

Feedback on March 2016 Neighbourhood Plan Open Day consultations at Cotswold Hall and Westwoods Centre

Feedback on the proposals highlighted in the March 2016 newsletter mostly centred on the site between the telephone exchange and the industrial estate, behind the lime trees at Jubilee Row, though various other queries were also raised. In no particular order, the essence of the comments, together with responses, are as follows.

Why are there proposals to allocate sites for development at the West end of town when development is proposed at the East end of town?

The sites which were the subject of our consultation are additional to those identified at the East end of town. The site at Bassett Road (N1A) has outline permission for 40 houses. The site to the east of Nostle Road (N 14C) will be included in CDC's District Plan for further housing – possibly 17 dwellings.

The sites we propose are designed to provide the infrastructure that will not be delivered by development at the East end of town, namely, car parking, space for expansion of the school and or nursery provision, the possibility of additional recreational space and car parking for the school. In addition, if our plan is supported, this will also deliver 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy to the Town Council to facilitate further improvements to the town.

Is a car park necessary? Will anyone use it if it is situated on the proposed site behind Jubilee Row?

We believe a visitors' car park is essential. The car park in Market Place is often at capacity and cannot cope with larger events in the church or busy periods. Neither can it adequately accommodate an increasing number of coach visits. The following is an extract from an email to church welcomers from Richard Owen, of 24 April:

We recorded 408 visitors this week, including over 170 on coach tours. 50 arrived on a coach tour on Tuesday at noon, with much the same numbers the following day... Tours were from Hampshire, Surrey and Warwick.

The previous week saw coaches arriving from elsewhere in the UK and from Belgium.

A well signed visitors car park will provide space for longer term parking for walkers, tourists and those attending events in the town, as well as a couple of coaches. It will also provide the opportunity to add some green space to the Market Place and ensure that it is available to local shoppers. The need for this is also recognised by CDC in their emerging district plan. Without it, we believe our businesses will struggle to take advantage of the potential for increased trade and our environment will continue to deteriorate. Some 64% of those completing the household survey thought one or more car parks to be necessary.

Why can't we put a car park by the church?

We believe we have chosen the most feasible site. To provide a car park by the church would have a number of additional challenges, not least financing the additional cost of constructing a feeder road and locating this so close to a Grade 1 listed building. Neither was it favoured by our consultants. The State of the Parish Report, which includes the results of the survey of all households, shows that the site at Jubilee Row was only 2% less popular than by the church as a location (58% and 56% respectively) and that these were the two favoured sites (other than on the site of the fire station which is not considered achievable in the foreseeable future).

Why should there be any light industrial or housing development on the site behind Jubilee Row? (Site A / N13)

We expect the existing Ferrari site to be allocated for housing. Were that site to be sold for housing, the town would lose an employment site. Some 65% of those responding to the household survey wished to see more employment space. To provide for this possibility by extending the existing industrial estate into an area behind a new car park would ensure employment land remains available for the future and that any new demand can be accommodated.

Together, some allocation for employment and for housing on this site can help finance a car park for the town. Any development needs to be of the utmost quality to improve the entrance to the town in this location and lessen the impact of the breezeblock gable ends and asbestos roofs of the existing industrial estate. It must not go above the line of the existing housing, but would provide an opportunity to extend the existing tree belt.

What about development in the field opposite Jubilee Row? (Site B / N12C)

Some small amount of development here would also assist in financing infrastructure for the town and at the same time could provide a more welcoming, typical entrance to the town than at present by ensuring high quality building using natural stone and ensuring a “soft” settlement edge in place of the current urban block.

The field behind Jubilee Row floods and contains springs. Is it suitable?

Any developer wishing to build will have to satisfy planners that there is a suitable scheme which will not threaten any housing. By way of example, the new school hall required additional drainage to prevent run off into the playing field and Mill End. Similarly, the newly constructed houses at Slys Close are designed to deal with all the water arising on site and avoid runoff into West End. Development could be an opportunity to improve the risk from flooding from field springs not adequately dealt with the older adjoining development.

Why is development proposed adjoining the school?

The school site has become increasingly constricted as additional classrooms and a new school hall were added over the years. The site now has more buildings and nearly twice as many pupils as 20 years ago. Room is needed for expansion. Space is also needed to provide for the opportunity for an adjoining nursery and provision of “wrap around” care for working parents who need child care provision before and after the end of the school day. This

site also provides an opportunity to add much needed parking for the school and to expand recreational provision adjoining the playing field.

What detail is available about what will be built?

The Neighbourhood Development Plan is intended to establish which sites are capable of sustaining the development the town wants. It is not intended, and cannot, go into any detailed design. The plan will operate in the same way as CDC's plan for the district, setting out what development might take place in which areas.

As with any proposed development, any potential developer will have to apply for and obtain detailed planning permission, ensuring that such matters as drainage, overlooking, density, materials and architectural detail meet planners requirements. In addition, any development at the West end of town will be conditional upon the provision of suitable car parking.