

## UMV NP Steering Committee response to the examiner

### Questions to the Qualifying Body.

2. A new shop and community hub are proposed.

*I would be grateful for an explanation of how this would work, for example, would they occupy the same building? In my experience, small village shops in very rural areas lack profitability and cease trading; and community hubs are mostly in obsolete shops.*

*Paragraph 3.12 of the Plan states that the shop/community hub will be separately funded. I would appreciate information on the source of the funds and evidence to demonstrate the viability of a “new build” shop and community centre.*

*Could I be provided with the evidence to justify the provision of 30 car park spaces and also why that specific number has been chosen?*

3. The Three Counties Nurseries, Marshwood is allocated for up to five live-work units. Policy ECON1 of the Local Plan states that proposals for live-work developments will be supported in locations considered suitable for open market residential development. Local Plan Policy SUS2 states that open market housing is restricted to the re-use of existing buildings. Therefore, on what basis does the Council and the Qualifying Body consider that the allocation in Policy UMV6 generally conforms with the policies of the Local Plan?

### Background re: new shop and community hub

The Marshwood Stores closed in 2018. As this is a key community facility, a replacement became the priority for the community.

The Dungeon site was examined first, this being nearest to the previous shop now closed, but had the disadvantage that the site owner would only allow a temporary building (or container) to be put on the site with a commitment to remove it after three years if not commercially successful: availability of on-site parking was very limited with only a little more space available on the adjacent roadside.

The then-owner of the Bottle Inn was approached but would not agree to site a shop and meeting room there unless housing could also be allocated: this site was also the furthest from the site of the old shop.

The Colmer Stud farm owner already leases a field (to the right of his entry drive) to the school as a playing field and has, in the past, proposed that the opposite field (to the left of his entrance drive) could be used to establish a car park for the school and church as long as he could obtain planning permission to build some houses.

A public meeting was held at the Marshwood church on 17 November 2018<sup>1</sup> where the result of a survey on proposed NP site allocations were discussed<sup>2</sup>. The Colmer site was discussed and there was strong support for the idea of having a car park there (and possibly also a shop, as the closure had just been announced) in return for the allocation of some housing.

### How the new shop and community hub would work

Following on from the November public meeting, a shop committee was formed (a sub-committee of the Marshwood Community Land Trust (CLT) which owns the Bramblehay site where 8 affordable houses were built a few years ago) and has worked since that time to investigate possible sites for a shop and community centre.

---

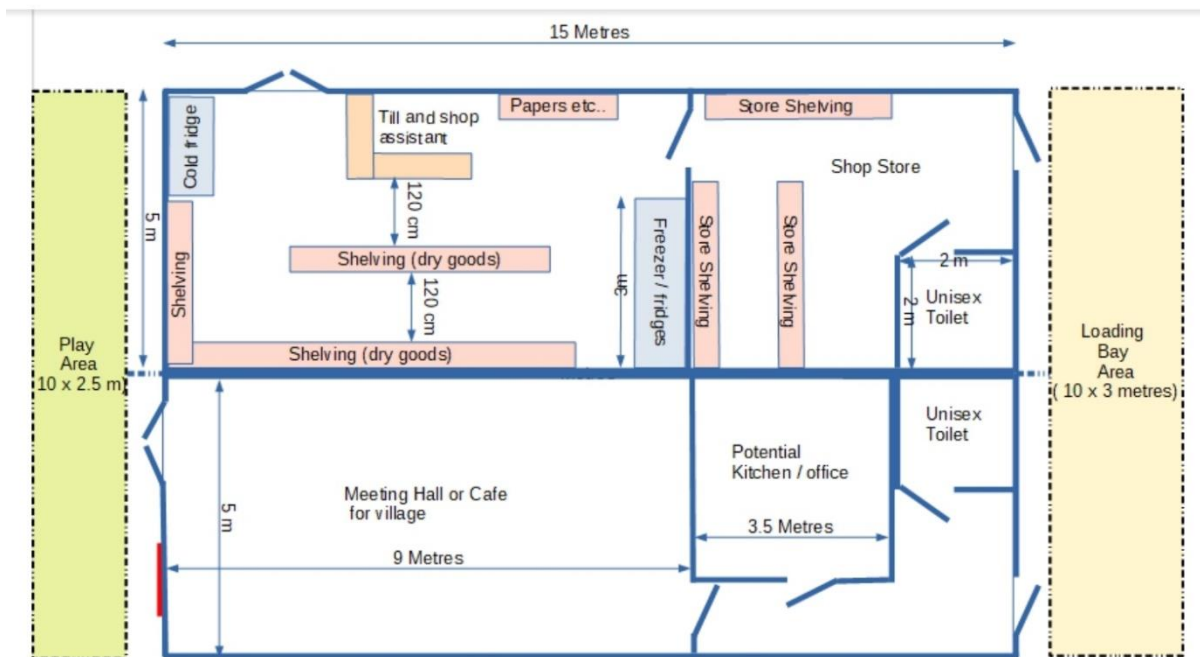
<sup>1</sup> <http://uppermarshwoodvale.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Shop-and-car-park-public-meeting-Nov-2108.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://uppermarshwoodvale.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NP-Site-Options-survey-results.pdf>

The present plan is to erect a building (to be owned by the CLT) on the Colmer site and to rent out the shop area to a lessee to run it commercially, with possible local volunteer support.

The ability to have a new village shop and community hub could facilitate –

- additional postal outreach services (currently this is held at the church for 1 afternoon a week but depends on church volunteers). The Post Office have stated that they have capacity to offer more sessions at Marshwood.
- a room to be used by the local police and PCSO for a monthly surgery to meet villagers, (this used to take place at the village shop).
- a meeting room for the CLT (Community Land Trust) and other organisations, and for voting.
- Marshwood is fortunate to have its fair share of talented artists and crafters, and a space to meet or exhibit, or say for Open Studios, (lack of parking in the village and a busy road makes attendance limited), would be a benefit.



**How the shop/community hub will be funded – viability**

Discussions were held with the Colmer site owner who has agreed to provide free of charge a completed and fenced 30-space car park plus an area at the side on which a combined community centre/shop

building could be placed (see draft site layout and building layout above), overall site ownership being transferred to the parish council which has agreed to be responsible for site maintenance.

The shop committee contacted three shops in the area run by volunteers (Broadwindsor, Thorncombe and Hawkchurch in Devon) to discuss how they ran their shops and also ran a call for volunteers in Marshwood which received a low response.

Quotes have been received to erect such a building at a cost of around £50k.

Funding for the building would be sought from several sources: a) about £10k from a portion of the charge levied by Dorset Council on the builder of the four houses, b) grants from Dorset Council; c) National Lottery grants; d) other non-Government grants and e) funds raised locally via a share capital issue and/or local private or business donations: shop committee members very recently attended a Funding Fair run by Dorset Community Action.

The CLT would pay the parish council a peppercorn rent for use of their part of the site and **would** receive rental income from the shop lessee to support the maintenance costs of the building.

From the research we have undertaken, the shop does seem to be commercially viable given the high volume of passing traffic on the Crewkerne-Lyme Regis B3165 road (the experience of the previous shop owner) plus use by local residents and school parents and children: there would also be potential for small volume catering especially during the summer (e.g. ice cream and teas with a few tables and chairs outside). The community facilities would allow for meetings, exercise classes and other community activities. Traffic figures gathered during a local speed-watch exercise revealed daily traffic of about 1,850 vehicles with hourly summer figures of 200+

### **Justification of the need for the provision of 30 car park spaces**

Parking outside the school (drop-off and pick-up) has long been a problem raised by parents and the school and has equally been an issue for some church services such as weddings and funerals, often also inconveniencing the Colmer Stud farm whose entry drive is sometimes completely blocked.

After monitoring the car parking at the school at the end of each day for over a month at least 25 cars were parked along the roadside each day with additional cars parking in Mutton Street, past the church on the verge, and staff at school parking directly outside school. Over 4 Tuesdays, while the school has been open, parking is even more congested due to the out-reach post office being in the church. There are also events at the church which can create significant parking issues such as funerals. Parking along the roadside, although it does slow the traffic down, poses a significant risk to pedestrians who have to cross the road as visibility is greatly reduced in both directions. Having a car park would maximise visibility to those crossing the road and therefore reduce the risk of accident. Any car park would have to accommodate parent parking, post office users, parking for church services and also for a shop/community room.

### ***The Bottle Inn – an update***

The Bottle Inn was put up for sale in April 2019, and since then closed. We understood that a new owner had been found, and the NP committee tried to make contact with them, this being finally managed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November.

The new owner has informed us that he is installing new tenants to run the pub which will be opened soon. He tells us he is presently working on a planning application for a shop adjacent to the pub on the site of the existing derelict building (which was used as a shop a long time ago). He asked to meet with the NP Steering Committee as soon as possible to discuss in detail his plans.

Clearly our committee will need to understand the full details of his proposal, especially as regards likely timing, as this could obviate the need for a shop at the Colmer Stud Farm site. However given the lack of any further information at this time, we do believe that we need to retain the option of using the Colmer

site for a shop / community facility in case these new plans at the Bottle do not come about or do not deliver what is needed. We believe that the advantages of a shop at Colmer, over one at the Bottle, are:

- Longevity: owned by the village community so not subject to closure by the decision of a private owner who will be operating under tighter commercial objectives.
- Viability: twice-daily flow of potential customers at the Colmer site from parents picking up and dropping off children at school. This really is significant - all those last-minute extra purchases, e.g. milk and bread, potatoes for tea, a quick snack for the kids – and parents wouldn't have time or inclination to make a further trip up the road to shop at the Bottle.
- Absolute need for safer parking near the school.
- More flexibility in building construction materials and design as the site is not in the curtilage of a listed building.

We also believe that the car park at the Colmer site needs to be retained in the NP since it would fulfil a need long unsatisfied for adequate parking there, a plan which continues to have strong local support.

**On what basis does the allocation of up to five live-work units at the Three Counties Nurseries, Marshwood conform with the policies of the Local Plan?**

Policy SUS2 on development in the countryside does allow specific allocations in a development plan document (and the supporting text makes clear that “communities can allocate sites, introduce or extend a development boundary, or develop a criteria-based policy to allow development to take place, where they consider this is the right approach for them”)

Neighbourhood Plan groups have been advised by the Local Planning Authority as to which Local Plan policies should be regarded as potentially strategic. This approach was published in the WDWP preferred options document (which contains many of the policies in the current plan) and is also contained in Appendix 1 of the submitted Basic Conditions Statement. This makes clear that the specific wording (in ECON1) on live-work units is not considered to be strategic.

So on this basis there are no conformity issues arising from the proposed live-work units in this location.