

Agenda item 8

For decision – Saxonvale consultation response

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's response to the public consultation which took place on 11th and 12th January on the vision and emerging concept for the redevelopment of Saxonvale, brought forward by Acorn Property Group and Mendip District Council.

Background

The consultation was held by Nash Partnership on behalf of Acorn Property Group. The exhibition was introduced by the following statement:

“This exhibition has been prepared to outline some of the studies now underway and to invite views from the Frome community on some topical issues that need to be considered.”

There were eight exhibition boards displaying the role/vision for Saxonvale and eight principles put forward as the basis for the next stage of the project which will involve designing a development proposal for further consultation. At the next stage of consultation, Acorn Property Group will be showing plans and drawings for the proposed development.

The exhibition boards can be viewed here:

https://saxonvaleredevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/18073_uo4_a1-consultation-boards-final-draftlr.pdf

Details will also be presented at the meeting.

Feedback was invited on specific questions set out on the comments form. The comments below reflect the Town Council's published position statement, which was agreed by councillors at Town Matters Committee on 19 Sept 2018 and is attached to this report at [Appendix 8.1](#). There will be further opportunities over the coming weeks for the Town Council to input into the scheme. Acorn Property Group will also be invited to come and discuss their proposals with the Planning Advisory Group.

Recommendations

That councillors agree the comments set out on the consultation response form, to be submitted to Acorn Property Group/Nash Partnership by the response deadline of 28th January 2019.

Saxonvale comments form

	ROLE AND VISION		Please add comments in each here. We have highlighted some points we are particularly interested in.
1	Do you support the proposed role and vision for the Saxonvale development?	Y/N	We support the vision but would like to see this amended to take account of FTC's position statement which says, 'we want to deliver a high-quality comprehensive scheme that fully integrates with the existing town centre and provides sustainable transport choices, with good means of access for those on foot and bicycle between the development and the existing town centre.'
	PRINCIPLES Do you support the following?		
2	Improve Saxonvale "street" Enhance Saxonvale as a street by reducing traffic and prioritising pedestrians and cyclists to help integrate the new development with the town centre	Y/N	Should we consider a new route through the site, via Garsdale, to the M&S car park/servicing areas and making the central part of Saxonvale 'street' a pedestrian space? Y/N A new route should be provided for deliveries, providing relief for Vicarage Street, Church Street and King Street. This will help to safeguard the heritage buildings, the character, residents of the area and St Johns School. It will also encourage walking and cycling by providing better permeability. Please refer to the Frome Town Design Statement Zone 4 - Saxonvale and Zone 1- Historic Core which covers Vicarage Street http://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/planning-for-frome/frome-town-design-statement/
3	Space for Enterprise, Social and Community Activity Providing flexible spaces within buildings, for commercial and other uses, that can accommodate a range of activities as needs emerge and change	Y/N	Should this type of space be located on parts of the site closest to the town centre and to support the important role of Silk Mill Studios and Gallery? Y/N It is important to provide flexibility within buildings for both commercial and residential use. Work space should be flexible to provide for individual businesses, including live-work units and a work hub that provides communal space for businesses to enable them to interact and network with one another. Live-work uses would also avoid the need for travel.

			<p>Flexible residential accommodation across the site that can be adapted to suit residents' changing circumstances should also be considered.</p> <p>Flexible workspace would support the role of Silk Mill Studios. Provision should also be made for community groups. We are aware of several community groups who need space and would complement the Silk Mill use.</p> <p>An important community use that should be provided is a day centre (similar to the Key Centre at the Mount) which is central to the residential area providing space for activities such as after school care, lunch clubs, toddler groups, parties and a nursery together with the provision of a shared resources area such as gardening tools and a car club.</p>
4	<p>Homes for a variety of needs and Aspiration A residential-led mixed scheme with new homes of quality in mixed types, sizes and tenures</p>	Y/N	<p>Should we provide homes for a variety of needs – privately owned, shared ownership, rented and for older people, smaller households and families? Y/N</p> <p>The Town Council position statement sets out the following – We support a mixed-use solution. The mix should include:</p> <p>A broad range of dwellings in terms of size, cost and tenure. To address the pressing need for more affordable accommodation in the town, we would expect to see social rented and shared equity opportunities as part of the mix. The recommendation is a minimum of 30% affordable housing. We would also like to explore the possibility of delivering housing that meets the needs of young people and families who are currently priced out of Frome and the growing number of older people ('downsizers') whose future housing aspirations are not being met by either specialist retirement developments or mass-market housing products.</p>
5	<p>Creating Character and Identity Using the topography, good quality materials and elements of contemporary design informed by local character to create a sense of pace and new views.</p>	Y/N	<p>Should we retain the Western Warehouse (attached to the Silk Mill)? Y/N If it is kept, what should the Western Warehouse be used for?</p> <p>The Western Warehouse building is a key feature and asset of the site. The building would suit cultural, creative and community uses together with food and beverage uses offering an experience. All these uses reflect the culture of Frome.</p>

			<p>We see this building as the heart of the cultural quarter catering for business and creative users. Restaurants, pubs and hotel accommodation that encourage greater evening activity and space for cultural and community activity, for example a town square, that will enhance the town centre as a destination</p>
6	<p>Streets and spaces for people Emphasis on walking and cycling. A main public space and secondary spaces all connected.</p>	Y/N	<p>What types of public space should be provided and what sorts of activity should they cater for?</p> <p>Public space should accommodate both commercial and community activities making provision for uses such as a town square, events space, play and informal recreation space and include seating areas. These areas need to relate to the surrounding uses.</p> <p>Links with Rodden Meadow and the provision of a pedestrian bridge are essential together with walking and cycle routes through the site linking to existing routes throughout the town, such as the NCR24.</p> <p>Frome Town Council has adopted a Transport Strategy. The strategy reflects Frome Town Council's commitment to improving access with a focus on promoting active travel and moving away from fossil fuels. The report and action plan can be viewed here http://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/resilience/transport-strategy/</p>
7	<p>Parking to support the Town Centre and avoid cluttered streets Replacement public parking, dual use of spaces out of hours, conceal private parking below buildings and in courtyards.</p>	Y/N	<p>What are the main requirements when considering replacement of the Merchants Barton (on Saxonvale 'street') public parking?</p> <p>Merchants Barton currently caters for a lot of parking permit holders, presumably for those working within the town centre. It is important that this provision is not lost and is actually improved. Commercial activity should be encouraged and supported to ensure the growth of local business. At the same time, sustainable forms of transport for those visiting should also be available in line with the Town Council's Transport Strategy. A creative solution is required to address this.</p>

			<p>The lack of town centre parking impacts on on-street parking particularly in residential streets. As a result of this Somerset County Council will be carrying out a parking review of the town within the next few months. The outcomes of the review should be used to inform parking within the redevelopment.</p> <p>Somerset County Council parking standards for Frome are currently set within zone B – Mid Range population area of between 3000 – 29,999, requiring a higher parking provision than that of more urban areas such as Taunton and Bridgwater. Given the proximity of Saxonvale to the town amenities and the desire to reduce car ownership and dependency, a lower standard of parking provision should be considered.</p>
8	<p>Green Space and Nature A riverside park, providing an amenity for the community and a valuable ecological habitat</p>	Y/N	<p>Should the park have a natural character or be more formal?</p> <p>The park should have a natural character, providing a well-connected riverside park to improve access to the river as well as other public spaces and a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the river that will better connect the development with both the existing town centre and surrounding residential areas and enable cyclists to avoid busier roads in the town centre.</p> <p>The space could provide a valuable marginal habitat; (continue) to contribute to the town’s natural flood management; provide access to the channel and views of the river; be part of wider river corridor walks; and provide opportunities for natural play (and education)</p> <p>Policy POS1 and the objectives of the Frome Neighbourhood Plan should be considered.</p>
9	<p>Sustainable Use and Management of Natural Resources Good insulation and air-tightness to minimise energy needs, sustainable Urban Drainage/landscaping, potential renewable energy sources. Re-use the Western Warehouse and emphasis on walking and cycling</p>	Y/N	<p>One Planet Living is one of the ‘golden threads’ of Frome’s Neighbourhood Plan and the Saxonvale development should embody these principles. Buildings should be designed to minimise energy demands through high levels of insulation, reducing heating needs by 90% and eliminating fuel poverty.</p> <p>Buildings should incorporate renewable energy generation, aiming for at least 50% onsite generation and connecting to local green energy supply to ensure zero carbon homes and buildings. Opportunities for low carbon solutions such as biomass district heating or combined heat and power systems should be explored.</p>

		<p>Walking and cycling should be at the heart of the development linking it with safe walking and cycling routes around the town. Vehicle use should be minimised and pedestrian only / home zones should ensure that communities can connect and children can play safely. Re-using the Western Warehouse will potentially reduce embodied carbon and enhance 'culture and heritage' of the site.</p> <p>Examples of other One Planet Developments include:</p> <p>https://www.bioregional.com/nw-bicester/ https://www.bioregional.com/one-brighton/ https://www.bioregional.com/bedzed/</p>
<p>Any other comments</p> <p>The Frome Neighbourhood Plan & Town Design Statement have been adopted by Mendip District Council. Both documents have been the subject of extensive consultation with the town and should be taken into consideration as part of any proposals for the redevelopment of Saxonvale.</p>		