



# worthingevolution

*making your future happen*

## FINAL PHASE CONSULTATION REPORT

### 1. Introduction

The first two phases of stakeholder and public consultation for the Worthing Evolution Masterplan took place between October 2005 and January 2006. These phases concentrated on establishing issues and aspirations for the town and looking at potential masterplan options. A draft final masterplan was developed as a direct response to the initial consultation. The third and final round of consultation took place in June and July 2006. This final round has concentrated on gathering responses to the draft final masterplan and has taken the form of a public exhibition and questionnaire.

The exhibition was launched in Worthing's Guildbourne centre on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2005 and was then set up at Worthing Town Hall for a 2 week period followed by the Aquarena for a further 3 weeks. The consultation period closed on 28<sup>th</sup> July although any responses received after that date have still been considered in preparation of this report.

The launch event and exhibition was publicised widely throughout the local community in order to attract as much response as possible.

### 2. Responses

Over 270 completed questionnaires were received by the consultation deadline along with several letters and email responses.

Specific consultation was carried out with the local fishing industry regarding the proposals for a fishing quarter in the town. Of the 5 full time fishermen operating from Worthing beach, 4 completed questionnaires were received. An exercise was carried out at Durrington High School where students were asked to write a letter to the Mayor of Worthing expressing their views about leisure facilities in the town centre. Six young people submitted letters for consideration as part of the consultation.

Additionally, The Worthing Evolution web site<sup>1</sup> which was launched on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2006 has to date (7/8/06) received approximately 9000 'hits' (separate visits) and some 1.9GB of data has been downloaded.

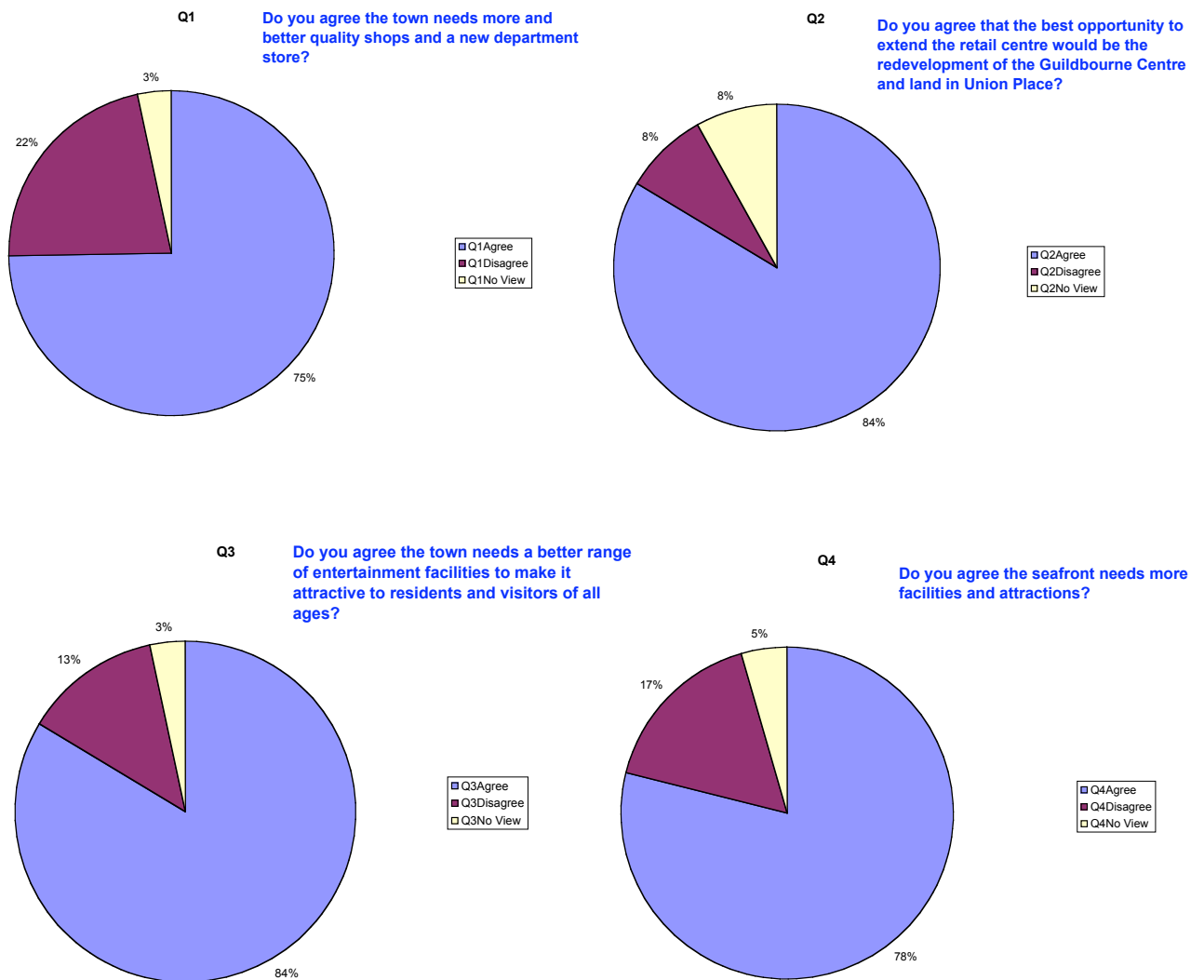
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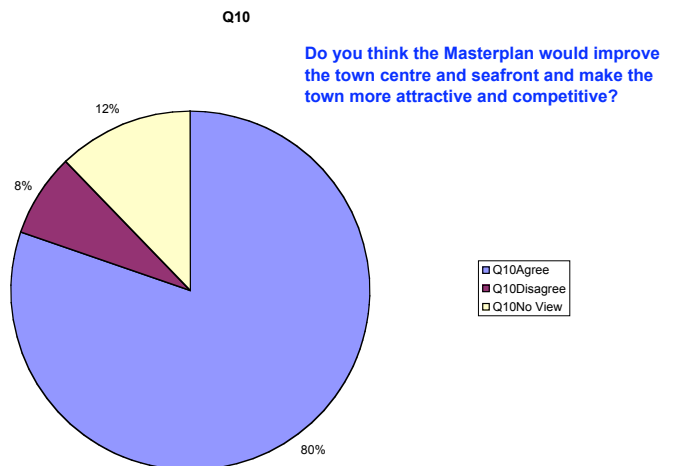
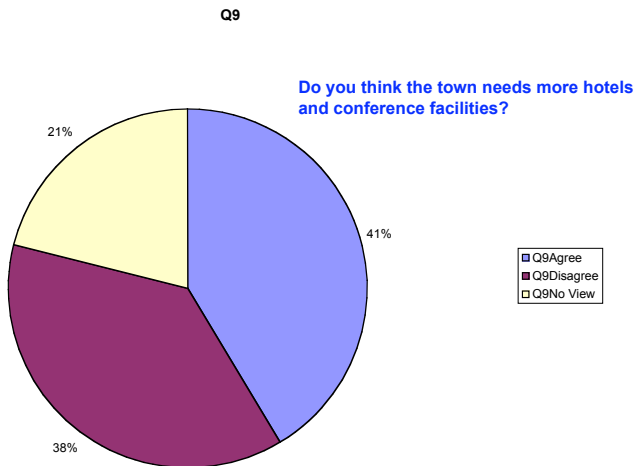
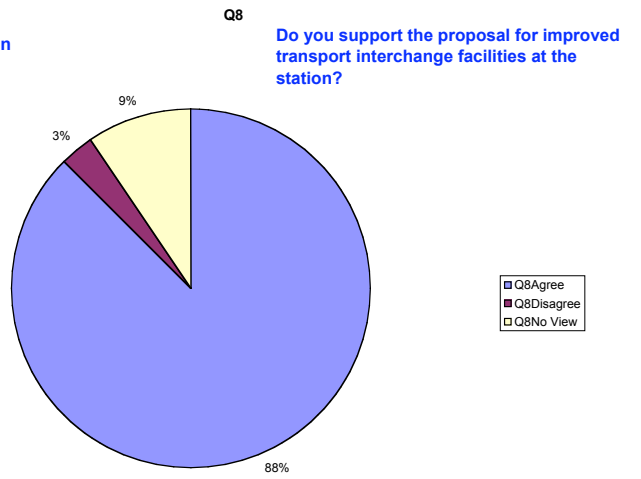
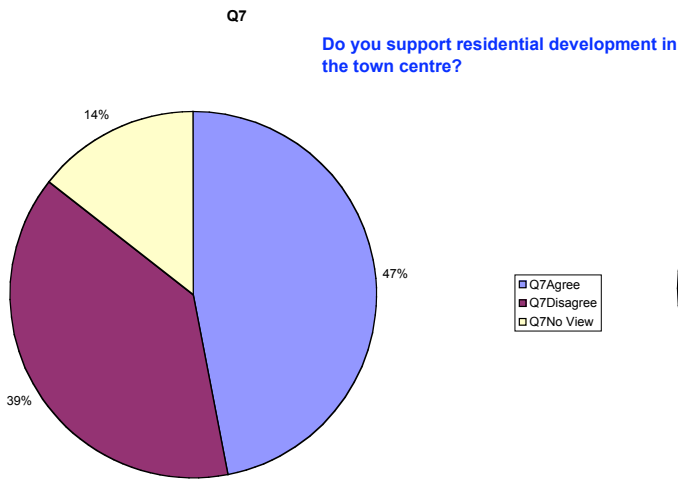
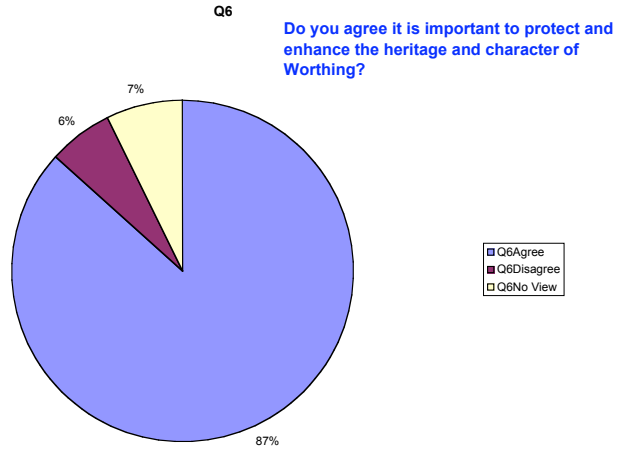
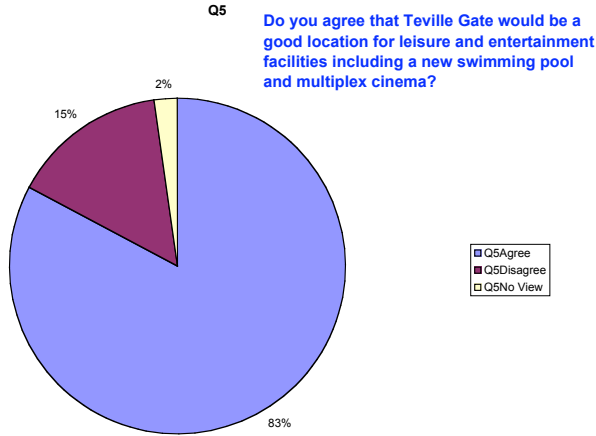
<sup>1</sup> [www.worthingevolution.com](http://www.worthingevolution.com)

### 3. Questionnaires

#### 3.1 Quantitative Analysis

Graphs illustrating the questionnaire responses are set out on the following pages . The graphs show that there was overall support for most of the proposals outlined in the leaflet and accompanying questionnaire. Concerns expressed over the proposal for increased numbers of housing in the town centre are expanded upon in the qualitative sections below.





## **3.2 Qualitative Analysis**

The questionnaire offered respondents the opportunity to add their own comments about proposals and this resulted in the submission of a wide variety of viewpoints, questions and statements. These comments are a crucial part of the consultation results and although wide-ranging and diverse, can be grouped into the following categories:

- Transport
- Leisure
- Heritage
- Housing
- Environment/sustainability
- Facilities/services
- Infrastructure
- Retail

### **3.2.1 Transport**

Interest in transport issues formed by far the largest proportion of comments received. One desire, which was expressed by an overwhelming number of respondents, is for improvements to cycle lanes. Other concerns included the cost of parking in the town centre car parks and it was generally felt that these charges would deter day visitors. Several respondents felt that increased housing units in the town centre would add to the overall traffic congestion in the town. There were also worries about increased congestion around Teville Gate with any new development on that site.

### **3.2.2 Leisure**

A high level of concern was expressed around the potential closure of the Aquarena and relocation of the pool to Teville Gate. Many respondents felt that the pool should remain at a seafront location. Those people that were in favour of the pool proposed at Teville Gate were concerned that it be of adequate size to meet not only the needs of the local community, but for sporting events. The desire was expressed for a facility similar to that at the Triangle in Burgess Hill.

Some concern was expressed over the potential closure of theatres and there was much support for maximising use of these facilities.

There was a very mixed response to the concept of a marina. Some respondents were concerned that it could be too close to the historic core.

An issue was raised about accessibility for disabled users of the beach and other leisure facilities.

There was an emphasis on the need to provide facilities for both young and older people.

There was a good deal of support for cafes and restaurants but concern that the seafront must remain high quality and not become “kiss me quick” or too much like Brighton.

### **3.2.3 Heritage**

Several respondents felt that developments must respect the heritage of the town. Concern was expressed over the proposed height of the Teville Gate towers and there is a feeling that the design could be out of character with the town. Some respondents felt that Teville Gate should be more exciting and iconic and less like an office block. Particular support was expressed for the preservation of the beach huts, particularly at the eastern gateway.

### **3.2.4 Housing**

Responses showed a general lack of support for increased housing in town centre, although these concerns were very much linked to traffic congestion and perceived strain on infrastructure and services. More specifically some respondents were against an increase in retirement homes, social housing and high rise developments.

### **3.2.5 Environment/ Sustainability**

Concerns were expressed over the potential impact on the environment of building out to sea due to rising sea levels etc. Use of sustainable materials is to be encouraged as well as the re-use of existing buildings. There is a concern that improvements to sea defences need to be shown as a priority in the masterplan.

### **3.2.6 Facilities/Services**

Several respondents expressed a desire to see an increased number of public toilets in the town. In terms of community safety there were issues around the fear of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

### **3.2.7 Infrastructure**

Particular concern was expressed about the possible loss of health services, especially if there is to be increased housing and greater numbers of visitors to the town. Linked to this there were more concerns over potential increases in traffic congestion. police resources and schools.

### **3.2.8 Retail**

Concern was expressed as to whether Worthing is able to sustain an increased retail offer, particularly new department stores. There was, However, a good deal of support was shown for encouraging local and independent traders. A general lack of support was expressed for new hotels, although there were several suggestions that the existing stock should be improved and modernised. There appears to be less concern over the proposal for conference facilities.

#### **4. Written Responses**

Seventeen written responses were received either by email or letter. These ranged from individual residents to organisations such as the Worthing Town Centre Initiative, Worthing Rowing Club, The Worthing Society and The Co-operative Group Property Division. Responses largely echoed the comments outlined above, particularly around traffic issues, but also emphasised the need to consider the impact on the Borough as a whole. Concern was expressed by some respondents about the potential decline of Montague Street should the focus of the retail core be moved to a re-developed Guildbourne Centre. It was also emphasised that although the masterplan is generally supported, care must be taken over the heritage of the town and developers should be selected on the basis of providing a quality in design and build which may require a long term investment in the town.

#### **5. Statutory Consultee Responses**

Southern Water – no comments to make

Network Rail – Additional custom would not cause operational difficulties. Should be shown as potential partner rather than a funder of improvement schemes.

Adur District Council – Continue to work in partnership re masterplan implementation e.g. visitor economy, improvements to seafront and highways.

SEERA – no comments to make.

SEEDA – Support for the masterplan, no specific issues or comments.

Sport England – New developments should provide for demands of sport and recreation. Reference to websites, which will assist in strategic planning.

West Sussex County Council – Support for the masterplan. Comments include: timescales for further work required. Impact on wider Borough and beyond should be referenced. Continued need for partnership working. Terminology should be clarified. Suggested heights and densities would be useful. Further work on transport issues is required. Potential for new library and resource building should be mentioned.

#### **6. Young People**

The exercise carried out with students at Durrington High School was specifically focused on the provision of leisure facilities at Teville Gate. Respondents felt that Teville Gate was a good location for a leisure facility, mainly due to its proximity to the train station. A majority felt that Worthing should be a bigger tourist centre because of its potential although one respondent felt that it could create a crowded feel to the town. Students mainly felt that a new leisure facility would attract visitors to Worthing which would have a positive impact on the economy. It would also provide an important facility to prevent young people from having to spend too much time hanging around in the streets.

## **7. Fishing Industry**

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to active and non-active fishermen via the Worthing Fishing Association. This questionnaire was designed to test the concept of developing a “Fishing Quarter” on Worthing seafront. Four completed questionnaires were submitted, all from fishermen working full time out of Worthing.

Responses received expressed unanimous opposition to the development of a shared retail outlet as proposed in the draft masterplan. Several reasons were given as to why this would not be desirable including the uncertainty of quality and quantity of fish, the desire to retain an individual service for valued customers, agreeing prices etc. There was some support, however, for an interpretation facility which tells the story of Worthing’s seafront, and in particular, celebrates the role of fishing in the town.

A clear need was expressed by respondents for improvements to the current facilities available on the beach. These include a fresh water tap for cleaning fish, a refrigeration unit and collection service for fish waste.

## **8. Conclusions**

As in all public consultation, most of the qualitative comments received through the questionnaires and the written responses, elaborate upon concerns and issues rather than positives. However, as the above graphs illustrate, there was an overall positive response to the proposals outlined in the draft masterplan.

Removal of the proposal for a “Fishing Quarter” from the masterplan should be considered and alternative uses for this area tested. The needs of the fishermen, identified through this consultation exercise, can be pursued through other funding sources e.g. Seafish, which could be pursued as part of the masterplan implementation programme.

The concern about increased housing stock in the town centre can be linked to both traffic and infrastructure issues. This should be clearly set in context within the final masterplan document, and ways of mitigating the impact explored.