

Cottis Lane QRP Summary Reports:

20.03.20 – Formal review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- While supporting the emerging work, the panel thinks there is scope to be bolder.
- The panel recommends further work to define, proactively manage, protect and measure 'quality', through each RIBA stage of work.
- The panel recommends embedding clear sustainability commitments at RIBA Stage 1 or 2, which could include precedent research for criteria such as Passivhaus.
- It highlights the benefits of early community engagement.
- The panel encourages options testing for the mix and location of key Town Centre functions and non-residential land uses. It also suggests broadening the spatial scope of the Brief, to look beyond red line boundaries and consider the relationship between the five sites and the high street, including potential public realm improvements.
- The panel urges a holistic view of the whole town centre to inform key design moves on each site.
- The panel thinks the current approach to car parking is unresolved. It highlights the huge potential to encourage sustainable travel and adopt a flexible future-proofed strategy to car parking and travel.

10.07.20 – Formal review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- The panel thinks a more convincingly comprehensive approach is developing.
- It strongly welcomes reconsideration of the leisure centre location and multi-storey car park proposals.
- The panel is yet to be convinced on the analysis undertaken to support the current approach to town centre functions, or rationale for the housing typologies, tenure and mix. While it broadly supports the uses suggested, it is unclear why specific uses are being directed to specific sites.
- It strongly recommends further work to ensure exemplary housing design, including revisiting typologies, internal arrangements and layouts. The panel would like to see more detail at a framework level before planning application details are developed, including on: routes, broader connectivity, servicing, edges, integration and retail arrangements.
- It continues to strongly urge early engagement to develop the project vision – so people can feel genuine agency in informing proposals.

17.09.20 – Workshop review of Epping Town Centre Sites

- The Panel applauds the substantial work undertaken since the last review.
- The approach taken to engagement is commendable and should be valuable in informing ongoing design work.
- The panel continues to stress the importance of looking beyond physical building elements – to engage with the social, not just physical development of the centre. It would have expected to see mapping – analysing the social and cultural offer that already exists in the centre. This would then be used to inform an approach to 'fill in these gaps'.
- The panel encourages developing a meanwhile strategy, and exploring the potential for small scale public realm interventions.

- Greater clarity is needed on how individual sites and public realm will be phased, funded and delivered including the delivery of public realm improvements.
- The panel continues to strongly urge that the council re-consider the 'no net loss' approach to car parking – and follow an evidence-based approach to parking and sustainable travel.

30.10.20 – Site Specific Workshop review

- The panel is broadly supportive of the proposal for a mixed-use scheme on the site.
- It maintains its concern about the creation of a new car parking structure. However, the panel acknowledges the council and community requirements for car parking. This should be minimised where possible.
- The team is strongly urged to develop the meanwhile use strategy further, allowing the car park to accommodate uses that can persist after completion.
- The project brief should provide a mix of uses that respond to local need and are commercially viable, potentially focused on an anchor tenant or public / community uses. In particular, further thought is needed about uses that will activate the public space throughout the day.
- The industrial design concept is welcomed, but the team is urged to ensure this vision also extends to the landscape approach.
- Landscaping to the south should be carefully considered and planned to facilitate flexible use. Acquisition of the Marks and Spencer site could allow significant opportunities for the public realm, landscaping, which should be considered by the design team.
- The western site corner and its relationship to the Bakers Lane site is crucial in terms of its accessibility between the two.
- The panel recommends a more active frontage on this side and ensuring the street design promotes better connection.