



Leatherhead  
Residents Association

## Bulletin for February 2025

Dear Members

Given its importance to the future of our Town, I make no apology for the fact that this Bulletin is exclusively on the subject of **Transform Leatherhead**, following the Leret Partnership's "Forum" meeting on the subject that took place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February at the Theatre.

For those who did not attend, the meeting was well supported and whilst there were no plans and artists impressions on display or for the attendees to take away, these were shown on screen as the various speakers explained what is now proposed.

As far as the Swan Centre is concerned, the latest proposals are not dissimilar to those of last year. The first-floor deck above the main entrance is cut away to create an open concourse area, whilst new restaurant buildings are provided to either side. A multi-screen cinema is constructed on the service deck above the mall, accessed via a new lift/stair core from the mall.

The plans for Bull Hill have, however, changed quite significantly, with the hotel building deleted, the creation of a larger replacement Park and many of the taller buildings replaced with four 5-6 storey blocks along the Bull Hill frontage. A number of very tall buildings remain however, notably at the bottom of Station Road and adjacent to the railway line. The Transport Hub remains in the north-west corner but is now accessed from Station Road rather than Randalls Road.

The LRA held a meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> February to discuss these latest proposals and many of the points made by our members re-iterated comments made at the "Forum" meeting. Specifically on the **Swan Centre** these included:

"Why can't the developers help the Theatre to have a better cinema offering, instead of building a new one?"

"Will the new concourse in front of the entrance be practical, when it is open to the elements?"

"Will a new cinema be viable when there are so many competing screens in nearby centres such as Epsom, Dorking, Reigate, Esher and Guildford?"

Email via [www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact](http://www.leatherheadresidents.org.uk/contact)

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“Any new cinema should be capable of conversion to another use in case it proves unviable.”

“Residents wanted more or better shops not more restaurants.”

“Would the cost of the proposed works be better spent on a simple refurbishment of the Centre, together with subsidised rents to attract new retailers?”

As regards **Bull Hill** comments included the following-

“The revised, larger Park is a great improvement.”

“Who will own and manage the buildings and the common areas such as the Park ?”

“A number of the buildings are still excessively tall; have they been justified by the “Tall Buildings Survey“ required by the Local Plan ?

“Is a substantial new office building really viable with so much vacant office space available?”

“The proposed buildings on Bull Hill are a great improvement.”

“Is the access road to the Transport Hub capable of handling the likely traffic?”

Of course, one of the most fundamental queries for both the Swan Centre and Bull Hill is will Mole Valley District Council be around to implement this 10 year development, when the Government is proposing to disband district councils and vest their functions in Surrey County Council?

You have the opportunity to study these proposals and comment on them at the public consultation exercise that the Leret Partnership will be conducting in the first two weeks of March. There is a “Zoom” virtual meeting between 19:00-20:00 on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March** and live meetings in the former Clintons Cards unit in the Swan Centre between 14:00-20:00 on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March** and between 10:00-16:00 on **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March**. I do urge you to attend one of these meetings, study the plans and give the Leret Partnership your views thereon.

Please do not forget that I cannot continue in my role as Chairman of the LRA after the end of April. Perhaps a couple of people could share the job? I could make suggestions if that was thought a way forward. We have around 5 people who are prepared to continue in their current roles, so there is an existing team with whom a new Chairman could work, so please think about it!!

With best wishes to all of you.

Caroline (Brown)

Chairman

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