

The future of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project

1. Introduction

Sheerwater residents, businesses, community groups and other interested parties were asked for their views on what should happen with the remainder of the regeneration site.

The consultation was launched on Wednesday 9 August 2023 and closed at midnight on Sunday 17 September 2023, giving respondents just under six weeks to have their say.

507 surveys were completed - 440 online, 67 paper. 52 of the 67 paper copies completed had been sent directly to the respondent.

The views of respondents will be presented to the Council's Executive on 5 October 2023 along with the findings of the review currently being undertaken by external property experts, Avison Young.

2. Methodology

The public survey consisted of seven questions relating to the project. Questions were a mix of multiple choice and free text responses.

1. How do we deal with the remaining properties on the estate?
2. Which organisations do you think should lead on any further redevelopment?
3. What do you think about the standard of the existing community facilities?
4. How do you feel the changes to the regeneration project will impact access to health services? (Included on behalf of Sheerwater Health Centre)
5. What other health and community services would be useful in the Sheerwater area?
6. What one thing would you like to see delivered as part of the regeneration?
7. How do you want us to provide you with more information about the regeneration project as it becomes available?

The survey was hosted on the Woking Community Forum website (woking.gov.uk/sheerwater). Paper copies were also sent to households in and around the regeneration area who we regularly communicate with (approximately 1,275 homes).

These residents were encouraged to complete the survey online or return their completed paper copies to the following drop-off points, where further copies were available: Eastwood Leisure Centre, Parkview Centre for the Community, St Michael's, MAScot and Sheerwater Health Centre.

3. Promotion of the survey

The following communication activity took place during the consultation period to raise awareness and encourage residents to complete the survey.

- A press release was issued to the local media which resulted in local newspaper coverage and an interview with Cllr Forster on BBC Surrey.
- Two short videos featuring Cllr Forster were produced for use on the council's digital channels. Combined, these received 4,300 views (watched for 3 seconds or more).

- Regular organic posts on social media generated more than 13,500 impressions.
- Articles included in the council's weekly e-newsletter generated 250 click-throughs to the online survey.
- A targeted email campaign sent to Transforming Sheerwater e-newsletter subscribers and Canalside residents achieved a 69% open rate and resulted in 52 click-throughs to the survey.
- The Strategic Director – Communities attended a coffee morning at Woodlands House on Thursday 17 August 2023.
- Cllr Forster attended the Sheerwater Together residents meeting on Wednesday 13 September 2023.

4. Profile of respondents

Interest:

Of the 507 people who completed the survey, a quarter (24.8%) live within the regeneration area. A third (34.7%) live in Sheerwater but outside of the regeneration area.

The largest group of respondents (39.4%) labelled themselves as not living in Sheerwater but as having an interest in the project.

Age:

Three quarters of the people who answered this question (501 responses) fall into the 24 to 44 (36.1%) and 45 to 64 (38.7%) age brackets. This is consistent with the Canalside 2021 Census profile.

Gender:

Just over half of the 483 people who answered this question identified as female (54%). 192 respondents described themselves as male (39.8%). 30 people (6.2%), preferred not to say.

Ethnicity:

457 people answered this question. When compared to the Canalside 2021 Census profile, Asian respondents are under-represented.

	Canalside Census 2021 data	Survey respondents
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	38.9%	12%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2.8%	1.8%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	3.7%	2%
White	50.9%	83%
Other ethnic group	3.7%	1%

5. Analysis of responses

Q1: How to deal with the remaining properties on the estate? (Mandatory)

Respondents were asked to give their views on whether the remaining areas should be redeveloped or retained and refurbished. Generally, the preferred option was to keep and refurbish the houses in Woodlands Park (60%) and Hennessey Court and Spencer Close (52%), along with the sheltered accommodation at Woodlands House (54%).

It was more evenly split for houses in Dartmouth Green, Dartmouth Avenue and Dartmouth Path and Wakehurst Path, Blackmore Crescent and Bunyard Drive, with 50% supporting refurbishment.

Demolition and selling the land for redevelopment was the preferred option for the blocks of flats in Dartmouth Avenue and Devonshire Avenue (68%); flats in Spencer Close, Forsyth Path and Loder Close (65%) and the retail units with flats above in Dartmouth Avenue (66%).

Property	Keep and refurbish	Demolish and sell the land	Don't know
Houses in Woodlands Park (Falcon Court, Heron Walk, Kingfisher Court, & Merlin Court).	60%	35.5%	4.5%
Houses in Hennessey Court and Spencer Close.	51.7%	44%	4.3%
Houses between Dartmouth Green, Dartmouth Avenue and Dartmouth Path.	49.7%	45.6%	4.7%
Houses within the hoarding at Wakehurst Path, Blackmore Crescent and Bunyard Drive.	50.1%	44.8%	5.1%
Blocks of flats in Dartmouth Avenue and Devonshire Avenue.	27.8%	68.4%	3.7%
Blocks of flats in Spencer Close, Forsyth Path and Loder Close.	29.4%	64.7%	5.9%
Sheltered accommodation at Woodlands House.	53.5%	39.3%	7.3%
Retail units with flats above in Dartmouth Avenue.	30.2%	66.3%	3.6%

Q2: Who should lead on any further redevelopment? (Mandatory)

Views were more evenly split on the type of organisation that should lead on any further redevelopment. Respondents could select multiple options. Private developer was selected 292 times while housing association was selected 283 times. Where respondents selected Other, the answer given was 'council'.

Q3: 3. What do you think about the standard of the existing community facilities? (Mandatory)

Respondents were also asked how they rated the quality of the existing community facilities within the regeneration area. The results were mostly positive, with the majority of respondents rating the different facilities as either Good or Reasonable or they did not know. The Parkview Community Centre had the fewest (21%) rating the facility as Poor, followed by the Foodwise/Nursery Building (24%) and Health Centre Building (25%).

There was slightly higher dissatisfaction with the recreation facilities (Multi-Use Games Area, recreation ground, play area and skate park), ranging from 31% to 32% rating them as Poor. The only community facility where there was widespread dissatisfaction was the retail units, with 70% of respondents rating the buildings as Poor.

Facility	Good	Reasonable	Poor	Do not know
Parkview Centre of the Community	25.8%	32.3%	20.9%	20.9%
Foodwise and nursery building	15.6%	22.5%	24.3%	37.7%
Recreation ground skate park	15.8%	32.9%	32.1%	19.1%
Recreation ground MUGA	17.9%	32.9%	31.6%	17.6%
Recreation ground play area	18.5%	32.5%	32.1%	16.8%
Recreation ground in general	18.5%	34.9%	31.2%	15.4%
Shops/retail units	5.5%	17.4%	70.2%	6.9%
Health centre	20.8%	32.5%	25.2%	21.4%

Q4: How do you feel the changes to the regeneration project will impact access to health services?

This free text question was included in the survey on behalf of Sheerwater Health Service following the proposed changes to the Yellow phase health and community facilities.

344 people responded to the question. 15% indicated that they were 'unsure' or 'did not know' what the impact was or might be.

A significant proportion of respondents (23%) expressed concern about the high number of homes being built and the potential negative impact this will have on already 'overstretched resources'.

There were 60 references (17%) to the current provision being bad or poor or having got worse as a result of the regeneration. 22 respondents said they thought the existing offer was good and didn't foresee any impact as they trusted the council/NHS would respond accordingly to local need. 12 respondents indicated they thought the regeneration would have a positive impact on the health of the community.

45 respondents (13%) wanted to see the expansion and upgrade of existing facilities, specifically the health centre (8%) and the pharmacy (5%).

Q5. What other health and community services would be useful in the Sheerwater area?

358 people responded to this free text question. 22 people (6%) indicated that they were 'unsure' or 'did not know' what was needed.

A quarter of respondents (25%) said they want to see the return of a dentist. Again, 85 respondents (23%) said how important the health centre and pharmacy were. 25

respondents (7%) said they wanted a walk-in centre or community hospital like the one at Heathside Road.

16 people felt there was a need for day care services for the elderly, while 15 people felt mental health services would be a valuable addition.

After this, there were multiple references to a having coffee shop, mother and baby clinics, a youth centre and a community centre that was 'suitable for all'. This would suggest that people either don't know that these facilities already exist in Sheerwater or that the current provision does not meet their needs.

Q6. What residents like to see delivered as part of the regeneration

414 people responded to this free text question. The overriding sentiment is that respondents want to see the completion of what been started and that there is an end to the regeneration. As part of this, they want to see the roads resurfaced and the estate cleaned up.

In terms of answering the question, decent shops came out on top (11%), followed by affordable homes (9%) and green space which the whole community can use and benefit from (7%).

Q7. How do you want us to provide you with more information about the regeneration project as it becomes available? (Mandatory)

Email, letter and webpages ranked the highest among the 507 survey respondents.

Method	Rank in order of preference from 1 to 6
Letter	2
Email	1
Webpages	3
Public meetings	4
Virtual verbal updates (via Teams, Zoom)	6
Posters and information at Parkview	5

By providing their email addresses, 325 responded opted-in to receiving the Transforming Sheerwater e-newsletter, which will enable the council to communicate with them via email in the future.

6. Conclusion

The results from this survey will feed into the option analysis presented to the Executive on 5 October 2023.