

Carnival pool site application - 172012

I am responding to this consultation on behalf of our Residents Association committee.

WBC's plans appear to be well thought out and logical.

It appears that the use of finance and space would provide a good facility for the town. We support these features

- ✓ The establishment of a multi-use facility is very good. The idea of a sports hall which has motorised bleachers to convert to a 400 seat theatre/concert space is excellent but there is little detail of the actual facilities. The commitment to that mustn't be lost in planning
- ✓ The rebuild of the bowling alley
- ✓ Three studios for arts activities
- ✓ The large car park at the southern gateway
- ✓ Two Gyms
- ✓ A new modern swimming facility

However we do have some concerns as noted below.

1. Access

Most importantly, we are concerned that the site of the library specifically could be difficult for older and disabled residents. While the proposed paths and crossings may provide better access to it, it will still be some distance from the 'centre' of town for those who cannot drive and/or wish to park at the carnival site. Also for those from our residents' area, the lack of a formal crossing for the lower end of Langborough road / Denmark St/ and proposed new access to Elms field (as in the plans for Elm's field) presents a significant risk for them. With walkers in mind we note that access to these facilities is directed at the car park not at the town side.

Also the 'improved path' across the bridge to the south across the railway line may prove unnecessary if the bridge across the railway is not replaced. Is there a commitment to build a better user friendly bridge (as is currently not the case).

2. Library space

We are pleased that WBC is committed to continuing with our library and incorporating it in this way, although we feel this is a waste of our purpose built and recently renovated library.

We would welcome re-assurance that Elevate, a very useful and used facility will be re-housed, particularly as we understand that its current lease on the bottom of the library, is ending soon.

3. Café space

Is the cafe sufficient for all these facilities? It will be catering for far more than the space in the current library.

4. Residential section

The report regards this as desirable but will residents find it so? The fact that it provides a form of security for the area because it overlooks it, may not make it desirable at all for new residents when the neighbours are leisure facilities and how does this give them privacy. There is no affordable housing included which we feel should be there. Clearly this is financially advantageous to the site development but not if the residences are not sold or let.

The space could rather be used to provide further leisure facility.

5. Planting around the site.

It is good to read about the replacement of trees, rain garden and wildlife friendly beds. This has clearly had attention so as to provide a pleasant and wildlife friendly aspect. Can the rain water be stored and useable if only to water the plants?

6. Energy provision.

Photovoltaic panels are incorporated in the plan but it is not clear if the number is representational or actual, if the latter more panels would be desirable.

It would also be environmentally friendly to collect water from the roof to be used in the building eg for flushing toilets.

7. Gray's farm

We note that Gray's Farm is mentioned in the leaflet as a proposed "outdoor leisure hub" for the area. We feel that is very positive but there are already rumours that it might be converted for further housing development.

It would be positive for the council to give a clear commitment to the area being used only for this purpose.

8. Loss of swimming facilities during rebuild

This is clearly disappointing for those of us who use the pool regularly. It is likely that residents may change to use non-council facilities and this may prove a long term loss of custom for the council.

9. As a last comment the appearance is quite stark with many vertical lines which need to be softened with design features or altered to be less so.

Pat Smith - Chair, Great Langborough Residents Association