



We care, we inform

Wickford Action Group

People before Profit

Wickford Action Group, Newsletter No 2 – Autumn 2007

The Wickford Town Centre Master Plan

– have our Councillors let us down?

When the first details of the Wickford Town Centre Master Plan were unveiled at Christchurch Hall in April 2005, around 600 people attended, although the hall was so crowded that it was difficult to see the display boards. Most residents agreed that Wickford was in need of a bit of ‘tender loving care’, and resident’s response forms collected by the exhibitors, were said by the council to be 81% in favour, although many people were not happy with the sheer number of flats, **490**, which was thought necessary to fulfil the vision. The plan details were confirmed in the Master Plan booklet, published in November 2005, and is an impressive vision for the regeneration of the town.

But what of the reality?

- We are now two years on, and already **351** flats have been approved in the Master Plan area, and none of these will provide the wonderful benefits promised by the Master Plan.
- Only recently, in July 2007, and with 351 flats approved, has the Council agreed to ‘look for’ a Strategic Partner to deliver the Master Plan. They hope to get one late 2008!
- A new proposal is now on the table, which at last offers something promised in the Master Plan, the re-built pool, health centre and library, (which we have already), plus 99 more flats.

With the above facts, we think YES, our Councillors have let us down!

Here are three examples why we in the Wickford Action Group think so:

Example 1. Runwell Road.

What the Master Plan said:

“Runwell Road will provide a high quality northern gateway with **town houses** and commercial activity.” The proposal was for **35** one to five bedroom residential units with some active frontages at ground floor provided by leisure / office use.

What has now been approved:



A five story block of 84 flats. There was some controversy, with two applications being turned down by the council, although planning chairman Mrs S Buckley (wife of Council leader Malcolm Buckley,) voted FOR the one which eventually won on ‘secret’ appeal.

Example 2. Lower Southend Road

What the Master Plan said:



“Residential development with combination of flats and houses with restaurant and office use at ground floor”. **86** units were envisaged, and the picture in the plan showed 4 stories.

What has now been approved:

A six story block of 173 flats, with restaurants and commercial. The construction is underway by Bradgate Developments, owned by Mr Ray Ride, councillor for the Wickford district of Runwell (Chelmsford Council)

Example 3. Frasier’s site in London Road

What the Master Plan said:

“Land use should be focussed on the consolidation and development of this area as a location for eating and drinking. The possibility of live work units that are complementary to this theme should also be encouraged”

What has now been approved:

A five story block of 36 flats
An earlier application for a Medical Centre and 30 sheltered accommodation flats was supported by the Wickford Action Group, but was rejected on the casting vote of chairman Mrs S Buckley



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Public Meeting

The Wickford Community Association has kindly allowed us to use the main hall for the Wickford Action Group second Public Meeting about these and many other developments, please come along to air **your** views. All Wickford Councillors have been invited.

Date: Thursday 27 September 2007

Time: 8:00 pm

**Location: Main Hall
Wickford Community Centre
Market Road, Wickford**

Please try to attend this important meeting about the future of our town. If you have a specific question or comment, you are welcome to use the section below and we will try to raise it on the night. If time doesn't permit, we will get back to you after the meeting with a response. Or you can email us using the address below.



My question / comment is:

Name / contact details