

7. Appendix B:

Public Consultation Statement

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1.0 Introduction

Background to the Master Plan

David Lock Associates Ltd (DLA) has been commissioned by the Felixstowe and Trimleys Peninsula Futures Group to produce a master plan for Felixstowe Seafront and Town Centre.

The project brief included a commitment to consult with stakeholders identified by the Project Steering Group as well as wider public consultation.

This short statement outlines the results of this consultation with a view to informing the identification of projects to be taken forward as part of stage 2 of the master plan.

2.0 Consultation strategy

The consultation to date has comprised:

1. Stakeholder meetings

Discussions with key stakeholders identified by the Felixstowe and Trimleys Peninsula Future Group.

David Lock Associates met with the following stakeholders in one to one sessions on 25 May 2007 to explore their vision for the future of the town centre and seafont:

- Felixstowe Youth Forum
- Felixstowe Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- Felixstowe Town Council
- Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Trimley St Martin Parish Council

2. Invitation to public for initial comment and ideas through local press and website

Public comment and ideas were received through invitation via:

- a. press releases by Suffolk Coastal District Council covered in local newspapers, Felixstowe TV and radio and;
- b. the project website (www.felixstowefuture.com).

Actions under 1 and 2 above, aided and informed DLAs identification of 27 possible projects ("Long List of Projects") to improve and reinvigorate the town centre and seafont. The Long List of Projects were derived through:

- discussion with the Project Management Team;
- conversations with the stakeholder groups;
- responses from the general public to the Felixstowe Future website and;
- David Lock Associates professional experience.

The Long List Selection of Master Plan Projects is shown on the following page. This comprised Stage One of the master plan.

Delivery Timescale	Project Number	Project Name
Short Term	1	Street Furniture Strategy
	2	Seafront Leisure Path
	3	Art Gallery
	4	Food/Farmers Market Location
	5	Young Persons Hang Out
	6	Extending the Day'
	7	Circular Bus Route
	8	Cycle Routes
	9	Gateways
	10	Beach Shelters and Cafes
	11	Townscape
Medium Term	12	The Triangle
	13	Seafront Gardens
	14	Seafront- Town Centre Link
	15	The Pier
	16	Beach Huts and Shelter
	17	Convalescent Hill Site
	18	Hamilton Road
	19	Spa Pavilion
Long Term	20	Seafront Winter Garden
	21	Sea Defences
	22	Water Sports Centre
	23	Station Area Re-development
	24	Larger Format Town Centre Retail Units
	25	The Ordnance
	26	Former Beach Station Site
	27	Former Cavendish Hotel Site

3. Public Exhibition of Projects

A public exhibition of all 27 projects was held at the Felixstowe Leisure Centre on 13 and 14 July. Felixstowe Leisure Centre was accessible to the general public and has the capacity to hold such an event. The event was advertised through press releases, posters and individual invitations sent by the Felixstowe and Trimleys Peninsula Future Group.

The exhibition material included a short amount of text and images on the opportunity and outline of the proposal. All of the exhibition material was made available on the project website to catch those that could not attend the exhibition itself, and this too was advertised.

The event sought to:

- raise the profile of the project;
- present the key issues identified so far;
- seek feedback from the public.

A feedback form sought to identify respondents three preferred options as well as providing the opportunity for other comments and ideas. Comments were sought by 23 July 2007.

3.0 Public Exhibition Feedback

General Comments

Approximately 300 visitors attended the exhibition on the 13 and 14 July to view the 27 possible projects. 154 feedback forms, letters or emails were completed and returned either on the day, by post or via email by 23 July 2007. These comments were reviewed to identify the top three project preferences.

Weighting

The public identified their preferred schemes, by listing their preferred three projects, in order of preference – first, second and third. In order to represent this selection process the choices have been weighted. The weighting has been calculated using a points system;

- 3 pts for 1st choice;
- 2pts for 2nd choice;
- 1pt for 3rd choice.

In addition to comments received via the feedback forms, comments were also received via email and letters. Due to the nature of the letters and emails it was not possible to identify the preferences of the project choices therefore a weighting of 1 point was given to all projects mentioned in correspondence. Any additional comments not part of the master plan proposals have been included in the 'Other Project Ideas' section of this report.

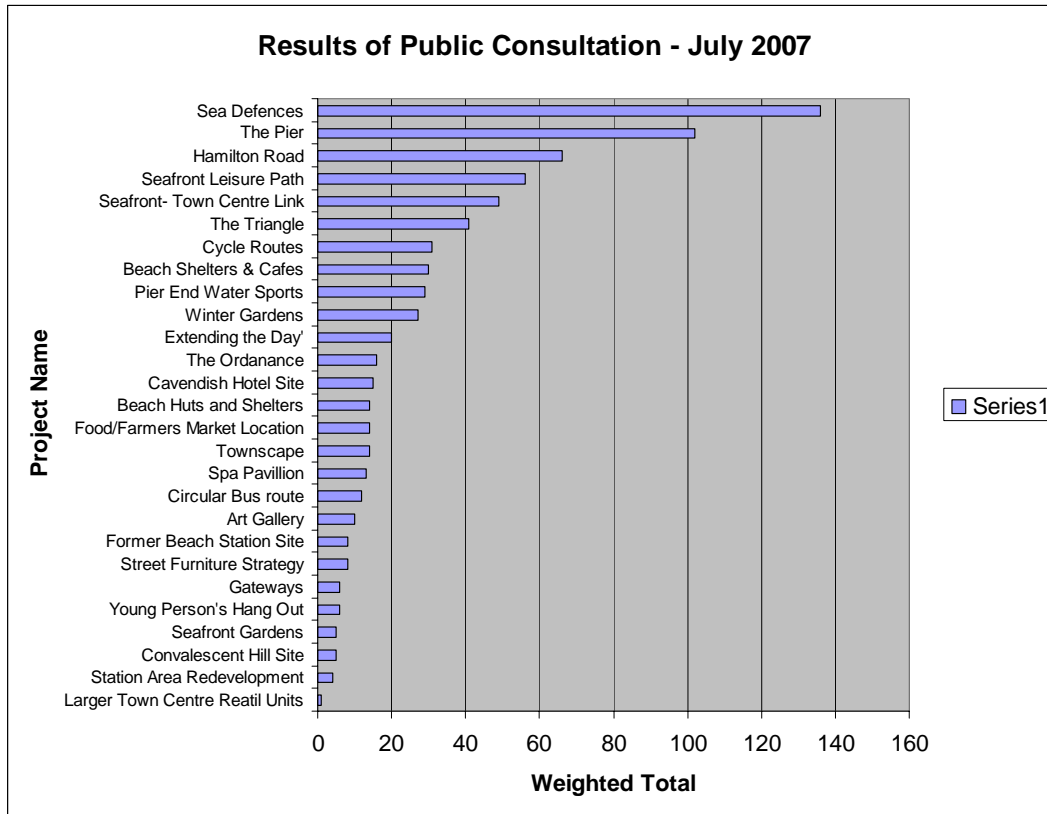
4.0 Analysis

The top ten preferred projects identified at the exhibition are as follows.

- 1st **Sea Defences**
- 2nd **The Pier**
- 3rd **Hamilton Road**
- 4th Seafront Leisure Path
- 5th Seafront-Town Centre Link
- 6th The Triangle
- 7th Cycle Routes
- 8th Beach Shelters and Cafes
- 9th Water Sports Centre
- 10th Winter Gardens

The ranked list is shown below.

Rank	Project Name	Votes				* Weighted Total
		1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Total	
1	Sea Defences	38	2	3	47	136
2	The Pier	10	23	19	52	102
3	Hamilton Road	13	5	17	35	66
4	Seafront Leisure Path	9	8	11	28	56
5	Seafront - Town Centre Link	8	6	11	25	49
6	The Triangle	5	9	6	20	41
7	Cycle Routes	6	2	4	12	31
8	Beach Shelters and Cafes	3	4	13	20	30
9	Water Sports Centre	3	3	9	15	29
10	Winter Gardens	3	5	5	13	27
11	Extending The Day	3	2	7	12	20
12	The Ordnance	0	7	2	9	16
13	Cavendish Hotel Site	2	3	3	8	15
14=	Food/Farmers Market Location	2	3	2	7	14
14=	Beach Huts and Shelters	2	3	2	7	14
14=	Townscape	2	1	3	6	14
15	Spa Pavillion	3	1	2	6	13
16	Circular Bus Route	1	2	5	8	12
17	Art Gallery	2	1	1	4	10
18	Street Furniture Strategy	1	0	4	5	8
19	Former Beach Station Site	1	2	1	4	8
20	Young Person's Hang Out	1	1	1	3	6
21	Gateways	0	2	2	4	6
22	Station Area Redevelopment	0	1	0	1	5
23	Seafront Gardens	0	1	3	4	5
24	Convalescent Hill Site	0	1	1	2	4
25	Larger town centre retail units	0	0	1	1	1



Analysis of Public Preferred Options

1st: Sea Defences

Sea defences were overwhelming identified as the preferred project. There is clear concern over the current sea defences and their future maintenance. Even if taking the Sea Defences project forward for detailed design is beyond the scope of the planning and urban design led Master Plan it is important that this project is included under the umbrella of the master plan, as the quality of the beach and seafont is integral to the quality and appeal of the seafont.

This result underlines the need for a long term solution to maintaining the sea defences to ensure projection of the beach, seafont and town: i.e. the study area of the master plan. Without this protection secured the other projects pale into relative insignificance.

The feedback forms make clear that at the very least the general public seek to understand:

- where responsibility lies with maintenance;
- where funding will come from and;
- what the timetable for maintenance is.

2nd: The Pier

The Pier has been highlighted by various parties throughout the master plan process and has been reinforced through the response to the public exhibition. The depth of feeling regarding the pier is clear in the identification of the pier as the 2nd preferred

project as well as through the additional comments section of the comments form. Its current state of repair in such a highly visible location is considered by many to be detrimental to the seafront and damaging to the overall image of the town.

The feedback forms suggest that the public are currently bewildered and frustrated over the current situation and do not understand, or have not been told, why the pier is as it is. The level of frustration is of course enhanced by the success of Southwold's pier.

3rd: Hamilton Road

DLAs project board on Hamilton Road proposed:

- the extension of the Saturday restricted vehicular access to weekdays;
- widening of pavements, by narrowing the carriageway, and parking bays on one side only;
- new surface treatment to match carriageway material to pavement material;
- provide high quality street furniture – more seats, street trees, cycle racks and flags.

Although the project was supported it is clear that a range of views exist over what intervention is required.

4th: Seafront Leisure Path

Confirmation of the prom as a popular project for improvement. The interaction between cyclists and pedestrians is likely to remain a controversial issue.

5th: Seafront-Town Centre Link

The public clearly recognise the problem of access from the town centre to seafront via Bent Hill and Convalescent Hill. This is a recurring theme heard by DLA since the inception of the Local Strategy back in 2005. DLA are aware of Suffolk County Council proposals for a highway engineering response to these concerns however the opportunity remains to consider a more visionary and iconic response to improve access.

6th: The Triangle

Public support for public realm improvements to the heart of the town centre. Relocation of the public toilets is a key issue requiring further consideration.

7th: Cycle Routes

Support for the identification of cycle routes within the master plan area and throughout the town. Suffolk County Council has identified routes for extension however, funding is not in place. A publicly available cycle route map does not currently exist.

8th: Beach Shelters & Cafes

The potential for the conversion of beach shelters received support

9th: Water Sports Centre

In addition to the water sports centre being identified as the ninth most favoured project, a further five separate respondents commented on the need for "more water sports". If these votes are carried forward as votes for a water sports centre the project would rise to the seventh most popular project.

DLA consider this project to offer a significant opportunity to utilise the town’s greatest resource (i.e. the sea), widen the leisure offer for residents, provide activity for all but particularly the young, and revitalise the tourist offer.

10th Winter Gardens

The vision of a winter garden is supported although the actual location is subject to debate. Whether next to the town hall or closer to the Spa Pavilion.

Unpopular Projects

The results illustrate that the schemes requiring developer intervention are not very popular, for instance the **Convalescent Hill site** and the **Station Area Redevelopment**.

It is also interesting to note that the **Seafront Gardens** project is another unpopular choice mustering only 4 votes in total. The least popular scheme was the creation of **Larger Format Town Centre Retail** shop units. This may be a reflection of the strong public popularity of Felixstowe town centres rich mix of small shops, including many independents. There was also a strong agreement with the master plan’s advice to reconsider the development of large format ‘out of town’ retail units at the Haven Exchange.

Other Project Ideas

Inevitably a number of ideas were suggested which have not been defined as projects in the Master Plan. The most notable new suggestions include the idea to create a **Marina** on the Seafront and to maintain Felixstowe’s **character**.

The graph below shows the results of these other comments:

