

Online Comments - shopping importance of the "service centre" - Consultation 3

Reference	Plan Comment
663	<p>5a) Many rural town in other countries deliberately change the emphasis from being primarily laid out for motor traffic, as Watlington is, to be primarily laid out for pedestrians. Motor traffic is able to access and move through the centre but it is not primary and the road margins are deliberately narrowed and merged with the pavement. 5b) There is a tendency to build commercial nursery units as warehouses, probably because they are cheap to build. The proximity to the M40 might turn Watlington into a convenient store and forward location for logistics businesses. We would be wise to target high tech light industrial (B1) or (A2) use as this is less likely to draw in heavy vehicles. 5c) Would be assisted by notes on 5a) above. 5d and 5f) Signage in the car park advising what amenities are available in Watlington would encourage cyclist and walkers to enter the town. In addition it is not clear how to get to the town centre from the Hill Road car park. Further, visitors going from the car park into the town do not get a good first impression as the path is scruffy, uneven, and the path is very narrow and difficult to navigate if you are elderly, disabled or managing young children.</p>
664	<p>5a. Get the illegally parked cars off the street. 5b. How about helping smaller traders like bakers and greengrocers? I understand that the rents on the High Str are prohibitive to ordinary small businesses which may be why all that's left are a very expensive lighting shop, deli, butcher and chocolatier, yet not even a Post Office. 5c. There is NO economic vitality here. Too expensive. See 5b. 5e. How are you going to provide more parking, and where? The Paddock (as i see was recently suggested)? Why don't you turn the centre of the town into a 'pedestrian zone'. That will get more people moving around on the streets, knowing they're less likely to be run over. 5f. How are you going to get tourists into a town that doesn't even have a Post Office or baker?</p>
666	<p>A big problem in Watlington is the lack of variety in the local employment available. many of the local businesses employ very few local people, either because they employ few people at all, or because the jobs they offer are not matched to the range of housing available so that employees cannot afford to live in Watlington. The old auction house should be used to provide employment rather than housing, and would help build on the businesses already established in the courtyard. The new businesses need to be employers of people such as light industry or people intensive similar to the deign company already there or the marketing company in the old Hare and Hounds.</p>
728	<p>Consideration for more local shops into new development areas. Nothing is mentioned about provision for medical services, schools and amenities, please consider these,</p>
751	<p>Generally agree however perhaps there should be consideration as to whether the new inhabitants of Watlington are likely to be self employed and add to the need for more small units. With 240 new homes of which 40 % are Affordable /social housing, will those people's needs be the same as currently identified from existing people's requirements? More parking is essential for the town centre.</p>

- 756 Great plan , will be good for Watlington safely, shops and environment and living standards
- 758 Houses are needed for young and old and to meet national objectives. The NP should resist any pressure brought to bear by SODC in pandering to the outspoken "nimby" minority! It is reasonable the growth be spread as fairly as constraints allow - at present the Government has woken up to the fact that small sites are important as we should reflect that virtue of policies that growth through the NP: area in proportion to the location The whole area is sustainable with 15% of our population choosing to live outside the town - that's around 400 people and their relationship with the town is important
- 766 I agree that there is a need for all types of housing to be built in the Watlington area, there is a desperate need for housing, with the youngsters having to move away as they cannot afford the area, and the life being sucked from the community by people who take no active part, and object to the new housing and roads spoiling their little piece of Oxfordshire. However as it stands there is not the infrastructure to support the proposals. The Coop has a monopoly on shopping in Watlington and is not big enough to cope with the extra houses (some would say it is not able to cope with the current population) nor able to expand. Further, the lack of buses to areas with other supermarkets and shops are infrequent and inadequate. Have the local schools been approached to see whether they are able to cope with any extra children that would come with the extra houses. There is a desperate need for a by-pass, traffic and the pollution levels are a current problem, which will only be amplified when the housing projects in Benson and Chalgrove come on line. My only other comment on the by-pass is that the residents of the Marlbrook estate knew about the prospect of the bypass passing near their dwellings when they purchased the houses, and the argument of it being too close to houses smacks of Nimbyism, by moving the road further out will only move the problem to the new proposed housing areas. Should the schools be expanded the current use of Love Lane and Chapel Street during dropping off and collection times will be intolerable and dangerous. Consideration should be made to moving the entrances to the proposed bypass. It is unlikely that the traffic will not increase, with children being ferried to school not walking. There has been no consideration of land to the rear of the Carriers and on the South side of the town. There has been interest on this site over the years. Is the lack of consideration due to the expensive houses on Hill Rd having views blighted? Lastly, i understand the Pyrton application is a totally different plan, but should it be granted this will have a huge impact on traffic, schools and shopping in the town as discussed earlier. The plan will border your plans A, B & C with no buffer zone. Should we not be considering how the plan will impact upon Watlington's rather than putting our head in the sand?

- 771 I am broadly in support and believe home building could actually provide an opportunity for Watlington to "future proof" our village and benefit and capitalise on its expansion. But we'll only be able to do that if we do two things - 1) Provide an environment that encourages and supports a 'high street' by providing paths/pavements that are pedestrian, and ideally push-chair friendly too, to encourage people to visit the village and not use cars. If not, the shops will not be sustainable and we'll lose jobs and an important element of our community. 2) Provide working spaces where small businesses/individuals can work and co-work (home-working, remote working, small businesses, individuals, need to be able to work and this is increasing in occurrence now, but will do so dramatically more so in the future.... people need to be able to work in the local area and not have to commute to work). This is absolutely critical and requires a leap of faith in thinking - anyone under the age of 25 today will understand this, we're a tech based society now and commuting to work every day is fast becoming a thing of the past.
- 774 I am concerned about the infra structure in Watlington. We have a reducing number of shops and consideration of school places , Drs appointments needs to happen. However I would not object.
- 778 I am not totally against a road to the North and West of Watlington however the only traffic problems in Watlington are the 'only for access over 7.5t' lorries. Why would they not be encouraged to use the bypass, i.e no limit - leaving the high street free for general traffic - especially for passing trade for the high street. The recent closure of the High Street has proved to traders that a reduction in passing trade will crucify the retail outlets in Watlington. As a retailer myself, I can confirm that our insurance company paid us for loss of earnings during the recent closure as passing trade was unable to stop/park. Watlington residents cannot alone support the retail businesses. We can only survive with the help of passing trade The effect of the new road on Cuxham, Britwell and Pyrton must be considered. Especially Cuxham, should the 3K houses go ahead in Chalgrove as the bypass will make the B4009 a rat run.
- 789 I do not want more workshops or warehouses around Watlington as like Lys Mill we have seen how destructive this is in terms of additional traffic (white vans speeding around the roads) too many large lorries and very noisy workplaces
- 793 I don't want to see traffic totally taken away from the centre of Watlington, I think it provides energy and keeps the town 'alive', but I do like the idea of the new road that will re-route the HGV's. I am very against having ANPR cameras and unnecessary road signs.
- 799 I have no understanding how building a major road and houses will increase employment in the area. Faster connections will make it easier to drive to larger towns where major companies are based. Watlington becomes more and more of a commuter town each year as can be seen from the closure of the bank and post office etc The slow internet, unreliable electricity and minimal public transport of Watlington does not help
- 802 I may have missed this, but I am unclear how the Plan would provide physical space for 'small businesses'
- 823 If there is demand then it will happen. Waitrose or Tesco would not build a superstore if there wasn't the demand. Why focus on making Watlington a service centre or employment focus when if the demand is there then it will be built anyway.

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825	I'm glad to see some small industrial units or offices incorporated. Small businesses abound and need local sites they can rent or buy so as to reduce travel and improve local access to jobs without additional travelling and traffic.
833	Increase in available office space. Ultimately, what is the attraction of being based here?
856	Make provision for services etc not supplied by out of town supermarkets and on line shopping and keep our petrol station!
859	More employment from vacant shops being in use would be good, but don't turn Watlington into something that would destroy its character.
860	more focus is needed on retaining shops in the town, it is unfortunate the hardware shop burned and I assume that as it was for sale for such a long period of time it is unlikely to reappear. Perhaps the coop could take this over as well? more seriously the shops in the town are inadequate and this a situation that will not improve with the building of new houses. The closure of the high street was pleasant respite and should a by pass be built taking most traffic away from the area, could consideration be made to increasing the pedestrian area on the high street, allowing for the cafe and club to have more outside seating, which would bring more people to the area.
862	More small offices, workshops, professional service spaces can be provided to provide "Connected" working spaces that encourage more rural working rather than commuting
863	Most facilities already exist for new developments but new shopping opportunities other than catering/coffee shops etc should be encouraged. Hardware/charity/down market food hall?
868	Need to keep it more pedestrian and help local shops
879	No I do not agree with this policy - employment focus is necessary but not if it is detrimental to the character of the town
903	Policy 5 is supported but the bypass will mean that the centre of Watlington will be overlooked and therefore positive policies are required to promote the town in order to retain the vital services such as the pharmacy, tradesmen and shops. Policy 5 needs to address this
907	Protect yes. Enhance, what do you mean? Enhance could mean make it more attractive to visitors and enhance the economy by having people visit the shops but that could increase the traffic which means more pollution and traffic congestion.
908	Provided it does not act as a magnet for HGV's why should anyone object to more local employment? Car Parking needs attention and more parking spaces are required. Many residential people park their cars in the central car park, so it's often full on weekends People parking on Hill Road outside the chippy is a complete nuisance as well as illegal

Reference

Plan Comment

- 915 Retail, tourism and services are the target areas with the town serving a range of communities including our own settlements
- 920 Site A seems the logical site as it grows and links the town. The architecture for the development should be sympathetic to the area, with consideration of "green space" It would also go to support local businesses as more revenue would come from the increase in population. We would need to see investment in the local schools for the increase in capacity, I would suggest that a leisure centre connected to the school for public use would benefit all especially with artificial playing surfaces for sport it would create jobs and revenue for the town whilst maintaining a fit and healthy population. With the increase in population I would also suggest that there would need to be investment in public services, Health (surgery), Policing and fire service. We need to keep Watlington a "safe" environment to live in as there is a strong sense of community and identity.
- 929 South Oxfordshire is short of public transport and car usage should be managed not used to prevent development. People cannot all live in town centres and walk and cycle - they need to shop and commute and the car is the only practical way to do so
- 940 Support housing policy but do not think there should be any commercial development within the housing. This should be confined to current commercial areas or at least be totally separate. This will avoid commercial traffic and pedestrian safety issues and avoid unsuited you buildings near people's homes.
- 946 Survival of the retail offering in the town centre is dependent on free car parking and easy access. \more housing providing more "critical mass" is essential
- 971 The plan does not improve traffic, it makes it worse. Watlington will die if traffic is routed around the town. The garage will shut. The garage is part of Watlington character. The shops will die.
- 988 The scheme needs to include proper provision to expand car parking or risk restricting the success of the shops and businesses in Watlington.
- 995 The town cannot just die. The high street needs to thrive, otherwise it will just become a series of charity shops.
- 1004 There is no provision in the plan for local and new businesses. Where would organisations base themselves and what would the traffic impact be in reality ?

- 1006 These are all excellent proposals. It is essential to bring new businesses into the area. As well as providing employment opportunities, they will also engender a more well-rounded community rather than simply becoming a large housing estate. It is vital, however, that sufficient (free) car parking be provided to cater for the needs of both businesses and shoppers. At the moment there is insufficient car parking to serve those who wish to shop in the town. Many of the short-term parking spaces are occupied all day long, which encourages those who wish to use the shops in Watlington to go elsewhere. This is particularly true at weekends, when it seems that significant numbers travel to the area and park in the car park prior to going on long cycle rides. It is also noticeable at school pick-up time. Might it be possible to provide short-term parking only in the Hill Road car park, and have long-term parking elsewhere? This might actually encourage more people to travel to Watlington to shop, which would in turn encourage more retail businesses to open in Watlington.
- 1019 This must also address how these jobs are going to be filled, and if people are going to come in to Watlington to work, then consideration must be given to how they get here and any additional parking facilities that will be required. The recent change in the Business Centre charges to their tenants for car parking has meant an increase in people using the Hill Road car park when they come here to work, making it difficult for visitors and shoppers to find parking.
- 1042 Watlington needs to grow as a service centre and employment location, particularly bearing in mind its location and access to the M40, however due to the existing traffic issues it loses out to nearby settlements. This needs to be rectified to preserve the town, by the provision of a suitable road network around the town as a whole.
- 1045 We agree that Lilacs place is the type of development which works well. Provision for developments like Orchard Walk should be encouraged. This also provides local employment and service opportunities.
- 1065 We need to support our shops.