

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 14 December 2010

Subject: Legal and Estates Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lesley Wagland

Item: 7(f)

Recommending:

That the report of the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder be noted

T11/Langton Road Depot Joint Redevelopment Site

Planning Application and Exhibition

1. An outline planning application for the redevelopment of the T11 and Langston Road Depot sites as a retail park was submitted to the Council during the week commencing 6 December 2010.
2. The applicants are Polofind the owners of the T11 Site.
3. The submission of the application followed an extensive public consultation process in the form of an exhibition of the development plans which took place over a four day period at a vacant shop unit at 23 The Broadway, Loughton. The times and days were varied to ensure accessibility for the maximum audience:
 - Tuesday 23rd November 10am – 1pm
 - Wednesday 24th November 1pm – 5pm
 - Thursday 25th November 5pm – 8pm
 - Saturday 27th November 10am – 1pm
4. The exhibition including full information on the retail park, visuals, scheme layouts, retail studies and highway improvements was promoted to attract as wide an audience as possible. Major interested individuals and groups were informed the week prior to the Open Day. Poster boards were erected in the windows of the retail unit for the weekend preceding the event. Press statements, visuals and advertisements were issued to the local press, including the Loughton Guardian, the Loughton Recorder and 'The Forester', which is distributed throughout the District. This information was also added to the Epping Forest District Council's website. Flyers were delivered to all the Broadway Traders; a letter was sent to the Broadway Traders Association and Business Groups including the Chamber of Commerce were notified via email.
5. All members of the District Council were informed by email and the Council Bulletin. Loughton Town Council and their Councillors were informed.
6. The exhibition was staffed by a professional team including consultants and representatives from EFDC and Polofind Ltd, who were on hand to provide further detail and information where necessary.

7. During the course of the four days approximately 250 people visited and reviewed the information available. The visitors were a mix of individuals, couples, and families, some of whom were representing family members, friends, business groups, local residents and other interested parties.

8. Specific attendees included:

- Councillors and representatives from Essex; District and Town Councils.
- Groups; including members from the Chamber of Commerce, Loughton Residents Association, and the Broadway Traders Association.
- Local Retail Traders.
- Langston Road businesses.
- Local residents.
- Local shoppers.

9. The feedback from the exhibition was positive, with the public generally showing support for the proposed Retail Park: only 8 requests were received for further information out of all the visitors

10. Locals were excited by the prospect of having completely different retail outlets on their doorstep, and appreciated that it would assist in raising The Broadway's profile, and encourage people to shop locally rather than going to other Centres. The employment benefits were welcomed by the local community. Personnel from the local Job Centre were very supportive and wanted to have full information when available for these potential future jobs.

11. The feedback brought out two concerns, namely highways issues, and ensuring synergy between the retail outlets at The Broadway and the proposed Retail Park.

Highways

12. It became clear that locals had recently experienced highways works undertaken by Essex County Council, and did not want to undergo further works, without these works resolving and providing a 'complete' solution along Chigwell Lane for the long term. Locals were shown the proposed Highway improvements which were mainly welcomed and accepted as a long term solution that would benefit the locality.

13. Car parking requirements and concerns were also discussed in respect of visitor and staff parking arrangements, as well as the servicing of the proposed retail units and assurances given that these aspects would be properly managed.

The Broadway Retail Traders

14. Representatives of the Broadway retailers and independent retailers attended the exhibition. They were seeking clarification of the proposed retail offer, and the benefits that would flow from the addition, as well as understanding what effects there might be on their businesses.

15. The proposed plans are for a fashion led retail offer that will be complementary to the Broadway's 'local', 'everyday' shopping experience,

16. The traders are seeking an improved link between the Broadway and Langston Road (as well as Debden Tube Station), and also better signage for the Broadway. They were informed that proposals for improvements to the walking route between

the Retail Park and the Broadway will be included in the Transport Assessment, and that improved signage was already being investigated.

17. The Broadway Traders Group and Loughton Town Council both requested a representative of Polofind Ltd to attend forthcoming meetings. This was welcomed and arrangements are being made for this to take place.

Conclusion

18. The public consultation and exhibition was successful in engaging the local community in the promotion of the proposed Langston Road Retail Park.

19. The format of the exhibition, its content, and the availability of the professional team, ensured those attending were given sufficient time and detailed information to better understand the proposals.

20. Overall, there was considerable support for the proposed scheme, and feedback that the proposal would benefit the community and District.