

The people of Stafford say YES

When someone wants to invest many, many millions in your area – especially when you know other places would sell their soul for a slice of that amount – it would be easy to grab the money and not ask questions.

So it was great that hundreds of local people took the opportunity to visit the recent exhibition of the plans to transform shopping in Stafford with two huge retail schemes at the opposite ends of the town centre.

It was also pleasing to hear 97% of those who gave their views backed the Riverside scheme. And 85% supported the redevelopment of the Kingsmead site. That sort of backing sends a clear message to developers, retailers and other firms that Stafford Borough is very much open to do business.

Of course there will be moans. It is only human. Some may be worried about the disruption (sorry but you always have to crack a few eggs etc), others will be concerned about congestion – and the developers will work with the County Council to make sure this is limited as much as possible - there may be those who won't like the design of the buildings.

We have, of course, been asking all these questions. Our officers have been working hard behind the scenes with the developers. And we know only too well the pride people have in Stafford. It can be a challenging balancing act. Long term prosperity on one hand - versus - short term disruption on the other.

But we won't forget the key bit in the middle. We may have exciting new developments coming to opposite ends of the town but officers are also working, alongside the excellent Town Centre Partnership, on drawing people to the traditional 'high street' with proposed investments and improvements.

All this when the national outlook doesn't seem to be getting brighter.

The developers proposed the multi million pound scheme, we have asked the million dollar questions, and everything suggests you are happy with what is now being planned for your town.