



Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council

27th February 2024

Neighbourhood Planning Engagement

Feedback

Overall

Attendees: Approximately 55

Newsletter requests 20

'I arrived 4.55 pm already the event looked successful the Community Centre was looking full'

'The comments around the consultation event were positive, I heard no adverse comments on the documents, and residents were interested in the future of Leiston. Several newcomers to Leiston all spoke positively about the town, commenting on the possible need for new shops facilities, no one saw SZC as negative, good for employment and growth'.

'It was pleasing the support there was for the Neighbourhood Plan'

Vision and Objectives

First of all, there were several positive comments about the Vision and the Objectives, including how it was put together, because they liked it. Good feedback on the fact it included Net Zero, environment and Biodiversity.

Our Vision does not seem to include sufficient input from the NHS in terms of Dental and Heath Facilities at the Doctors surgery. We build houses but do not match with services. Our young people deserve better.

Traffic and Transport

Concerned about the volume and speed of traffic from SZB and now SZC, will see site workers vans down King Georges Ave. SZB to end of king Georges Ave is like a race track - why not enforce a speed limit to make it safe and enjoyable for locals to access the beach on foot and bike.

SZC was mentioned a few times including concern over limited resources to put the infrastructure of highways in.

As a resident of Crown St I am concerned about access to my property as it is on a narrow road with parked cars on the road and a two way system. I experience difficulties accessing and leaving my driveway (a small one) as there is a blind spot due to parked cars on the road. Cars also whizz round the corner by Urban Rd which makes it more hazardous when trying to leave my property. I am unable to drive into my property if driving from the Valley Rd end as cars are parked next to my property. There

just isn't enough space for me to manoeuvre the car onto the driveway (resident has included an illustrative map).

Could there be a residents parking review ahead of SZC

Residential parking.

The speed limit of Lovers Lane and the impact on the safety of the footpath to the beach. Lower speed limit and make walking and cycling to the beach more comfortable.

Speedwatch as you turn into the bottom of KGA (by the boat) should be 30mph

Too many large lorries using town what will, happen with Sizewell C development, discussion around plans in place to deal with these met with scepticism.

Questions around when planned Traffic Management scheme will be introduced – overdue !!

Other items brought up in conversation were positive and negative comments on the Transport and Traffic Strategy issues including start dates and whether cycle routes would be used by an ageing population

There was a good deal of interest in keeping Sizewell traffic out of the town and it was recognised that the traffic improvements aim to do this.

There was support for wider pavements and better pedestrianisation.

Traders in the High Street were concerned to understand if deliveries could still take place under the one way system.

Good support for the walking and cycling strategy and better use of footpaths.

Proposed one way system

this is not a good idea

Gas Hill was closed recently which served as a trial run for traffic issues on a one-way system

shops front the roads in the town and when the shop doors are open, traffic fumes will simply add toxins to the atmosphere and in the shops the proposed seating on High Street will not be used due to excessive traffic turning left

pedestrians are inhaling fumes

what happens when the traffic backs up by the White Horse public house as lorries slow down/

what happens when the traffic backs up Gas Hill to King Street?

Sizewell - there's only a short period in the day when the vehicles are on site, mostly offsite overnight and weekend parking

the traffic issues are outside of Sizewell working hours

incompetent drivers, and elderly drivers who only come to the local shops on a local drive, if they miss a turning will have to go round the one-way system once again making unnecessary journey time and fuel expense a burden

there are more traffic movements with a one-way system because obviously it produces twice the volume of traffic in half the distance

a one - way system doesn't suit a local town because it is too congested and too confusing

the shops require footfall and traffic to access independent shops to keep the independent shops in business

congestion caused by a one-way system will feed into 'out of town' and 'travel to other town' alternatives and lose the local population

local business owners need to have delivery vehicle access

local business owners need to have the facility for disabled drivers to pull up outside the shop for the disabled and elderly and less mobile, to use the shop

currently congestion is caused by lorries unloading off the main roads and this will only get worse with a one-way system

Speed cameras

these should be installed at each of the town entrances especially the Sizewell end of the town

employers should not pay fines for employees speeding

the sports centre car park is overloaded with parking on the road, and this is before football matches start

Town Centre and Masterplan / Planning

It was rewarding to hear how the town with its proposed new town master Plan was welcomed by all I spoke with.

Building on brownfield or unused sites in the centre of Leiston should be prioritised and incentivised. This will bring footfall into the town and (illegible) it's also much greener than building on the edge of town and forcing young people into their cars

Shops and space above shops turn into flats for first time buyers should be incentivised.

Tony's fried chicken and Leiston local is an absolute eyesore. Leiston is lovely quirky friendly town let's keep it this way

Garish signage is awful

Please could something be done about the awful garish signage in the town centre it brings down the look of the town so badly, also the tatty buildings in Leiston – The Crown, post office area by the phone box, the old Saint Margaret's shop, Valley Rd the old cycle shop. When visiting Woodbridge and Beccles the shop signs are more subtle and tasteful which creates a more welcoming atmosphere to the town.

I am aware that the signage is a concern for many Leiston residents I also appreciate enforcement have visited the premises and it's not a straightforward process to remove the signs could the Town Council have a policy that local businesses have to follow in keeping with the look of the town.

Double yellow lines everywhere reduces footfall and income for small businesses, sadly if you keep cars away you keep customers away

Supermarket

There should be an aesthetic plan for Leiston with guidance and support for independent shops.

Heritage quarter should be prized and properly funded - moving the library and council out of the buildings in post office square should not happen until businesses, amenities and (illegible) are lined up to replace them,

Please pollard the line tree so that people can sit on the granite seats underneath!

Please would plans take into account the historic nature of the town especially preserving the old shop fronts.

The need to make the outlook of the Town Centre more appealing, including shop face signage.

The lack of a Supermarket raised it's head a few times as did the Crown and HMO's.
Supermarket in CLT area.

I support the plans for the town centre redevelopment and the new layout for the High Street

Car park to relieve on street parking.

A lot of comments around the empty shops, the need for new ones and the need to address the issue of some shops spoiling the appeal of the town, namely Black Horse.

The number of dilapidated properties in Leiston - number 16 Sizewell Rd, in the High St, the carpet shop the building above Nistor's and the former cycle shop in Valley Rd.

The chicken shop was mentioned by many

An interesting issue was the cost of a dropped kerb, it is £200 for advice and and a further £200 for the work. It was suggested this could ease the on street parking issue and could be a good way to encourage EV home charging. Is there something one of the Place Board projects could do to offer a concession for EV's or places where parking restrictions are going to be introduced?

Some had been given section 5 of the Masterplan, rather than the full document and were concerned that the Film Theatre was not mentioned. We need ESC to publish the Masterplan so that a clear message is available.

Market Square was a popular concept and many commented on the wasted land behind Gracie's.

No one expressed a desire to keep the Sizewell Rd properties, more a need to refresh the town centre.

The Heritage Square was mentioned and the need to ensure the Barclays Bank building should be retained as an asset.

Community Centre, King George's Avenue. If the Waterloo Centre is to be fully developed as a new community hub, is there any need to retain this building? it would be an ideal site for housing redevelopment and the proceeds from the sale would provide much needed funds for the town centre redevelopment.

Dilapidated/derelict buildings in the town centre. At present, the town centre is not a pretty sight! St. Margaret's old charity shop has been boarded up for years and is an eyesore, also the following: Old cycle shop, Valley Road. ---again, boarded up for a very long time and no sign of any progress. The Crown Pub, King George's Ave. In a very poor state of maintenance and is beginning to look very run down on this very prominent site. A tidy up and removal of weeds in the car park would help, although the frontage needs a complete re-paint, and most of the building is boarded up, and has been for years! The old sheds at the back of the car park are ripe for demolition. Again, no real sign of any progress with making use of what is a fine piece of town architecture.

Town parking

making the Co-op car park smaller is not a good idea
parking is at a premium in the town and there needs to be more parking in the town centre
EDF vans occupy parking bays overnight in the Co-op car park and this can be observed at Sizewell shift times
a lot of company vans take up more than one car parking space
car parking is obvious along Grimsey Rd where houses are rented out for multiple occupants each having vans so there are too many vans to park on the nearby roads
commercial vans are blocking local car parks
we don't want more one or two bedroomed houses in the middle of Leiston-we need to keep the town centre free for additional car parking
car parking is critical to attract and retain people in the town otherwise people will just go to old bra and Saxmundham
don't remove car parking outside the library as this is critical for seniors using the library services
see plans to plant trees and install seating outside the library – seen graphics showing young people socialising but the reality is young people move on and car parking space is needed more for the elderly to access library services than a place to sit for youngsters
an aged population won't walk from the Co-op carpark to the library
library offers one of the few pleasures to an ageing population
get rid of the fees at the cinema car park - the 30-minute free tariff is insufficient

Street scene

can't the town council do something about the tacky posters and inflatables outside Tonys and the pizza place on cross street? This does an enormous disservice to the street scene
the inflatable is tied to a vehicle tyre and whilst the inflatable may be taken indoors from time to time, the tyre is left as a hazard on the footpath
uneven footpaths cause danger to the disabled and impaired

Planning

Barclays Bank, Parking provisions on new development properties and the lack of Solar Panels on new properties

Site for large new Supermarket.

Questions and fears of HMOs in town, Black Horse, Crown, Barclays Bank all disapproval.

Whats happening on the old Caravan Site

A conversation I had that may be of use to you is one whereby a lady, whose name I've forgotten I'm afraid, noted that she would like to develop her land for approximately 19 homes. Her land lies on the edge of Leiston, although she wasn't quite sure whether it's within the settlement boundary. Around 7 years she received pre-app advice which noted the chance of receiving planning permission was slim. I advised her to submit her land for consideration for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan as and when the you initiate the call for sites process.

The old caravan park, King George's Avenue. I believe that this land belongs to Suffolk County Council. It has been derelict for years and is now heavily overgrown and ripe for use as either an extension to Charles Adams Close (from which there is access & there is also an access road from KGA.) as social housing or for "greening up" as a wildlife amenity. Or perhaps the County Council should sell it off for re-development ?

Abbey Road: I have no objection to the 100 houses. What it is concerning is the family pub which we do not need and will impact the town Hotel and local pubs

Biodiversity and Green Spaces

Everyone busy chatting at all the stands, except one. Green Spaces. As soon as I presented myself I was greeted with a constant selection of residents very interested in the whole event but with a few comments around the Green Spaces.

Great to see biodiversity featured

Wildlife areas - will anything be put in place for the area near the orchard on the sports field

Could council have a separate event for climate change and environment and biodiversity to develop a strategic approach

Charging points - EV charging points in car parks

Really encouraging to see wildlife and biodiversity on the agenda

I thought there was wildflower planting in the corner of Victory Road recreation ground. I can't see it marked on the map.

Are there any plans for a wildlife area on the sports field next to the orchard

Connecting the green spaces together to generate a green corridor

What about the disused caravan park?

Is there a plan for the verges to be managed for wildlife

Request for acknowledgement of use of the Old Middle School field, failed to record one user. Where is it? How do you access it?

One couple who have used the Public Footpath between Waterloo Avenue – over rail line – to Westwood Hoo consistently over last few years, were unaware of its existence.

Little known awareness of its position, some suggested they may find it then use it for their boys to play football etc.

Speaking personally I'm one of several who until the housing development started used it regularly for dog walks.

Surprise and disapproval at the Leiston Church front graveyard being labelled green space.

“Grow Munroe” Halesworth Grow your own through community garden remained throughout very interested in the Allotment sites – An amazing opportunity for people keen to be self sufficient “ A Community Agriculture Scheme” would reduce food miles & support biodiversity. Suggesting Allotments or old Caravan site behind King George's Avenue.

A second visitor similar scheme “Engaging Land Owners to prioritise “regenerative farming” local produce reduce carbon footprint.

Several comments questioning waste of allotments, feeling a lot not use, I did defend ourselves and management of sites, saying there is a waiting list.

Several comments around the vacant site in King Georges Avenue “ Old Sizewell B caravan site”

Why was the LTAA not included in green space list?

Victory Road Recreation Ground need a toilet block. Several comments.

I spoke of plans for Waterloo Centre & possible Café and toilet access, – people pleased plans afoot, just impatience.

A lot of praise for Victory Road & King Georges Avenue recreation grounds and childrens play equipment..

Skateboard Park – plenty of praise.

Litter seen as a major issue in Leiston.

The Community Orchard was mentioned as looking lovely in the spring months and an area enjoyed by many.

Floods

The water drainage initiatives are very encouraging and some great projects proposed for Leiston.

Balance ponds – on new developments, concern around the safety of children around the Johnson / Buckland Place one in particular.

Community space

the community room at the fire station is precious and we need more of it 'because we have an aged population who don't traverse across town to the Waterloo centre - the White Horse junction is as far as people will walk from the Sizewell area
the Town demographic is an aged population on the increase
the car park is critical to safe school access as there's nowhere else to park for school collection and drop off
the community centre itself is a valuable resource because it has a good Kitchen providing OAP lunches
poor lighting after dark means seniors won't walk or drive any distance
the 70 plus houses to be constructed at Saint Margarets means far more people are using current services and Sizewell will only add to the influx
one community room is insufficient for the town
the town is very much structured as two ends with a hub in the centre
Essential services within the town are already at breaking point and there is no plan to improve or expand

Medical service provision

excellent currently
need to nurture it
need to avoid overload from outsiders from other towns using our local services

Miscellaneous

- there's a lot of 'community' lost due to Sizewell
- has the brothel been granted planning permission?
- There's an unofficial brothel operating on Crown St
- it's all well and good Sizewell checking for drinks and drugs in working hours, but it's too late as the damage is done the night before
- can the town council check the location of the Lovers Lane works against the original plans? as it seems wrongly located?

Town Clerk

February 2024