



## PROGRESS REPORT AUGUST 2011

The strategy of the Envisage Project Group since the completion of our survey and the publication of our Report and Action Plan in 2009 has been to act as a catalyst to help existing local organisations rather than to act direct and thereby add to the number of local groups with overlapping ambitions.

Set out below is a summary of some of the actions and initiatives which we have taken over the last twelve months:-

- Elmbridge Core Strategy:** The wishes and aspirations of our local community which emerged from the Envisage Survey were duly reflected in the representations which we made in respect of Elmbridge Borough Council's (EBC) Core Strategy proposals. A copy of those representations can be viewed on our website [www.envisage.org.uk](http://www.envisage.org.uk). The majority of the points we made were incorporated in one way or another into the final version of the Strategy Document and The Envisage Report was specifically acknowledged in its Core Document List as being part of its data base. The final version of the Elmbridge Core Strategy, as amended during the consultation period, was submitted to the Government Inspector last autumn and her Report was received in June of this year. The Inspector concluded that the Council's Strategy was sound and the document was duly approved by the Council and became operative in August 2011.

We continue to have input into the implementation of the Strategy in general through involvement in EBC's Town Planning User Group, Design and Character Workshop and Community Infrastructure Levy Workshop. We also keep in touch with individual Local Authority Officers and Members with regard to other implications of the implementation of the Core strategy as they arise from time to time.
- Loyalty Card:** We have continued to work closely with the Cobham Chamber of Commerce on the Cobham Village Card and the local loyalty-card scheme. The original Village Card website has been incorporated into the Cobham Village website so there is now one reference point at [www.cobhamvillage.co.uk](http://www.cobhamvillage.co.uk). Some 1500 consumers have a village card and the number is steadily growing. Some 50 businesses locally have special offers for Village Card holders. The implementation team has been working on marketing ideas to ensure that businesses update regularly and to encourage shoppers to support their local businesses. Plans include a regular monthly competition on the website with a prize from one of the supporting businesses. A Treasure Trail is planned for Heritage Day to encourage consumers to visit the participating businesses and the prize will be a laptop.
- Car Parking:** In collaboration with the Cobham Chamber of Commerce and in accordance with the Envisage Action Plan, we have promoted the idea, based on the results of our survey, that the Chamber should produce an overall strategy for parking for Cobham involving all available spaces, whether owned privately or by Surrey County Council (SCC) or EBC. This strategy paper has now been produced and, once agreed by Cobham businesses, will be submitted for consideration and approval by local residents' groups and associations so that a consensus acceptable to residents and businesses can be promoted. Despite Surrey County Council's decision to introduce parking meters - made in the face of much local opposition - it is hoped that this strategy paper will form the basis of continuing discussion with both Local Authorities.

- **Cedar Road Site:** When SCC first sought to sell this site in early 2009, the Envisage team urged, both in writing and at meetings, that, instead of selling, they should explore the possibility, with Envisage and other local organisations, of the development of the site by a community-led partnership aimed at maximising the provision of much-needed community facilities. This concept was rejected, but we were assured that the preferred developer would be made aware of the strength of public opinion revealed by our survey that community use on the site should be maximised. Assurances that we would be kept informed and involved as design and content discussions with prospective developers proceeded were not honoured. However, towards the end of 2010, with the promotion of the new Government's Localism strategy and with the intervention of our MP, Dominic Raab, the prospect of community involvement with Surrey County Council in resolving the site's future was revived. Sadly, however, a conditional contract for sale was concluded with the preferred developer before any meaningful community-based negotiations could take place.

EBC has now granted outline planning permission to the selected developer, Shanly Homes, for the construction of 14 residential units together with some 642 sq. mtrs. of floor space to include a new library and flexible community uses. In conjunction with the Cobham Chamber of Commerce, the Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust and the Cobham and Downside Residents' Association, Envisage has been invited to work with SCC and Shanly to ensure that the disappointingly limited amount of the site allocated for community space is used and operated in the best interests of local residents, charities, businesses and visitors.

- **Education and Schooling:** Our survey revealed considerable concern among parents in relation to choice and availability of satisfactory secondary school places within easy reach of the 'Envisage area'. Part of our Action Plan to address this included the promotion of the construction/establishment of a new secondary school to serve the area. Support, in principle, for this has been forthcoming from our MP Dominic Raab and from many Elmbridge Councillors and accordingly we plan to hold a public open meeting later in the year to assess in more detail the strength of local demand, support and interest. All those interested would be most welcome to attend.
- **Transport - Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon and Oxshott Stations:** We are pleased to see that Southwest Trains are planning some improvements to our local stations and the refurbishment of Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon station is due to start imminently. The work involves a repaint and an accessible toilet that will be part of the Radar key scheme. The booking hall and waiting area will be opened out to create a larger, more welcoming space. Platform extensions are due to take place in a couple of years at both stations. We remain in touch with Southwest Trains over disabled access for passengers with a physical disability who may require wheelchair access; also for passengers carrying heavy luggage who are unable to lift it over the bridge without assistance and for passengers with small children and pushchairs. We have asked Southwest Trains to incorporate plans for disabled and disadvantaged passengers in their plans and hope that they will do so. As yet, we have had no assurance on this matter, but they are aware of the views of our local community.
- **Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust:** We continue to work closely with the CCHT on many issues and to represent ourselves during Heritage Day to update local residents on the activities and initiatives in which we are involved.