

“PHOENIX QUARTER”

EXHIBITION SURVEY

Background

In September 2005 Angel Property showcased their masterplan for a proposed redevelopment of the Phoenix Industrial Estate at the old Market Lane Garage in North St, Lewes. An advert appeared in the Sussex Express and the exhibition ran for two weeks. The exhibition reopened at a later date for a further week, but with no advertising.

In March 2006 Angel Property presented their revised plans, following public consultation, for one week at the Market Lane Garage. This was advertised in the Sussex Express.

This survey was designed to find out visitors views on a range of key issues. Initially compiled as an exit survey, it would have required visitors to complete a questionnaire at the exhibition. This was considered impractical as Lewes Matters would not have been able to provide volunteers to fully cover the exhibitions opening hours, especially during the weekdays. It was felt however that a household drop within the town would allow visitors who had attended the first exhibition but not the second, to have their views included. To that end 3000 questionnaires were delivered door to door -for households with more than one adult, the questionnaire was available online.) A copy of the survey questions is attached in this report along with percentages.

Results

The survey was completed by 338 respondents. We are indebted to KCP a Lewes based market research firm for compiling the percentages.

While these responses cannot be guaranteed to be representative of the adult population of Lewes, it is necessary and more accurate to assess them within the context of the likely number of visitors to the two exhibitions, and questionnaires distributed. In the absence of exact attendance figures –the developer has confirmed that no visitor numbers were kept, we believe a generous calculation based on our own regular visits to all the exhibitions, to be visitor numbers not greater than 3000, averaging out at 750 per week and 107 visitors per day.

Conclusions

We believe that this survey—notwithstanding some flaws in methodology- is a proactive first step in community involvement, clearly highlighting the concerns of residents on the 'Phoenix Quarter' proposals. With well over 80% of respondents prepared to add significant comments to their questionnaires, it is crucial that our elected representatives take the time to find out and listen to what the public think. There is a growing sense of unease that Lewes is facing a wave of developments seeking planning permission before the tighter Local development Framework and National Park status come into effect. People want to support a proactive visionary council- examples **do** exist around the country- with development briefs, taking brave steps forward, most notably on sustainability, and not simply reacting to proposals on the back foot.

In a recent statement, David Neighbour LDC's lead member for planning, has promised to;

"carry out wide consultation with local people and interested organisations"

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"public and transparent process and nothing will be taken for granted. It is our responsibility as local councillors, not the developers, to gauge the public's response to these proposals. We intend to offer an extended consultation period of around two months, so that everyone has a chance to comment."

Meaningful consultation could take many forms and could include public meetings, a public relations campaign, Councillors holding "Clinics" and going out of their way to test public opinion. It should include a questionnaire that allows for a full survey of public opinion, providing valuable data in a decision making process.

We hope that the Council will build on the work begun by Lewes Matters.

Questions & percentages

1. Did you find the exhibition informative?

1 – Very	10%
2 – (Quite)	19%
3 – (So So)	25%
4 – (Not Very)	19%
5 – Not at All	4%
No answer	23%

2. Do you now feel you have a good understanding as to what is being proposed?

1 – Very	9%
2 – (Quite)	22%
3 – (So So)	27%
4 – (Not Very)	19%
5 – None the wiser	6%
No answer	17%

3. Do you believe that the Phoenix Industrial Estate in North Street should:

Remain light industrial	22%
Be solely used for housing	3%
Become mixed use	72%
No answer	3%

4. Approximately how many homes in this development do you believe should be built?

800	10%
More	1%
Less	82%
No answer	7%

5. Lewes District Council housing policy insists on 25% affordable housing in new developments over 15 dwellings. Brighton is committed to 40%. Should a development on this scale have:

More than 40% affordable	22%
40%	32%
25%	36%
Less than 25%	8%
No answer	2%

6. Do the plans indicate sufficient facilities for young people?

Yes	22%
No	38%
No answer/NA	40%

7. The plans show a mixed height skyline. What is the maximum height of buildings that is appropriate within the local context:

Above 7 storeys	1%
6-7 Storeys	4%
4-5 Storeys	36%
Less than 4 Storeys	57%
No answer	2%

8. The scheme aims to attract leading brand stores. Do you welcome this:

Yes	15%
No	73%
No answer	12%

9. What impact do you feel the arrival of such stores would have on Local Traders:

Stimulate competition	9%
Minor impact	7%
Major impact	80%
No answer	4%

10. Many councils now subscribe to the "Merton rule" which requires that sizeable developments provide at least 10% of their total energy requirements from renewable sources. Should LDC insist on this percentage when considering this development:

Yes	93%
No	1%
No answer	6%

11. Sussex is facing the most severe water shortages in 100 years. A range of green technologies exist to reduce our consumption of water. Is their inclusion in such a scheme:

Crucial	83%
Important	16%
Not important	0.5%
No answer	0.5%

12. What is your view of the current traffic management and parking provision in Lewes:

Good	3%
Adequate	20%
Poor	39%
Seriously inadequate	35%
No answer	3%

13. What impact do you believe the proposed development will have on traffic and parking:

An improvement	9%
No change	7%
Make worse	79%
No answer	5%

14. NOT ANALYSED

15. Do you believe that the proposed development will make Lewes:

Much better	7%
Better	21%
No change	3%
Worse	30%
Much worse	37%
No answer	2%

16. Are you:

A Lewes resident	92%
Work in Lewes	5%
A visitor	1%
No answer	2%

