

SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM FOCUS GROUP – PUBLIC MEETING 20/7/12 - from Heather Morris

CONCERNS & OBJECTIONS

1. Traffic & Parking

- This is already an issue with The Courts & The Glove Factory, and new development risks making this worse.
- It is not clear from the plans whether there is adequate parking for both the commercial units and the housing.
- The fact that the Glove Factory seriously underestimated their parking needs and are having to apply for retrospective planning permission, is not reassuring.
- The entrance to the Midlands by the shop is already tight for lorries and the proposed changes to that – narrowing the road and adding bollards – may make this worse.
- The provision of parking outside the shop is not adequate as the shop relies on passing customers being able to park easily and pop in.

2. Scale and Viability of the Development

- Concerns that we are not being told the whole picture at this stage and there are already plans for further expansion e.g. into the fields between the Tannery site and the Midlands Light Industrial site.
- Strong feeling that we do not want the development to spread beyond the existing boundary of the Area of Opportunity.
- Concern that WCC might over-rule our concerns and expect additional housing if they feel the development doesn't look financially viable – to avoid the risk of collapse & failure.
- Risk that the commercial units may not turn out to be viable and there will then have to be further development/conversions.
- Impact on existing village facilities e.g. the school which is currently full.
- Concerns that people & business directly affected by the current plan e.g. the Joinery & shop, haven't been consulted.

3. Environment

- Cost of the environmental clean-up of the site (both at the Pits and within the Tannery) – has this been allowed for sufficiently?
- Concern that these findings should be made public to reassure the village.
- On-going flood risk, especially in the area shown as a car park.
- Effect of more development on ground water and surface water run-off – looks like a lot of tarmac!

STRENGTHS

1. Creating work opportunities and employment a good thing.
2. The current site is “disgusting” and needs improvement.

3. The village survey in 2011 wanted an approximately 50:50 split between housing and commercial, and this offers something close to that.

4. Going for a whole development plan rather than allowing piecemeal development means that some of the key concerns about traffic and parking should be addressed.

WHAT'S MISSING

1. Preservation of as much green space as possible essential e.g. all the field beyond those currently on the plan and trees.

2. Option to create additional car parking for The Courts at the far end of the village by the Tollgate and run a shuttle bus service.

3. More retirement homes.

4. Village "Hub" identified on plan seems not to offer much; scepticism about whether a medical centre is viable.

5. Bigger and better new village hall with sports facilities within the site would be a much more attractive incentive. Site of current village hall could then be used for parking.

6. Rebuilding the sports pavilion would also be an option.

7. Convert the existing good buildings on the site (shown as being preserved) into housing and leave the rest as public open space.