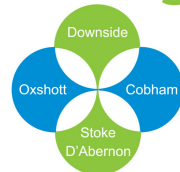


envisage



for the 21st Century

PROGRESS REPORT AUGUST 2009

Following the publication of the Envisage Report and Action Plan in January, the last six months have been taken up in developing relationships with the local authorities and existing local organisations and bodies. Our policy is to act as a catalyst in assisting and complementing those existing organisations in achieving the aspirations identified by our survey, rather than in setting ourselves up as yet another local group with overlapping ambitions.

This has been a challenging task, since those aspirations are spread across a very wide range of issues and our funding and manpower resources are very limited. However we set out below some of the initiatives we have taken to date:-

- **Elmbridge Core Strategy:** Discussions have taken place with senior officers and Councillors of the Elmbridge Borough Council who have all been very positively responsive to and welcoming of the Envisage Report and Action Plan which has been used by EBC as part of its information base. Many of the desires of our local community as identified in our Report have been reflected in the Core Strategy, but notwithstanding this, the Envisage Team has submitted a detailed paper to EBC containing further representations, comments and questions (copies of which are available on our website www.envisage.org.uk). Further meetings are taking place with Council Officers to discuss these issues.
- **Chamber of Commerce:** Discussions have been taking place with the Cobham Chamber of Commerce with which the Envisage team is collaborating in promoting and pursuing the following initiatives:
 - Restoration of the Christmas lights in Cobham High Street
 - Extension of pedestrianisation of Hollyhedge Road
 - Cobham retailers loyalty card
 - Unified parking strategy to be used in negotiation with EBC and SCC

A good working relationship is being developed with the Chamber which we hope will lead to further such initiatives.

- **Police:** Discussions have been held with the Elmbridge Neighbourhood Inspector, who is very supportive of the Envisage initiative and has taken due note of those elements of the Report which affect his field of operation. Envisage has lent its support to his desire for an extra officer to increase the visibility of a police presence.
- **Health and medical services:** Discussions are taking place with the Surrey Primary Care Trust which has expressed interest in using the information gathered by our Report in assisting it in improving the delivery of health services in the Envisage area.

- **Education and Schooling:**
 - Meetings have been held with Surrey County Council to represent the views of our local community in relation to the choice and availability of satisfactory secondary school places within easy reach of the Envisage area. The urgent need for these has been stressed, not only from the educational viewpoint, but also because of their impact in reducing our traffic congestion and carbon footprint. We are also strongly promoting the construction of a new secondary school to serve the Envisage area.
 - Discussions are in progress with the Elmbridge Community Learning Project and Brooklands College to explore the possibility of establishing educational courses both for adults and for those with learning difficulties to be held in suitably accessible community accommodation in Cobham town centre.
 - U3A – the U3A is an educational system in which members (adults) get together to study or take part in a common interest without a teacher/pupil relationship and has become an alternative to Adult Education. We have been in discussion with the Surrey U3A network with a view to establishing a new U3A in the Envisage area.

- **Transport:**
 - Discussions are taking place with Network Rail about the possibility of providing lift or ramp access to the platforms as an alternative to the footbridge staircases at Cobham and Oxshott stations, which would greatly improve access for those with disabilities and for many other rail users.
 - Local Community Bus Service: In collaboration with members of the community, consideration is being given to the development of a business plan for the operation of a local circulatory bus service linking Oxshott and Cobham stations with the shops and medical centres. This will then be used to promote support and funding from local organisations and businesses as well as the Local Authority.
 - The improvement of footpaths and the creation of cycle paths is being discussed with the relevant authorities to help improve safety and reduce congestion.
 - Envisage has also lent its support to the campaign of local residents to reduce the speed limit in Stoke Road.

- **Cedar Road Site:** The Envisage team urged Surrey County Council both in writing and at a meeting with senior Officers and Councillors, not to sell the Cedar Road site, but to explore the possibility, in collaboration with Envisage and other local organisations, of dealing with the development of the site by way of a community-led partnership aimed at maximizing the provision of much needed community facilities. This concept was rejected, but we were given an assurance that the findings of the Envisage Report and Action Plan would be brought to the attention of prospective purchasers and kept in consideration as the design process moved on.

- **Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust:** Envisage has lent its support to CCHT in its bid to bring about an improvement in the appearance of the open space adjacent to the River Mole at River Hill.

- **Central Government:** The Envisage Report and Action Plan was well received by our local MP, Mr Ian Taylor and a meeting has taken place with him in which he expressed his desire to be kept informed of our progress and to support us as and when appropriate.