



A 'Think Piece'

Responding to Mole Valley District Council's project to create a "Master Plan" for the centre of Bookham

The BRA's aspiration for the retail/business areas in and around central Bookham

This 'Think Piece' is in response to Mole Valley District Council's (MVDC) project to create a "Master Plan" for the centre of Bookham. We understand the plan is to focus on the central retail/business area of Bookham including the Lower Shott, High Street, and Church Road – collectively referred to as "the High St".

The Master Plan

MVDC has obtained Government funding to develop two Master Plans, one for Bookham and one for Dorking.

MVDC's theme for the Bookham Master Plan is about encouraging walking, cycling and improving accessibility for sustainable modes of transport. We have been assured that the Master Plan will relate to and draw on other existing Plans that affect the Bookhams; and that the Master Plan will be looking for improvement opportunities and identify how the "High St" could benefit from "enhancement".

MVDC has a completion date for the Master Plan of the end of March 2025. To get to that point we understand that the timetable is:

- Complete a baseline analysis and report - June 2024
- Development of draft master plan - July to September 2024
- Public consultation – October 2024
- Refine draft master plan – November to December 2024
- Finalisation / MVDC adoption January to March 2025

BRA involvement

MVDC has asked the BRA to join a 'steering group' of local Councillors for the Master Plan project. We welcome the invitation as a signal of resident's inclusion by MVDC.

The Master Plan can only be considered valid if it is fully informed by and genuinely responds to input from the local community. This Think Piece is the BRA's initial contribution to that process.

The Master Plan will affect all users of Bookham's High St. We therefore welcome comments from residents, and from any clubs, groups, societies and organisations that wish to comment through the BRA, and/or who have not already been contacted by MVDC's consultants (AR Urbanism).

Please send us your comments on the ideas in this Think Piece by visiting the BRA website: www.bookhamresidents.org.uk and click on the "Latest News" button.

The BRA's Thoughts...

The BRA's aspirations for the retail and business areas in and around central Bookham are that they should remain:

A welcoming community, retail and business centre at the heart of the Bookhams

The BRA thinks the matters listed in this Think Piece are necessary to support and enhance the High St. These matters are not in any priority order and we welcome residents comments. **What do you think?**

Planning

1. MVDC's Local Plan, Bookham's Neighbourhood Plan, the embryonic Bookham "Master Plan", and LCWIP (local cycling and walking improvement plan) all need to be fully coordinated
2. MVDC and Surrey County Council (SCC) need to work collaboratively together to integrate highways and Local/other plan delivery
3. MVDC and SCC need to work collaboratively together to maximise the community value of their land and property assets – e.g. working together with local GPs to improve/replace existing medical facilities in the Eastwick Park area
4. MVDC should consider introducing a BID or other Economic Development Hub/support for local businesses in Bookham
5. MVDC should undertake a comprehensive shopper survey – where do customers come from - local, further afield, and what attracts them to Bookham
6. MVDC should consider introducing a design code for new buildings, and the maintenance/decoration of buildings in the main business/retail areas

IT Infrastructure

1. Improve Broadband capacity/speed in the central retail/business areas
2. MVDC and SCC should explore the opportunities to expand the community services available in the central retail/business area, such as in the Library by creating for example:
 - a. a Banking Hub
 - b. a Heritage Centre
 - c. an IT Hub

Highways

1. Improve linkage between the Lower Shott and the High St – e.g. via an underpass, bridge, or improved crossing facilities at the A246
2. Improve linkage between the High St and Church Rd
3. Refurbish the Squareabout – the preferred solution to this four-way give-way junction
4. Improve the clarity and visibility of road and pedestrian signage – that signage to be of a style that is in keeping with the village
5. Improve the road, walking and cycling links between the retail/business centre and Polesden Lacey, and Bookham Common, to draw footfall into Bookham
6. Use coherent street furniture of a style that is in keeping with the village, and clear the clutter
7. Properly maintain the highways and pavement networks – pot holes, kerbs, dropped kerbs, white and yellow lines

8. Improve on-street and off-street parking enforcement
9. Undertake a feasibility study into promoting new and underused routes through the centre
10. Do not introduce pedestrianisation or one way traffic in the High St – either would be seriously detrimental to the High St (**Note.** We understand that SCC has recently reported that pedestrianisation and one-way for the High Street are not practical options. Also an experiment for one way was tried in circa the 1980s and confirmed that the result was excess speeding and dangerous driving)

Transport

1. Improve bus and train frequency. (Demand has been recognised with improvements to the 479 and Surrey Connect bus services announced by SCC)
2. Enable easy disabled access to Platform 1 (London bound) at the railway station
3. Provide safe/secure bicycle parking and electric bicycle charging points throughout the area
4. Remove the majority of the slow EV charging points in the Lower Shott carpark which are unused and detrimental to the visual amenity of the area, or replace with fast charging points of a design that is less of an eyesore
5. Introduce free parking for 1.5 hours in all Bookham car parks. OR. Introduce nominal cost residents parking permits for purchase by all residents covering all MVDC car parks in Bookham

Community (Leisure / Wellbeing / Youth / Environment)

1. SCC and MVDC to collaborate and deliver the new Youth and Community Centre on the Lower Rd Recreation Ground
2. SCC and MVDC to collaborate, and engage with local potentially interested parties (e.g. GP practices), over the redevelopment of the former Youth Centre and the former Keswick House Care Home
3. Develop sports facilities (e.g. Squash / Paddle Courts) e.g. at Lower Rd Recreation Ground, and the Chrystie Recreation Ground
4. Install outdoor gymnasium equipment to create outdoor adult fitness centres e.g. at Lower Rd Recreation Ground, and Chrystie Recreation Ground
5. Enable the planned creation of a 'bump track' at Lower Rd Recreation Ground
6. Work with organisations such as The Grange, and Care providers, to promote accessibility to the retail and business centre of Bookham for people with particular mobility and special needs
7. Develop/promote a heritage hub, and walking trail in and around the retail and business centre
8. Introduce facilities to encourage leisure use e.g. picnicking on the green by the Lower Shott
9. Undertake regular tree and shrub maintenance – regularly remove dead/diseased growth and control unsightly basal growth from trees
10. Improve street cleaning, weed control, and bin emptying

Have your say

The BRA thinks the matters listed in the Think Piece are necessary to support and enhance Bookham's central retail and business areas so that they remain: a welcoming community, retail and business centre at the heart of the Bookhams.

This Think Piece is being shared with MVDC's Planners, the Consultants engaged by MVDC to create the Master Plan (AR Urbanism), local MVDC and SCC Councillors; and most importantly with Bookham Residents and Businesses.

We welcome your comments on the ideas in this think Piece; and any ideas for improvements that you would like to see happen. **You may do by visiting the BRA website: www.bookhamresidents.org.uk and click on the "Latest News" button.**

We cannot promise to respond to all comments individually, but we will read all comments received and use them as part of our working with MVDC and its Consultants.

End.