

## Agenda Item 5: Lache Ward Project Action Plan

**1. Background**

In 2021/22, LDA Design were appointed to lead a team of consultants to engage with the community stakeholders and local residents to articulate a “Vision” and identify a series of potential projects aimed at helping to transform the neighbourhood positively in the future. A series of interactive, and in-person events and an online survey was held between October and December 2021 with press and social media coverage. 454 people were engaged at this time, although more than half (320) were children taking place in school workshops. A further consultation phase took place between February and March 2022, which included an event to present the draft findings of the initial stage which 71 people attended and a display at both at the Community Centre and Lache Library which was in situ for 4 weeks until March 2022.

A consultant’s report with their suggested proposals was published in April 2022 and feedback was sought online and from stakeholders. This identified that some ward residents, particularly in the Saltney area felt that insufficient engagement had taken place and that some key further consideration needed to be given as to how recommendations aligned with other Council and partner organisations adopted plans/policies. It was also noted that consultant’s suggestion for over twenty-six separate schemes, in a climate of financial pressure, was perhaps too large in scope and a more focused, prioritised action plan should be brought together.

Ongoing consultation/review has included:

- i) Online publication of the draft masterplan with request for additional public feedback. A leaflet was distributed door-to-door by Localities team officers with website details and how to respond.
- ii) Meetings with St Claire’s Catholic primary school, governors and Church representatives led by Cllr Beecham and Cllr Val Armstrong specifically focused on suggestion for new community hub building on current car park
- iii) A series of meetings with internal CW&C stakeholders and heads of service to understand how proposals align with the adopted plans/policies including Local Plan, Open Space Strategy, Play Strategy, Climate Change, LCWIP, Inclusive Economy and other appropriate strategic documents.
- iv) A high level/light touch analysis of financial position of Lache community centre, including levels of subsidy, income and occupation.
- v) Correspondence/meetings with key external stakeholder and residents including
  - Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (owners of health centre)
  - Sanctuary Housing (principle owners of social housing stock)
  - Representatives from Friends of Lache on Sycamore Park
  - Representative from Friends of the Backies on Backies/LAPA field
  - Meeting with residents from Saltney
  - Meeting with Lache Primary School
  - Meeting with Rage Fitness Company (in response to consultation suggestion)
- vi) A series of public meetings, 19th October, 14th December and 9th February (16th March 2023)

- vii) A letter distributed to all ward residents by Royal Mail in November 2022
- viii) An letter to residents on Stanley Park Drive and Thurston Road hand-delivered by CLLr Armstrong.

## 2 Emerging Project priorities

In October 2022, the outcome of the initial review was shared at a public meeting, online and via a letter to all residents. This suggested that:

1. Four projects are prioritised for further development.
  - **Sycamore Drive Park** – new children’s play equipment, all-inclusive play and access improvements and biodiversity gains
  - **Community Centre** –a refurbishment of the existing building, not a re-build with apartments on the first floor.
  - **The Baccies/LAPA Field** –proposal for biodiversity lead amenity -not including housing.
  - **Traffic/road improvements on Hawthorn Road and Poplar Road roundabout** – to understanding options to better manage traffic, making it safer to walk or cycle, and improving the way the area looks and feels
2. Further consideration needs to be given to consultant’s suggestion or other site options for The Sidings. The site was previously allocated in local plan for western relief road but is no longer required for this purpose. It is recognised that a majority of local residents are likely to be opposed to development, but simultaneously consultation highlighted demand for more social housing and bungalows suitable for downsizing and there is a identified shortage of this type of accommodation by both CW&C Housing team and Sanctuary Housing. There is also identified shortage of sites for allotments, although transfer of Sanctuary Housing site to Live, Laugh Lache for this purpose may elevate this at local level. The ecology of the site, combined with biodiversity net gain adopted policies, and other constraints could make the site unviable for any form of development. It is therefore recommended that some limited biodiversity investigation is undertaken in spring/summer 2023 to order to help inform development of potential site options shortlist. Appropriate consultation on these potential site options will be undertaken in Autumn.
- 3) Two additional suggestions came forward from the public meetings/online responses:
  - Actions to address flood response, particularly on Sycamore Drive
  - Suggested Community noticeboard at Ramsden Court

## 3. Feedback on revised project list

In general, there has been strong support for the revised project list (1-4) although the on-going need to consult on detailed plans for each emerging project as they progress has been stressed.

Comments received from public meetings/e-mails

- **Sycamore Drive Park:** Strong support to prioritise this project with a focus on investing in play equipment for under 12s – although small number also wanted to see planting and 2 learn to cycle route for toddlers/small children.
- **Backies/Lapa field:** Strong support for a biodiversity led amenity with no housing development. Two residents voiced concern about opening the site/removal of trees to improve natural surveillance, 15 responses supported this proposal. The original consultation identified option for some mountain bike track adjacent to railway line – 2

negative responses were received and 0 supporting from public meetings. Removal of fly tipping and retention of habitat for nature were primary feedback.

- **Community Centre** –Resident feedback was primarily focused on wishing to see additional uses in the centre. There were individual requests for re-opening of café and bar and 3 advocating facilities similar to Blacon (Rage Fitness).
- **Traffic/road improvements on Hawthorn Road and Poplar Road roundabout** – Feedback is supportive of improvements to manage traffic congestion and parking but it is recognised that until a highway’s scheme is designed, detail consultation responses are likely to be limited.

#### **4. Recommendation to the Steering Group**

1. That Steering Group adopts the revised project priorities (1-4) as Lache Ward Steering Group’s Action Plan.
2. Note the need for further investigative works to The Sidings prior to identification of any options.
3. As additional suggestions are not transformative projects, it is proposed to take them forward as part of normal localities team delivery.