

Appendix 3.5 Hewitts Industrial Estate

Report on Consultations and Evidence gathered for Cranleigh's neighbourhood Plan

Event	Interviews with the remaining business owners and managers on Hewitts Industrial Estate.
Date	Several visits in June and July 2015
Venue	Hewitts Industrial Estate
Purpose	Get insights into current business plusses and minuses in Cranleigh and what companies want here in order to remain and be successful.
Evidence Report by	Chris Dubois

Walked around the site going into offices and interviewing owners and managers, as available. I had a list of questions and used it to structure the interview, writing down the interviewee's responses and agreeing the wording with them where particularly important or uncertain or contentious. Eight companies were left, and I interviewed seven of them but did not catch up with the last, a car servicing business, whose owner was out a lot. I attach a written summary of the responses.

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Hewitts exit interview questions, 1May15: Summary of the responses, Chris Dubois, 25Sep15

Purpose: interview the owners/managers of businesses in order to get insights into current business plusses and minuses in Cranleigh and what companies want here in order to remain and be successful.

Can they can be quoted or wish to be anonymous.

Seven interviews have been done, out of the eight companies remaining there. The summary below is of the seven.

1. *What is/was your business (retail, light industry, services)?*
Retail 1, light industry 5, services 2.
Number of staff in Cranleigh: 3, 18 (has been 34), 7, 3, 3, 6, 40, 55.
2. *Why was your business in Cranleigh, how long had it been here, and how many staff did you employ?*
Business has been here >25 years: 6
The people who started it were local: 5
Skilled staff were available in 1978, and business customers (like the aircraft industry) were local. But not now: 1
Claim to be sole provider in area: 2
3. *Why did you / will you leave?*
Forced out against our wishes: 7
Want alternative site in Cranleigh, but there aren't any: 6
Moving out of the area: 1
Lease expired: 1
Quotations:
 - "Both customers and staff are local and I cannot afford to lose either."
 - "My rent in Worthing will be 60% of that here."
 - "Dunsfold is no good for my car servicing business."
 - "Threadneedle is offering me only an 18 month lease!"
 - "We're a nationwide business. We're going to Dunsfold despite the demise of industrial customers in Surrey, and despite the bad road network, because redundancy costs force me to continue in this area."
4. *Would you have stayed if alternative premises were available? What sort of premises would you have needed?*
Yes 7. Most said that they would have needed light industrial units of higher quality than this dilapidated area. 7 have customers local to Cranleigh. One said that he started when Peter Hewitt set up the estate in 1978 and when Surrey was a centre of

excellence for light precision engineering, but now that that has gone there's no reason to be here.

Quotations:

- "Dunsfold was offering no security of tenure and higher rent".
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5. *What were the advantages of Cranleigh for your business?*

Local staff, trained at this company: 5 (it applies to all the long-standing companies)

No specific advantages, but staff were of very long standing: 1

Strong local customer base: 6

Word-of-mouth recommendation: 1

Pleasant country location: 2

“Cranleigh used to have staff suitable for a light engineering company, but no longer, and industrial customers in Surrey have fallen away”.

6. *What were the disadvantages of Cranleigh for your business?*

High rent: 3

None: 3

Not many: 1 (“but for customers north of Guildford transport is a problem”)

Poor transport links: 3 “It’s hard to get national and international customers here.”

This industrial estate is very dilapidated and gives a poor impression of us: 1

The rent is cheaper than in Guildford: 1

Local residents complaining about the noise of a small factory: 1

“Housing is expensive for staff: 98% live outside Cranleigh and commute in.

There’s no affordable housing”.

7. *Did you/will you move within the Cranleigh area, and if not why not?*

Most want to, but they fear higher rents and they don’t see any suitable premises.

Quotations:

- “Don’t know: Dunsfold rent is nearly twice that here.”
- “Don’t know: cannot get clear answers. Possibly will go to Guildford.”
- “There’s no availability at current rent; though staff don’t want us to move.”
- “Yes if we can. Our customers are here, but there’s nowhere currently”: 3
- “No; there’s no good reason for this light industrial company to be in Cranleigh”
- “there are no suitable premises in Cranleigh”
- “the horse has already bolted for Cranleigh business”.

8. *What has been the availability of suitable staff in Cranleigh for your business?*

Not an issue: all have been here a long time, would travel a short distance: 5

No problem: many people phone us for a job (this for unskilled services): 1

Very poor for light industrial staff: South coast much much better: 1

[*My (Chris’) personal comments on these results are: many Cranleigh firms are of long standing and don’t want to leave; they have staff and customers in the area; if the continuity of either is broken we will lose them. The companies interviewed were the only ones left and I think the reason they are predominantly light industrial is that those*

are the hardest to move. I have spoken to a number of people about Hewitts over the past month and mainly encountered either (from residents) indifference to the presence of business in Cranleigh or (from business owners) the idea that resources of land and staff are no longer available.]