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Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre SPD Consultation PD response.pdf

**350**

**From:** Philippa Dickinson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 29 September 2017 18:55  
**To:** Planning Policy Internet  
**Subject:** Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre SPD Consultation Draft - response

Dear Sirs

Please find attached my personal response to the draft SPD.

Yours faithfully

Philippa Dickinson

[REDACTED]

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Please consider the environment before printing this email.



29 September 2017

Deputy Head of Planning Services (Policy)  
Town Hall  
High Street  
Gosport  
PO12 1EB

Dear Sirs

### **Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre SPD Consultation Draft**

I would like to commend the Planning Policy Team for the comprehensive nature of the draft SPD. There is a lot to welcome in these proposals and I really hope that, once adopted, the specific objectives and ambitions set out in this document are properly resourced and embedded into the Council's Action Plans for the Borough.

#### **Comments on the Vision**

1. I really like the stated ambitions to make the most of the multiple heritage assets in Gosport – and especially like the idea of opening up the former Gosport Lines to create a circular pedestrian route with the Millennium Promenade. That's a really imaginative idea which will help bring a coherence to the visitor experience in Gosport. Also be a wonderful asset for residents by providing a safe, pleasant walk which should not need them to have to drive at all.

Such a plan would need to include clear maps and signage to the access points and around the route.

NB: Please decide whether the *Millennium Promenade* is still to be called this or *The Waterfront Trail* (as promoted on [Discover Gosport](#) and in printed form and tea towels at the TIC). If it is to be *The Waterfront Trail*, it really does need to run along the Waterfront, not along the Mumby Road and Weevil Lane.

2. Similarly, I applaud the ambition to provide a more coherent and safe system of cycle routes around the SPD area. As a cyclist, Gosport is both a brilliant – and a terrible place for cyclists. There are the wonderful cycle paths along the former railway lines but these do not join up coherently with other safe routes to create sensible routes to places people want to go, such as the bus/ferry terminal. Marked cycle paths along the roads are unsafe and frequently blocked by parked cars.

3. Having run a number of successful events here at RCY, I fully support the ambition to hold more events here in Gosport. It would good to see a proactive approach to

attracting visitors to Gosport —as there is so much here for them to enjoy. Food and craft/heritage fairs are always popular but need a sustained strategy to ensure that they can develop. The success of the ‘*Love Southsea*’ and ‘*Hampshire Fare*’ enterprises provide good examples. It can take several years for quality markets to get established. One needs to keep the faith and not expect it to take off after just one outing. A sustained approach is far more likely to succeed.

4. I would caution against trying to compete with Portsmouth/Gunwharf Quays. That’s brash and noisy (especially at night). It would be much better and more likely to succeed if Gosport were to develop confidence in its own identity. Gosport is full of character, great history, personalities and stories. More should/could be done to develop these stories and there should be a proper, co-ordinated 3-5 year plan for this to happen. The town needs to stop feeling like a poor relation and look to develop areas of real character (similar to the Lanes in Brighton, the Shambles in York, Old Street in Liverpool, Golden Hill in Shaftesbury). Some of the Character Areas already identified in the SPD have this potential. Royal Clarence Yard has the potential to be the Covent Garden on the Harbour. As Haslar and the other Heritage buildings are released by the MOD, they also have potential to be both successful commercially and visitor attractions in their own right.

5. With three wheelchair users in my family, I am very conscious that Gosport is not good on access for those with disabilities and special needs as we discovered when trying to get to the ferry on foot/mobility scooter recently. The two family members on scooters had to go a very much longer way round on the pavement to get to the ferry than those of us on foot. It is no wonder that we see so many mobility scooters in the roads (which is seriously unsafe!). And it’s not just physical disabilities which are poorly served. Those with visual impairments also find getting about in Gosport difficult. The ‘Accessibility’ Theme in the SPD is very weak on this topic. The only mentions I can find relate to dropped kerbs and benches. I recommend that *all* the Character Areas and the proposed pedestrian walkways are properly assessed for Accessibility.

6. Transport: the problems of the A32 are widely acknowledged. The reliance on cars in Gosport is exacerbated by the lack of/withdrawal of bus routes serving many areas. RCY, Priddy’s Hard and Hardway are particularly badly served. This could be helped by deploying a number of different strategies:

- Doing whatever is necessary to get the Forton Bridge open to at least an electric minibus linking the Eclipse bus stop at the Windsor Castle, down heritage Way, across the Forton Bridge, through Royal Clarence Yard (or along Weevil Lane) and down to the bus/ferry terminal
- Introducing more water transport options across the harbour – particularly the previously withdrawn water-bus service linking RCY to Portsmouth.
- Allowing a proper bookable water-taxi service to operate within the Harbour (such as at Falmouth, Dartmouth, and the Medina River (IoW))
- Establishing cheap Park and Ride services on the outskirts and (I know this won be popular!) increasing the cost of parking in the Town Centre. Many towns and cities are adopting this approach – but it only works if the alternatives to town centre parking are free, cheap, frequent and reliable.

- Encouraging the big supermarkets to offer free/cheap door-to-door transport for customers (to reduce the number of people causing congestion by driving their own cars into town to Morrisons, Asda and Aldi).
- Reduce the number of cars parked on Stoke Road (this holds up traffic and buses). Assist the Stoke Road shops by enabling short stay customer parking at the rear of the shops or in the side streets.

### **Stated Strengths**

I agree with all of these.

### **Stated Weaknesses**

I agree with most of these. Transport and Accessibility (for those with disabilities and special needs) weaknesses noted in points made above.

### **Stated Opportunities**

I agree with all of these, plus the opportunities I've noted above.

### **Stated Challenges**

I agree with all of these

### **Key themes**

**A: Townscape:** Fine. But please no more tall buildings, particularly not blocking views of the harbour and heritage buildings. Gosport is mostly low-rise and that is part of its character.

**B: Economy & Employment:** Fine. Especially the importance of keeping the deep-water access. This is an important asset for Gosport.

**C: Shopping & Leisure:** Mostly fine but please let's avoid encouraging late-night bars and restaurants, which will cause noise and nuisance. Gosport needs to develop a different style and character to Gunwharf Quays.

**D: New homes:** Frankly, until the transport and other infrastructure problems are sorted out, please don't establish any more new homes in the SPD area.

**E: Accessibility:** Need to address accessibility for those with disabilities and special needs. Also the proposals for consolidating parking looks as though it might not be workable in the areas which are in fact poorly served for parking. The proposed redevelopment of the rather underused Mumby Road lorry park ignores the fact that an awful lot of car users use the free parking in RCY Cooperage Green rather than pay to park in the GBC car parks. I am also concerned that customers of the Pharmacy and the Waterside medical Centre will have nowhere to park.

**F: Public Realm.** Fine. Keeping green and natural environments is extremely important.

**G: Flood risk:** Fine

**H: Infrastructure:** Rather vague sweeping statement in the box! Fine as long as the Council has the resources and the powers to deliver these things.

**J: Health:** Agree with all of this.

### **Area Objectives**

**I: Bus Station:** Frankly can't see the point of a 'landmark building'. No need to try to replicate the Spinnaker Tower when Gosport already has so many eye-catching buildings along its waterfront. Unless such a building has a real purpose, it is most likely to become an expensive folly. No need for any tall buildings in this area.

**2. Waterfront:** Not sure about the aim to ‘*create a residential frontage to Mumby Road*’ This is a noisy, congested road. Why aim to put homes there?

**3. Royal Clarence Yard:** This is where we live, so we are very familiar with the problems created by the piecemeal and badly thought-out, still incomplete development of the site by Berkeley Homes. At the same time, we can see several opportunities presented with the release of the retained area at RCY. There are opportunities to address a number of the existing problems while finally creating the potential visitor attraction and high quality asset which GBC originally envisioned for this site. We urge the Council not to miss these opportunities:

- Ensure that when the retained land is released, the whole site is properly named *Royal Clarence Yard* and that future developments are only permitted if they respect the coherence of the former Royal Naval Victualling Yard as a whole. No more piecemeal developments, please!
- Parking (1): Ensure that when the retained land is released, that provision is made there for sufficient visitor parking to the businesses and commercial units in the Yard and along the Waterfront.
- Parking (2): I was shocked to see the draft proposal to allow parking in Brewhouse Square. There are parking issues at RCY but allowing parking into this attractive pedestrianised square would be extremely problematic, given the already over-complicated parking arrangements at RCY. This suggestion has not taken account of the fact of:
  - There are always plenty of empty parking spaces in the adjacent Flagstaff Green
  - New bollards/barriers would have to be established to prevent vehicles driving onto the RCY Waterfront (which will also form part of the re-routed pedestrian Millennium Promenade)
  - No account appears to have been made for the route any cars looking for parking in this area would have to make (and back again all the way round to Cooperage Green if the Brewhouse Square parking was full - as it would bound to be). Nor how this would work with the existing already ridiculously complex parking arrangements on site.
  - No account appears to have been made for the disturbance to residents in the Malthouse, Brewhouse and Flagstaff House apartments overlooking Brewhouse Square from vehicle movements at anti-social hours. Nor the pollution.
  - No account has been made for the fact that the biggest parking problems at RCY are at the *north* end of the site
  - This proposal is a solution looking for a problem. Please make sure that this does *not* get included in the final SPD!
- The Millennium Promenade: We very much welcome the proposal to finally route the MP through RCY as was originally intended. We suggest that GBC plans to re-route it as soon as possible through the developed part of the Yard as that will help put RCY literally on the map. At the moment the chain-link tiles routes along Weevil Lane and many visitors miss RCY completely.

**4: North of the High Street:** Fine

**5: High Street:** Mostly Fine. There are some nice-looking buildings behind ugly modern facades. I would hope this could be addressed through careful planning. I don't see the need to increase the height of the building as this will only create additional shade.

- 6: South Street:** Fine
- 7: Trinity Green:** Fine
- 8:Haslar Marina:** Fine
- 9: Gosport Lines:** Excellent proposal!

**Other Areas to consider:**

From our perspective here in RCY, it would seem logical to include both the Forton Creek Shoreline and the Priddy's Hard Ramparts Area. As they sit (at least partly) on the Millennium Promenade and are part of the former defences of the Town.

No other comments to add apart from to reiterate support for the Vision and the vast majority of the work included in this draft SPD. I just hope that the Council will find the resources both financial and human to be able to deliver this Vision.

Yours faithfully

Philippa Dickinson  
(contact details at the top of first page)