



Planning Committee 22 July 2020

Speaker Notes for 25 Station Road

(Maximum 500 words / 3 minutes allowed)

- Taken 4 years to prepare NP which had a 96% approval rating at referendum
- NP policies are based on residential and business surveys which led to our policy goal: *to protect and enhance local employment uses, create places to do business together and maintain a range of shops and services that meet the ongoing need of all sectors of the community.....safeguarding of employment sites will be supported, together with a new business centre'*
- Informal pre application advice was given which broadly welcomed residential but the NP is not referenced
- Our concern is the principle of introducing a residential use into the commercial frontage before all options for alternative commercial or mixed use scheme are exhausted. This is the largest economic opportunity site in the village centre and, given the clear intent of the employment section, we should do so before the use is lost for good.
- This proposal merits both viability and market testing, as stated to be necessary in some cases in the explanatory text to the policy, to see what alternative commercial uses there might be in the new economic environment. We welcome the viability work but ask that it is underpinned by market testing. An alternative commercial use would likely have lower contamination costs which would improve viability- but this has not been tested.
- To say that the tests of marketing and viability in the supporting text are not triggered as the application already satisfies the policy is incorrect in our view because:
 - i) The plan should be read as a whole-ie the policy goal, aims, policies and supporting text. The supporting text is relevant and should not be dismissed. The intention is clear.
 - ii) We do not accept that the introduction of a wholly residential use into the commercial frontage is acceptable in principle. If it were, we would not have specifically referenced its suitability as a first floor use; ground floor residential use in the middle of the commercial frontage is at odds with the aim of our commercial frontage policy.
 - iii) to say that the policy does not apply to the car showroom as it is sui generis, ignores the nature of the use which is mixed commercial being part retail and part service. The nature of the use falls within the ambit of what the policy is trying to achieve-the policy could not be expected to cover every sui generis use.
- For our concerns to be dismissed by officers as 'nonsensical' is disrespectful

We know we are in changing times and we need to understand what new opportunities affecting employment and working patterns may mean for the local economy before we lose this site. Marketing will provide the evidence and we understand there is time to do it. We owe it to our residents and businesses who supported the NP to show that we have done all we can to protect our local shops, services and economy. We therefore ask you to defer or refuse this application.

494 words