Gillingham Town Centre Masterplan

Written comments received during consultation held on draft masterplan 16 August – 30 September 2019



**Comments Tracker**

**Responses to comments received during 16 August to 30 September 2019**

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| **Organisation** | **Comments** | **Response** |
| Sport and Physical Activity Service - Kent County Council | Take account of Sport England guidance. | On page 30, added ‘Adhere to Sport England’s Active Design (2015) guidance in  promoting sport and physical activity through the design and layout of the built environment.’ |
| Southern Water | No comments | Noted |
| NHS Swale CCG | Outlined circumstances in which depedestrianisation would be favourable. | This masterplan does not provide a detailed evaluation of the idea nor assess the impact upon traffic, the street environment or the wider area. Neither does the masterplan specifically recommend introducing vehicles; it is an idea that needs further exploration. Re-opening the street to traffic at the current time covers the whole range of possibilities from ‘do nothing’ to very limited introduction of vehicles to a full restoration of two-way-traffic, but this clearly needs honing to a solution that  serves Gillingham best. |
| NHS Swale CCG | Promote night-time economy with more restaurants and/or bars. | The Retail Health Check acknowledged that the current offer revolves around ‘greasy spoon’ cafés during the day and fast food at night. A new well managed mass market  pub, selling a choice of good food, such as Wetherspoon or Stonegate Pub Company, would help anchor the town centre evening offer. |
| Resident A | Concerns highlighted re removal of the road gyratory. | The gyratory around King Street and Victoria Street is a particular problem, often bringing traffic congestion and confusion into the eastern end of the High Street. It may be that simply pedestrianising King Street forces a solution to be considered over the respective roles of Jeffery Street and the High Street in moving vehicles around Gillingham town centre. However, it should be noted that detailed review of this idea has not been undertaken and a further report is recommended to fully explore the benefits and disadvantages, as well as the impacts on the wider network. This report does not suggest any preferred part of the street to re-traffic, access or  egress points, the volume or type of traffic that might be appropriate, the times that traffic might use the High Street or the impacts on traffic movement more broadly. |
| Peel Land & Property Ltd | Given the proximity of Chatham Waters to the University Campus, a proposed link would offer an alternative route for students travelling to and from the Town Centre and help to deliver on the aspirations set out by the Draft Masterplan document. Is therefore requested that the benefits of the proposed route are acknowledged in the Masterplan document and included as part of the strategy to improve pedestrian and cycle connections in the area. | On page 28, added ‘Separately, in response to consultation, the land owner of the disused line from Chatham Waters to Gillingham station has identified the potential for an alternative route for students travelling to and from the town centre, in turn helping to deliver on wider policy outcomes. An innovative proposal, comprising its conversion to an active travel corridor with new housing fronting the route to provide surveillance, would provide an alternative, high quality link. This would also improve the permeability and connectivity of the catchment area to the north of the town centre. On page 46, added ‘The conversion of the disused line between Chatham Waters and Gillingham station could provide for a strategy to attract new customers  to the town centre.’ |
| Historic England | No comments | Noted |
| Resident B | References 2007 masterplan. | Previous work was considered at the outset as a foundation, however the 2007 masterplan required updating following structural changes to the retail sector and renewed emphasis on regeneration in the town centre. |
| Resident B | Concerns re car parking. | Parking is a significant area of concern and complaint amongst people shopping and trading in Gillingham town centre. The feedback centred on the cost of parking and the quantity of parking. Further study is recommended to enable to Council to  understand how Council parking is being used currently by town centre users and commuters and how this affects the town centre. |
| Resident B | Concerns re traffic congestion. | Opportunities have been identified, which could help to address traffic congestion,  however further study is required to fully explore the benefits and disadvantages, as well as the impacts on the wider network. |

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| Resident B | Health Centre and Aldi brought in to the town centre designation. | On page 50, it is recommended to extend the retail core boundary (as a town centre  boundary) to include Aldi on Duncan Road, the Balmoral Health Centre and Marlborough Road. |
| National Grid | No comments | Noted |
| Resident C | The map on page 5 of the Gillingham consultation wrongly identifies Arden Street as Mill Road! | On page 5, corrected map annotation. |
| Resident C | The plans to look at re introducing traffic to some pedestrian areas could be a useful experiment and should be considered further. | This masterplan does not provide a detailed evaluation of the idea nor assess the impact upon traffic, the street environment or the wider area. Neither does the masterplan specifically recommend introducing vehicles; it is an idea that needs further exploration. Re-opening the street to traffic at the current time covers the whole range of possibilities from ‘do nothing’ to very limited introduction of vehicles to a full restoration of two-way-traffic, but this clearly needs honing to a solution that  serves Gillingham best. |
| Resident C | Further pedestrian crossing recommended. | Opportunities for a much improved pedestrian environment have been identified as part of a wider public realm scheme, however further study is required to fully explore  the benefits and disadvantages, as well as the impacts on the wider network. |
| Natural England (Sussex and Kent) | Natural England supports the inclusion of areas of greenspace as key deliverable outcomes for the Chatham, Gillingham and Strood Town Centre Masterplans. We  would however recommend that these are designed in a way that contributes to the green infrastructure vision. | To be progressed through the Medway Green and Blue Infrastructure Vision document. |
| Theatres Trust | There are three theatres in Chatham, along with the 332 seat GlassBox Theatre in Gillingham. | On page 28, revised text to read ‘In addition to the leisure offer aspired to on campus, a new arts venue was discussed as a potential attractor, however the 332 seat GlassBox Theatre and MidKent College Campus has since opened. Chatham already has three arts venues and has a heritage of small music venues and such  like. Rochester also has a more conventional food and drink offer that might be more appealing to students that Gillingham has to offer (or is likely to offer).’ |
| St Mark's Church | The reintroduction of traffic to the section between the station and the cross roads would be a good idea to generate through traffic and also the ability to stop and pop in to shops, etc. | This masterplan does not provide a detailed evaluation of the idea nor assess the impact upon traffic, the street environment or the wider area. Neither does the masterplan specifically recommend introducing vehicles; it is an idea that needs further exploration. Re-opening the street to traffic at the current time covers the whole range of possibilities from ‘do nothing’ to very limited introduction of vehicles  to a full restoration of two-way-traffic, but this clearly needs honing to a solution that serves Gillingham best. |
| St Mark's Church | We are looking to potentially create a new entrance to the church at the cross roads between the High St and Canterbury St. We are keen to ensure this flows naturally in to the streetscape of any redevelopment of this area, considering layout of footpaths, street furniture, bus stops etc. We would be keen to be part of these discussions. The church is looking to introduce community facilities within its building, including meeting spaces, cafe, small business use, community support services etc. Again, it would be good if some of this was aligned with the aspirations of Medway Council. There may be possibilities to discuss funding/grant aid, or the use of some of these services/facilities by Medway Council or the charitable sector on an ongoing  basis. | On page 48, added ‘In response to consultation, as part of a wider effort to appeal to wider groups in the community, St Mark's Church has highlighted the potential to create a new entrance to the church at the cross roads between the High Street and Canterbury Street. The church is looking to introduce community facilities within its building, including meeting spaces, cafe, community support services, etc. Any new public realm scheme should maximise the church's aspirations for a greater community role in the town centre.’ |