accommodation or that there was enough already. Many negative comments were given about Beeston becoming “studentsville” and impacting on local residents’ lives, with many noting the untidiness of student houses.

A significant number of respondents said that student accommodation should only be built on the university campus.

A large number of respondents agreed with the options to redevelop existing buildings and make better use of space over shops, in order to create new housing.

## Employment uses

The question on the leaflet asked whether the employment land off Chilwell Road should be retained fully in employment use or whether it should be “predominantly employment but with other uses included”. Support was about 3 to 1 for the mixed use option, with respondents specifically mentioning the need for the college to expand, for students’ housing and recreation areas and for other leisure and parking needs. Several pointed out that mixed use was more likely to have evening activity and should therefore be less prone to crime. In contrast, some who supported the “full employment use” option pointed out that problems with residents’ amenity often result from mixed use situations.

Respondents generally supported the options for new offices to be located outside the town centre, partly because of the large parking need they generate. The Siemens site in Beeston Rylands was the most popular location stated for new offices, although Chilwell Road also received support.

## Public areas

The responses were approximately 2 to 1 in favour of a comprehensive refurbishment of the centre’s pedestrianised areas, particularly of The Square which was described as “tired-looking” several times. There was support for more trees and flowerbeds and more seats, but less street furniture.

There were divided views about public art. Several people called for the scrapping of the present Square statue, referred to by one respondent as a pigeon play area. However there was affection expressed for the Beekeeper, some suggesting that he should be moved to The Square. Generally, those supporting the introduction of new public art were outnumbered 6 to 1 by those against, many of whom felt that it can encourage vandalism.

Another related theme that emerged from the responses was the need for control of unruly behaviour by youths, including the abuse of the pedestrianised area by cyclists and, less commonly, car drivers.

On the issue of green spaces, there was a significant number of respondents who disagreed with the leaflet’s suggestion that “Beeston is well provided with green open spaces”. A majority of people opposed the idea of enhancing these spaces by using development to bring activity to them, some of these mentioning their preference to retain their calm ambience.

### Miscellaneous comments

There was an invitation on the leaflet for people to write comments which had not been covered by the preceding headings. By far the most commonly expressed views were that the planned Tesco store was not needed and that the tram line through Beeston was not needed. A few respondents suggested other routes through Beeston for the tram and several were concerned about the delay in the decision about whether the tram would be given the go-ahead. There were also some responses expressing support for the tram.

Many of the responses criticising the Tesco decision also expressed a need for more small and specialist shops. In contrast, a similar number stated that there should be more “big name” or anchor stores. There were a few comments attacking the number of charity shops in the town.

There were a number of further comments relating to the need for good public toilets and the need to curb anti-social behaviour.

There were very few comments made on the heritage or “image” aspects of the town although some new signage was suggested, to help improve image.