



# Draft Consultation Report

## November 2007





## **CONSULTATION REPORT.**

### **Introduction**

The Marsh Street Arches and Gardens project has the aim of developing an area of derelict land located to the South of Greengate Bridge and the arches directly below the bridge. The land and buildings proposed for development have been derelict for almost 30 years and until a recent clean up, had been used as an area for fly tipping, arson, under age drinking and drug abuse. The land on which the site is situated is owned by Barrow Borough Council and is situated in the Central ward of Barrow in Furness, an area which is densely populated but with very little open green space.

In addition to the physical regeneration of the area the project also has the aim of developing the skills, knowledge and qualifications of local people through involvement in each stage of the process including consultation, research, design, planning, construction, delivery of services and evaluation of the project. The full involvement of local people in the process will not only provide the best opportunity for long term sustainability of the project but will also help with the wider social and economic regeneration of the area, providing people with skills and confidence to start new projects, access training or further education or find employment either within the project or elsewhere.

### **Terms of reference**

This report has been compiled for the Marsh Street Arches and Gardens project Committee in order that that they can use the results to inform the development of the final plans for the garden.

### **Consultation process**

On March 21<sup>st</sup> 2007 the Marsh Street Arches and Gardens Project received notification that a funding bid to West Lakes Renaissance to develop a derelict site into an urban Garden was successful. In order to ensure that a range of local people had an opportunity to inform the development of the site a number of consultation activities were carried out.

The consultation process did not have the aim of providing residents with a “blank canvas” to start the process from the beginning but rather an opportunity to adapt the plans before work begins.

The consultation had four main aims as follows:

- **To provide a range of groups in the local area with a final opportunity to pass on any ideas or concerns they may have before the work begins.**
- **To encourage a greater sense of ownership of the garden by the local community ensuring that people use the garden when completed and protect it from potential vandalism etc.**
- **To encourage more people from the local community to become involved in the project whether activities taking place on the garden site or involvement in the planning and design of the arches project (recruitment of volunteers)**
- **To assess the level of local support for the project, including how many people would use the garden and what they might use it for.**



## **Consultation activities**

### **1. Public meeting – Greengate junior school – 16<sup>TH</sup> May 2007**

\_This meeting was designed to provide an opportunity for residents to :

- To hear about and view the plans for development of the site.
- To ask questions of the steering group about the site.
- To adapt the plans or add ideas they may have.

#### **Advertising of consultation event**

To try to ensure that as many local residents as possible attended the event leaflets/questionnaires (see appendix 1) were sent to every house in the local area. For those people not able to attend the meeting an option was provided to return completed questionnaires to 40 Arthur Street. A press release was sent to the North West Evening Mail, Abbey FM. Radio Cumbria and an article was written for the Central Community Newspaper to highlight the consultation activities which also included a questionnaire for people to complete.

#### **Results of consultation**

Only three local residents and a number of PCSO's turned up on the evening. Those present listened to a short presentation by Hugh Massey (project architect) and Neil Doherty (project officer).

Following the presentation an informal discussion took place with residents expressing their support for the project. Only one request was made, that the garden includes roses, if possible!!

### **2. Public meeting – The Sidings – 24<sup>TH</sup> May 2007**

This meeting was designed to provide an opportunity for residents to :

- To hear about and view the plans for development of the site.
- To ask questions of the steering group about the site.
- To adapt the plans or add ideas they may have.

#### **Advertising of consultation event**

To try to ensure that as many local residents as possible attended the event leaflets/questionnaires (see appendix 1) were sent to every house in the sheltered housing blocks. For those people not able to attend the meeting an option was provided to return completed questionnaires to 40 Arthur Street. An in depth article was also written for the Central Community Newspaper to highlight the consultation activities and also included a questionnaire for people to complete.

#### **Results of consultation**

No residents turned up for the meeting and as such we could only conclude that residents are either happy with the plans or are not really interested.



Marsh Street Arches and Garden Project

### **3. School assemblies Greengate Junior School and Sacred Heart school**

These events were designed to provide an opportunity for school children to:

- Hear about and view the plans for development of the site.
- Ask questions of steering group members about the site.
- Adapt the plans or add ideas they may have.

In addition all the children were given the opportunity to enter a competition to write a sentence about why they feel the garden would be good for their area and to also provide any ideas they may have for the garden. All of the competition entries are provided in appendix 2.

#### **Results of consultation**

##### **Sacred Heart School**

28 entries were returned with the following responses;

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a water sprinkler to keep us cool</li> <li>2. a pond, swimming pool, tree house and gym</li> <li>3. a pond, swings and water fountain</li> <li>4. a pond and some swings</li> <li>5. a pond</li> <li>6. a little maze and colourful flowers</li> <li>7. a green house, a swimming pool,</li> <li>8. a pond and a pets corner</li> <li>9. football nets</li> <li>10. a little climbing frame, a slide and a football pitch</li> <li>11. a slide and a gift shop</li> <li>12. mechanical plant waterer</li> <li>13. banana slide, swings</li> <li>14. a pond, plants, trees and grass</li> <li>15. swings a pond, a bench and a place to put bikes</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. a roundabout, a fountain, flowers, swings and trees</li> <li>17. a pond, swings, slide and grass</li> <li>18. a greenhouse, a swing, a pond, seats and rabbits in cages</li> <li>19. a pond, a climbing frame, a bench, a football pitch</li> <li>20. a shed, a pond</li> <li>21. a dog area, some toilets, a drink zone and a playzone</li> <li>22. a pond and some swings</li> <li>23. a shed</li> <li>24. a fish shop and a basketball net</li> <li>25. a flower pot, pond</li> <li>26. a bench</li> <li>27. a pond, trees, flowers, a waterfall, and a café</li> <li>28. a slide</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

##### **Greengate**

A total of 6 responses were returned with the following responses;

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a bird bath, fountain and toilets</li> <li>2. a running area for big ones</li> <li>3. a slide and a climbing frame</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. a fountain and a pond</li> <li>5. no comment</li> <li>6. Swimming pool and toilets</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

##### **Overall conclusion**

The most popular ideas include

- A pond (15)
- Swings (7)
- Play equipment (7)

Innovative ideas include;

- A maze
- A greenhouse
- A place to put bikes
- Toilets
- A bird bath



#### **4. Youth consultation – youth re-action team – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

This consultation exercise was carried out independently by the YOUTH Reaction team with the aim of identifying the ideas of the Youth Reaction team and also assessing the views of local residents.

##### **Results of consultation**

Thirteen young people from the Youth Reaction team were asked to provide ideas or concerns, the results are provided in detail in appendix 3 but a summary is provided below as follows;

##### **Shelters**

The YOUTH reaction team had strong views about the possibility of placing shelters in the garden area concluding that

- There should be several shelters in the garden area,
- Shelters should be practical but modern in design – see photos in report
- The shelters should be brightly coloured

##### **Security**

The young people prioritized security measures to keep the park safe and for it not to be terrorised by a few individuals, security aspects favoured were;

- CCTV
- Good lighting
- Police presence in the arches

##### **Features**

The young people felt strongly that the following features would enhance the outdoor space;

- **Temporary activity space** – this would be an area of ground that would be left as an open space covered in grass or a similar multi-purpose surface. The space would be used for temporary activities such as, a visiting climbing wall, festivals, fetes, mini-garden show. This would make the park a more lively and evolving place and the events could be selected to appeal to different audiences to encourage a broad range of the community to use the park.
- **Water feature** – this was voted for by a high number of young people involved in the project who felt it would create a relaxing aspect to the space.

##### **Arches**

The following uses were highlighted as potential uses for the arches;

- Multi-sports area – football, basketball
- Café
- Graffiti space
- Youth centre – but not called this – internet, sofas, music, table football.

##### **YRAT Feedback from residents**

A number of interviews were also held with local residents to ascertain their thoughts and ideas in relation to the garden. Details of interviews are provided in appendix 3 with a summary provided below.

##### **What should be the main priorities for the garden area?**

- Should be easy for people with limited mobility x4
- Fencing important so that it is safe but that people can look onto the site
- A water feature would be nice x2
- CCTV would also be good to protect the site and make it safe x4
- A team room with chairs would be nice
- An area for older children to play – preventing football in the street.
- The area needs to be supervised



## **5. Streetsafe Survey - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

This survey was carried out by the local streetsafe project in which volunteers visit each household in the area to identify issues of concern or to consult with people about particular issues (see appendix 4). 300 homes were visited.

A number of questions concerning the garden project were included in the survey as follows;

- Are you aware of the marsh street arches and gardens project?
- Would you like more information about the project?
- Would you like to be involved in the project?

### **Results of consultation**

40% had heard of the Marsh street Arches and Gardens project.

15% requested further information.

In addition a number of people from the local community expressed an interest becoming part of the community and as a result have become actively involved in the project.



## **CONCLUSION**

The Marsh Street Arches and Gardens consultation had four main aims and as such must be measured against those aims.

**1. To provide a range of groups in the local area with a final opportunity to pass on any ideas or concerns they may have before the work begins.**

The activities organized were designed to provide all sections of the community with an opportunity to have their say on the proposed development. The Committee recognized that barriers often exist which prevent certain sections of the local community from putting forward their ideas. As such separate activities were held for different age groups within the area with a slightly different focus. A competition was designed for younger children aged 8-11 to try to capture their imagination whilst the Youth Reaction team held a separate seminar for young people aged between 11-16. A meeting was also held at the Sidings to ensure older people with limited access to transport could have their say with further opportunities provided through questionnaires, door to door surveys and a general public meeting.

The committee has worked very hard to ensure that everyone could have their say and whilst the number of responses was a little disappointing the only conclusion that can be drawn is either that people are happy with the project or uninterested in the development of the site.

**2. To encourage a greater sense of ownership of the garden by the local community ensuring that people use the garden when completed and protect it from potential vandalism etc.**

&

**3. To encourage more people from the local community to become involved in the project whether activities taking place on the garden site or involvement in the planning and design of the arches project (recruitment of volunteers)**

When the consultation process began there were a number of agencies involved in the development of the project but only three local residents. The project now has thirteen individuals involved in the project, with more people expressing an interest in becoming involved in different aspects i.e. gardening, bats, environmental issues. The involvement of more local residents has had an immediate impact with many talking to friends, neighbours and relatives about the project and in doing so advertising the project to the local community.

**4. To assess the level of local support for the project, including how many people would use the garden and what they might use it for.**

Although some of the consultation activities did not generate a large response almost all of the responses to the proposed site were positive. Many people highlighted the need for security highlighting real concerns over the possibility of the site being vandalized or used for other acts of anti-social behaviour.

Each of the different age groups consulted identified different ideas for the site as follows;

- Younger children (8-11) – emphasis on play equipment although nature activities were also a high priority.
- Young people (11-16) - emphasis on meeting place with a range of activities inside the arches including sports and music as well as a place to meet and socialize.
- Adults - emphasis on a place to relax and unwind within a beautiful environment. Also seen as an opportunity to get involved in physical activities such as gardening.

The different needs of each of the groups will need to be considered when planning the facilities and activities which take place on the site, ensuring that the needs of each group are satisfied but not at the expense of another group.