



Waterfront Community Update Paper 2009

Introduction

- Waterfront Action Partnership Group constituted in March 2009. Although it has been in operation since September 2007 as the Waterfront Community Group.
- This group is led by Waterfront Churches and consists of representatives from Ipswich Borough Council, IBC Ward Councillors; Suffolk County Councillors; Ipswich Council for Voluntary Services; University Campus Suffolk, Suffolk New College, Suffolk Police, Local Business and representatives from some of the residents groups that have been formed.
- The Group organised a Community Day in April 2008, which attracted over 1000 people, over 500 of whom completed a survey enabling us to begin to build a profile of the 'Waterfront Community'. The aim of this event was to begin to build a picture of what kind of community made up the Waterfront and gather data about what people liked and disliked about the area to generate community involvement and engagement.
- Further data collection took place by carrying out a survey. The Waterfront Action Partnership group agreed to pilot a 'door to door' survey of residents in the Neptune Marina and Orwell Quay developments. 95% of the residents spoken to participated in this survey.

What We Have Learnt so far:

Hard data : obtained from the 'door to door' survey of Neptune Marina and Orwell Quay (December 2008)

- § A high proportion of residents are tenants – 80% in Neptune Marina going up to 90% in Orwell Quay
- § Whilst 77% of owners at Neptune Marina intend to stay in the apartments on a long-term basis there is only a 45% commitment from Orwell Quay. With the owners some 37% expect to move in less than a year making a very transient part of the development.
- § Currently there are some 22 properties to let in Orwell Quay plus 5 at Neptune Marina and 20 for sale.
- § Single occupancy ranges from 40-45% with only 14% having children (25 in this instance)
- § Most of the residents fall within the 25-39 year age bracket with slightly over half having a White-British ethnicity and 21% of Indian origin.
- § 70% of residents work full time with around 70% working in Suffolk.
- § Retired people make up less than 5% of numbers.

- § Salaries were widely spread with the £20-£30k and £30-£50k being the most common
- § In the two areas, which were surveyed, there are an additional 32 vehicles, which are parked on the road. If this is consistent with each block there would be **around 100 vehicles**, which have to be parked off site, most likely on local roads. The planning department needs to be made aware of these numbers for planning any future car parks as well as for new developments.
- § 40% have a cycle and due to this being kept in the hallway of their apartment would suggest it is regularly used
- § A significant number of children live in the area (25) with 16 being aged under 2 and this may have an impact on services.
- § We have recently learnt that some 400 students have enrolled to start studying at UCS from the Modus development, which may see people in these blocks staying for a longer period of time.

Soft data: issues/suggestions gathered from the community day held in April 2008.

- § There was a general consensus from all those who attended the event that the Waterfront is beginning to develop a 'buzz'. Although people indicated that they welcomed the cafes, bars and restaurants and the continental ambience being created, we have discovered that some residents are beginning to complain about anti social behaviour and noise.
- § There is a clear desire for people to meet together and start building community in the area, but community development investment is needed for residents and groups to form.
- § There is a great interest in the Waterfront, with people wishing to engage in the process of development, and looking for vibrant activity in the area.
- § The need to make access easier between the town centre and the Waterfront and vice-versa
- § Residents expressed concern about the extent of development taking place and wanted to see a community centre being built; water activities being provided and green space.
- § Pedestrianisation and the re-opening of the dock gates, providing public toilets is seen as a priority as is a whole host of environmental issues
- § The lack of railings around the water was seen as a potential hazard.
- § Residents wanted more litter and recycle bins and more toilets around the Waterfront area.
- § Better lighting and police presence particularly at night to make the community feel safer.
- § More consultation and better communication
- § Introducing more business to the area and affordable cafes and restaurants.

- § The height of some of the buildings was a cause of concern and residents expressed a view that they would like to see more houses being built and more provision for social housing.

Summary of issues for partner agencies to consider

Childcare provision needed:

Whilst figures show that the vast majority of residents are tenants and may not be there on a long-term basis, it does show the need for facilities for pre-school/ nursery places. Again, looking at the complete area there is likely to be in excess of 50 children aged under 2 years with no pre-school provision.

Investment in economic development resource:

The business community is also growing. We have an increasing number of restaurants/food places opening up on the Waterfront. However, they are deemed to be expensive - a pie shop closed after 6 months of opening!

Evidence suggests that there are a high number of students who are opting for separate apartments rather than purpose built student accommodation

Getting the balance right between vibrancy and increased noise and anti-social behaviour:

The Police are reporting that on some evenings in the early part of the week the Waterfront is very busy yet the rest of the Town Centre is very quiet. The Town Pastors are also reporting that their patrols of the Waterfront have seen a major increase in use of the Waterfront. The increase in use of the Waterfront facilities has led to a rise in anti social behaviour and criminality, which has culminated in requests being made for increased security measures to be introduced around the Waterfront particularly around the Isaacs' bar, which is generating 1200, plus drinkers during the peak Thursday to Sunday periods.

The Dance East and Witchbottle theatres will be opening shortly, increasing the vibrancy of the area and the cultural offer. However, increased vibrancy may lead to an increase in noise levels and perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

Promoting community engagement and involvement particularly with gated communities.

The very positive attitude of people to be involved in the survey was noted, as people are keen to see any beneficial changes, which can be made to the area. This reflects the strong interest that came from the community day results, and demonstrates a strong desire from people who live in the area to engage and be actively involved.

Good links have begun to be developed with residents and there is a good desire for more communications. In excess of 500 people have requested to join a database to be kept informed.

Environmental issues

Residents would like to see more public toilets and have raised concerns about litter, particularly in the water, and poor access.

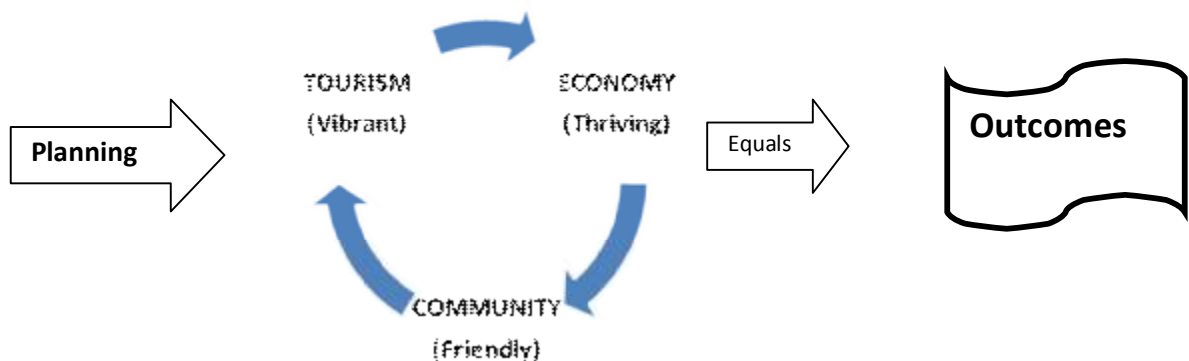
Waterfront Action Partnership Group – What We Are Currently Doing

An Action Plan has been drawn up and limited funding obtained for the detailed actions to be put into place. Draft action plan attached as appendix 1.

A Waterfront Fete is being held on Saturday 19th September on the Ipswich Waterfront as a means of community and business engagement. As part of this it is intended to have another questionnaire to survey residents' views.

Links are being made with residents/community groups to identify if there is the need for additional residents groups to cover each area – possibly in conjunction with Community/Neighbourhood Watch where links are being developed.

The action plan has been developed using the following strategic framework set out in the diagram below:



Jay Harvey – Co-Ordinator
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