

**Fradley, Lichfield
Community Engagement for Sustainable Growth at Fradley
Final Report**

April 2011.

Background and Purpose of Report

In December 2010, Lichfield District Council (LDC) requested the support of ATLAS to assist in developing a strategy for engagement with the local community and relevant stakeholders, to consider the potential for future development within the village with a view to formulating a vision, set of objectives and concept plan for Fradley. The engagement exercise formed part of the Council's consultation/engagement process for their emerging Core Strategy and specifically the "Shaping our District" document, which identified Fradley as a potential Strategic and Broad Development Location for between 900 and 1000 homes.

The objective of the engagement exercise was to seek to build consensus and develop a spatial vision and development objectives for Fradley, responsive to local ambitions and community requirements. It was agreed that this could be achieved through a mixture of workshops and community events, involving a wide range of professional and community inputs. The key outputs from the exercise were identified as:

- A spatial vision and set of development objectives (or guiding principles) for Fradley; and
- A concept plan(s) showing spatial options for managing the potential future direction(s) of growth in housing, employment and community facilities in and around Fradley which are likely to be necessary in order to deliver the vision over time.

It was further agreed by LDC that these outputs would be used to inform the ongoing work required in bringing forward the Draft Core Strategy and ATLAS would consider making recommendations on how the outputs from the engagement exercise could be used to ultimately inform a future master plan for the development of Fradley up to 2026.

This report sets out the approach taken to the exercise as described above; provides a summary of the discussions and key issues that emerged; and suggests some next steps in terms of seeking to formulate a Masterplan for Fradley.

Approach to the Exercise

Following discussions with LDC, the Parish Council and community representatives, it was agreed that a staged approach towards engagement would be the most appropriate. It was established that engagement should take place with three basic groupings:

- Community representatives – community groups, Parish Council, schools, local businesses etc.
- Local residents; and
- Key stakeholders, such as Highways Agency, Local Council Departments etc.

Engagement was therefore carried out through three separate events: a stakeholder/community representative workshop; a wider community session; and a final report back to the stakeholder/community representative group. The following sections explain the detail of how each event operated and what the key outcomes were.

Workshop 1

This was a formal, structured workshop held over a full day with invited representatives from community groups, Parish Council, Ward Members and key stakeholders (the agenda for the day and list of attendees are contained at Appendix I). The purpose of this first session was to identify and understand the baseline issues in relation to the Fradley area and to consider what Fradley should 'look like' in 2026. The workshop combined views from both community representatives and the key stakeholders to help all involved understand their respective aspirations for Fradley. This combination of groups also served to assist the key 'professional' stakeholders in understanding the general community aspirations for Fradley and enabled a resultant set of 'guiding principles' and 'concept plans' to be produced that were grounded in the reality of technical constraints relating to the area.

Key Outputs

From the structured group discussions, we were able to identify a set of 'Guiding Principles' that could be used to inform the future development of Fradley over the next 15 years. These emanated from discussions around what the representatives felt currently works well in Fradley, what's currently missing from Fradley and how Fradley could be improved. The agreed Guiding Principles are set out in Appendix II.

In addition to these principles, the attendees were encouraged to illustrate their ideas on plans – for example, which areas they felt should be protected and enhanced and which areas they considered could accommodate future development. To undertake this exercise, the attendees were divided into 4 groups, which resulted in 4 separate emerging 'concept' plans for Fradley (images of these are contained at Appendix III). These plans drew out several issues:

- A limited range of options for housing locations – focused around the airfield site and on land between Old Fradley and Fradley South.
- Debate around where best to locate community facilities as they are currently dispersed.
- The importance of the canal as an environmental asset and how best to maximize it's potential
- The Importance of retaining easy access to the surrounding countryside.

However, from these initial 4 plans, we were able to discuss with the attendees the areas of commonality that had emerged and identify where there were differences of opinion. This enabled us to prepare a 'composite plan', which seeks to spatially articulate the choices, options and issues that emerged (as summarised above):

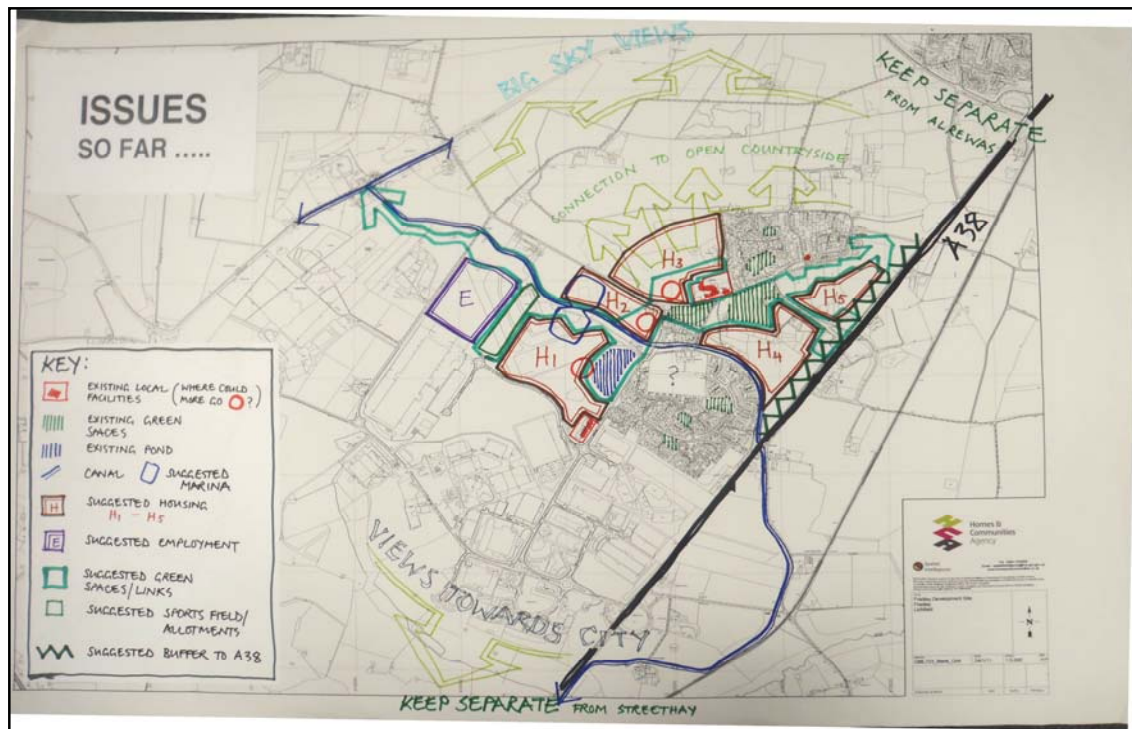


Diagram 1: Composite of initial ideas/concepts

Community Event (Workshop 2)

The purpose of the community event was to enable the outputs from the first workshop to be communicated, tested and challenged with the residents, and between the wider community of Fradley (including landowners and their representatives).

The event was an open invite (with letters sent to all residents of Fradley well in advance) and was organised as a relatively informal, drop in session, held between 4.00pm to 8.00pm in Fradley Village Hall. Approximately 100 people attended the event and can be categorised as follows in respect of demography, location and length of residency:

- 2 were under the age of 18; 5 were 18-30; 29 were 30-50 and 50 were aged over 50.
- 59% were residents of Old Fradley and 22% from Fradley South.
- 42% have lived in Fradley for over 10 years and 44% under 10 years.
- There were a number of landowners and their representatives in attendance.

Attendees were invited to comment on the outputs from the first workshop and indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements within the following categories:

- What's good about Fradley?
- How could Fradley be improved?
- Guiding principles for future development

A full list of the relevant statements under each of the above categories is contained at Appendix IV. In addition, the four 'concept plans' and 'composite issues so far' plan were displayed, together with information relating to the alternative proposals submitted by landowners. Members of the ATLAS team were on hand to explain the plans and seek views from attendees. Views from the evening were captured in writing (on forms provided) and through map bases, where attendees were invited to express any other thoughts and suggestions they had in relation to the future development of Fradley, including any comments relating to the wider, alternative proposals for Fradley.



Images from Workshop 2

Attendee's responses to the various statements on display were totalled and the results of these are contained in the tables at Appendix V. The most popular and least popular statements were as follows (with 'significant other' statements in purple):

What's good about Fradley?			
Most popular (no.s of respondents)			
	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
Post office and store	47	44	3
Fradley Junction and canal	46	46	0
Quality of rural location	44	43	1
Living in a village	42	42	0
Natural environment	41	40	1
<i>(Strong Sense of community)</i>	<i>(26)</i>	<i>(19)</i>	<i>(7(27%))</i>

What's good about Fradley?

Least popular (no.s of respondents)

	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
MUGA	12	12	0
Well connected	17	17	0
Access to rail station	19	16	3

How could Fradley be improved?

Most popular (no.s of respondents)

	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
Pub	48	34	14
Improve highway junction (A38)	45	35	10
More shops – Stirling Centre	34	25	9
Doctor's surgery	27	25	2
Village centre	25	19	6

How could Fradley be improved?

Least popular (no.s of respondents)

	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
More facilities for toddlers	4	4	0
Distinctive architecture	10	6	4
Sports pitches	10	7	3

Guiding principles

Top 5 (no.s of respondents)

	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
Improve highway infrastructure	38	30	8
Provide a range of homes – size and tenure	35	26	9
New sports community facilities	35	33	2
Health facilities	30	29	1
Utilise env. assets	23	23	0
<i>Education</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>0</i>

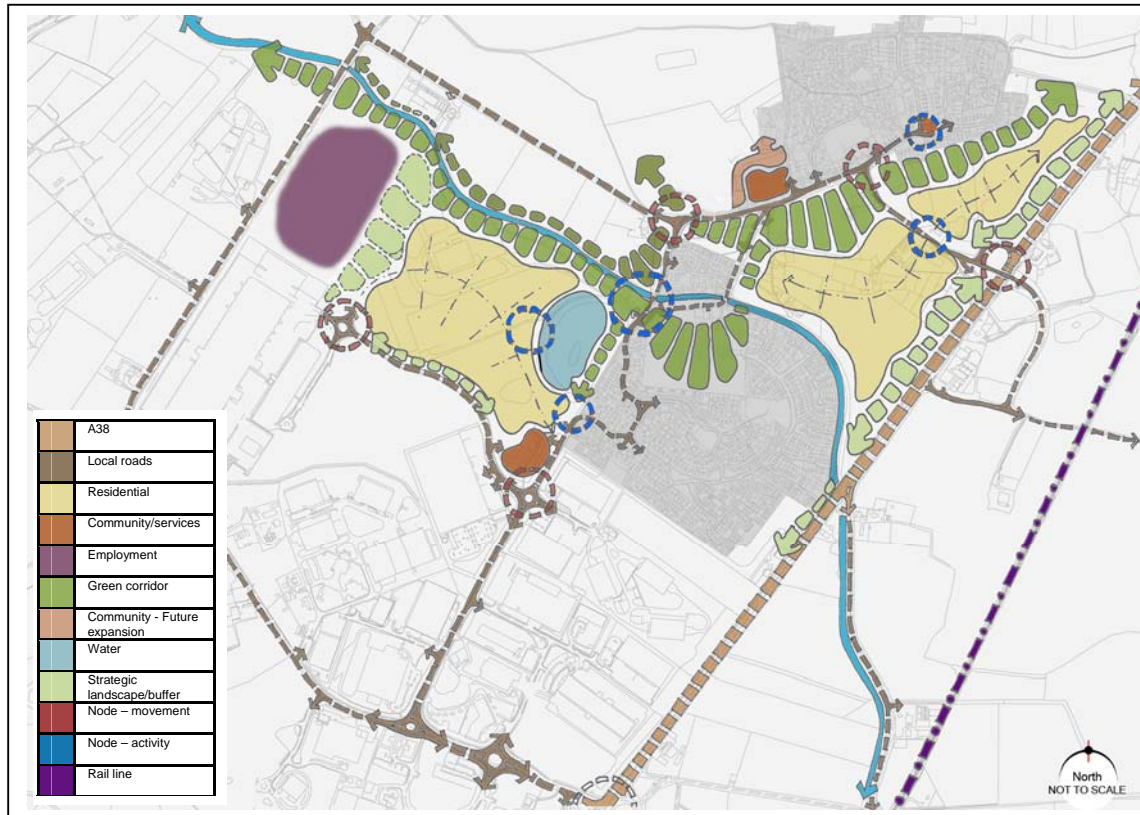
Guiding principles

Least popular (no.s of respondents)

	Overall response	Agree	Disagree
Reduced carbon output	13	13	0
Education facilities	16	16	0
Adaptable buildings	18	16	2

It should also be noted that 16 respondents indicated that they wished to see no development at all and there was very little support expressed for 'alternative' settlements in the vicinity of Fradley.

From comments provided in relation to the 'composite issues so far' plan, and other comments captured on blank plans during the evening, it was possible to create the following emerging concept plan



Concept Plan

Workshop 3

A final workshop was held approximately 2 weeks following the community event and an invitation was issued to all those who attended the workshop 1. The purpose of this final workshop was to allow the community representatives and key stakeholders the opportunity to review their original guiding principles and concept plans in light of the outputs from the community event.

From the workshop, the following conclusions were drawn about the material that had emerged so far:

- There appeared to be consensus emerging around a number of key themes relating to the preservation of the rural environment of Fradley Village; safeguarding existing green infrastructure; enhancing green infrastructure where appropriate; and providing additional social facilities, potentially focussed around the Village Hall and school (although facilities around the Stirling Centre could also be considered)
- There was general support for the guiding principles that had been formulated at the first workshop.

- Highway infrastructure and capacity were issues of concern/comment (both in terms of the need for improvements to strategic infrastructure eg junction on A38 and also transportation and movement within and through the village).
- Development of the former airfield land (in part) for a mixture of housing and employment seemed to gain support.
- Some form of residential development between Old Fradley and the A38 could be considered.

It was recognised that representation from younger members of the community was lacking, which could explain the relatively low level of support for play facilities etc. and that further, targeted consultation with specific groups might be useful. It was also recognised that further work was now required around the development options as shown on the final concept plan and this will be explored further in the Next Steps section of this report.

Conclusion

Overall, the consultation exercise appears to demonstrate a level of support (or acceptance) for further development within and around Fradley (although clearly this is not a universal view). There was very little support expressed for 'alternative settlements' near to Fradley, with the vast majority supporting the concept of development adjacent the existing residential areas. The retention of the rural, 'village feel', particularly for Old Fradley, came through as a strong aspiration and current residents clearly value their close proximity and easy access to the countryside. Existing green infrastructure is highly valued, such as the canal network and there is a desire to see this both preserved and where possible enhanced as part of any future development (but not sanitised).

The view from previous consultation exercises appears to be backed up in that there is a relatively strong desire to see a stronger 'village heart' developed. Facilities are currently split between the post office (which is highly valued and provides a range of local services), the village hall/school area, the church and the Stirling Centre. The recent development of the Stirling Centre is clearly welcomed and between this and the post office, most day to day retail needs etc. appear to be met, although there was significant support for further shops locating within the centre. The 'split' in facilities could present an opportunity to create/enhance a village social hub around the church/school/village hall, possibly with further sports and social related provision in this location.

There appears to be a specific desire for a social meeting space, whether it be a public house or sports/social club and this could potentially be accommodated at either location. A number of views also came through strongly that there is a desire to create a greater sense of community within Fradley. Whilst this could clearly be a consequence of external life style factors for many, a focus of social and community facilities, catering for a wide age range within the central location around the school etc. could provide a 'link' between both Old and South Fradley. This would need to be complimented by improved, sustainable links (footpaths and cycle ways) between Old and South Fradley.

Infrastructure, particularly highways was an important issue for many. Concern was expressed about the need to ensure that the local highway network (which is largely rural) would need to be improved to accommodate any resultant traffic growth. The A38 was also highlighted as a concern, with particular reference to the problems of entering and exiting at the two Fradley junctions (but in particular joining the A38 both in a northern and southerly direction).

There appears to be a relatively significant level of acceptance towards development on part of the former airfield site, but interestingly there is support for more of a mixed development, incorporating a level of employment, some of which should provide greater opportunity for local jobs and small to medium-sized enterprises. This suggestion reflects the fact that a number of views were expressed that the current employment area is overly dominated by 'large sheds' and provides little by way of employment opportunities for the local community. This raises the potential to explore other employment based opportunities for at least part of the former airfield site, which could be of a more appropriate scale in relation to any new, adjacent homes which could also provide facilities for home working etc.

Next Steps

It is recognised that this consultation exercise and its outcomes represent the start of the masterplanning process for Fradley. On this basis, it is considered that there are a number of key actions that can be undertaken in order to progress the masterplanning process:

- Whilst the consultation/engagement exercise was relatively well attended overall, it should be noted that the main community event was still only attended by 100 residents and only 7 of these were under 30. The results of the exercise, whilst very useful must be treated with an air of caution and it is suggested that they are **combined and compared with the previous consultation outputs but also that there is further, targeted consultation with specific groups, such as younger members of the community (e.g. directly approaching the school etc.)**. This will help to create a more comprehensive and representative picture of views and opinions from the Fradley community as a whole.
- **The results from the exercise so far should be fed back to the wider community**, setting out how they will in due course inform future Council policy, strategy and decision making.
- A draft vision is provided at Appendix VI and this is drawn out of the composite comments from the 3 events. **This, together with the guiding principles and draft composite plan should be the subject of further consultation and discussion with the local community, to seek wider consensus on a vision and set of development objectives to inform how Fradley should look by 2026**. The Parish Council in particular could play a key role in assisting with this action.
- **Further testing of specific issues**, particularly around infrastructure and potential delivery of the draft options should be carried out. Discussions are required with education, highways and health to establish current and future capacity issues. British Waterways should also be approached regarding the potential for canal focussed improvements/development.
- **A strategy for dealing with the relevant landowners** should be devised to ensure that they are informed of the Council's intentions for the area and to seek a collaborative approach towards masterplanning for Fradley.
- Following the testing of specific issues (as referred to above) and further investigation of physical constraints, **a more detailed concept plan should be formulated to identify deliverability issues around the various options, together with an indication of which option/s are emerging as favourable**. This will in effect form a draft Masterplan/Strategic Allocation for Fradley, which can then be the subject of a more detailed engagement exercise.

In conclusion, it should be stressed that the draft outcomes from this engagement exercise to date, do NOT in themselves represent a Masterplan for Fradley, rather they provide a starting point. By following the next steps as described above, a draft Masterplan will be formulated, that can be the subject of an essentially iterative process, requiring the emerging proposals to be constantly revisited as relevant evidence and information emerges (in a structured manner). Continuing engagement with relevant stakeholders (including the community) throughout this process will enhance the Council's ability to prepare a robust basis for policy making and ultimately delivery of a concept for Fradley that has a degree of consensus and community ownership.

APPENDIX I

WORKSHOP 1

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES AND KEY PROFESSIONALS

9.15-9.45	Arrival and refreshments	
9.45-9.55	Welcome and introduction. Outline of the key objectives and purpose of the session	ATLAS
9.55-10.10	Strategic context	LDC
10.10-10.30	Qualities of a successful place	ATLAS
10.30-11.15	Workshop One: SWOT analysis	ALL
11.15-11.30	BREAK	
11.30-12.30	Workshop Two: Creating a vision and set of objectives for Fradley - What is good about Fradley, what else is needed?	ALL
12.30-1.15	LUNCH	
1.15-1.45	Technical Constraints/Issues	LDC
1.45-2.45	Workshop Three: Developing a concept plan. Each group to consider where development could be located to address issues discussed in previous sessions	ALL
2.45-3.00	BREAK	
3.00-3.30.	Presentation – representatives from each group to present their concept plan to wider stakeholder team.	ALL
3.30-4.00	Discussion – Identify common ground between each groups' proposal. Review the vision and development objectives and look towards consensus.	

List of Attendees:

Parish Councillors

Ward Councillors

Representatives from –
 FACT (Fradley Against Curborough Town)
 Fradley Players
 Fradley Conservative Association
 St. Stephens Church
 St. Stephens School
 Bromford Housing
 British Waterways
 Birmingham Chamber of Commerce

Officers from Lichfield District Council (LDC) -
 Development Plans & Implementation
 Development Control

Community & Regeneration
Countryside
Housing

Officers from Staffordshire County Council -
Highways
Education
Climate Change

Advisory Team for Large Applications

APPENDIX II : Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

Environmental

- Achieve a more cohesive form of development that enables both physical and social inclusion within Fradley (but retains separation from other settlements).
- Provide an excellent, high quality, multi functional green infrastructure that maximises the existing landscape and ecological features and links the existing settlement with the surrounding countryside.
- Achieve a structure and form of development that will enable priority to be given to pedestrian and cycle movements and enable an increase in the number of local journeys made by more sustainable modes of transport as opposed to the private car.
- Achieve a form and structure of development that enables a reduction in carbon output for the village as a whole.
- Wherever possible, enable improvements to transport infrastructure, including the A38 junction.
- Utilise and maximise existing water based and environmental assets, including the canal and improved woodland/buffer planting.

Housing

- Achieve an appropriate proportion of all new homes that are affordable, offering a sustainable range of house sizes and types to support a diverse and sustainable community.
- Provide opportunities for distinctive buildings that respond to local context and create a strong local identity and sense of place.

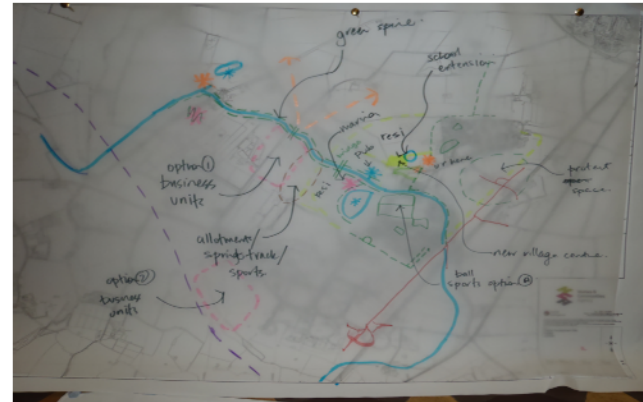
Economic

- Provide on site new employment floor space, the majority of which should be appropriate in type and form to being interspersed within a sustainable urban structure and offer opportunities for start ups, small business enterprises and associated 'touchdown' space.
- Achieve a structure and form of development that enables the provision of buildings that are adaptable and which can support a range of different uses over time.
- Provide excellent IT infrastructure throughout the settlement.

Social

- Achieve a form of development that provides opportunities for improved play, sports and community facilities that are centrally located (village centre/hub) and accessible to all.
- Provide improved health facilities accessible to the local community.
- Achieve improved school/education facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

APPENDIX III : Emerging concept plans from the four groups



APPENDIX IV : Results from Workshop 1

HOW COULD FRADLEY BE IMPROVED
Greater ability to address asset of canal
Pub within the village
Links to the other side of A38
More shops within the Stirling Centre
A centre of the village
Doctors
Public transport
Employment for "professional"/higher skill employment locally.
Primary school with capacity
Properties for ageing population
Facilities for parents and toddlers
Larger village hall
Distinctive built form – vernacular architecture
A38 junction improvements
Football/sports pitches.
High reliance on car
Slow Broadband
Better connectivity between woodlands, for both wildlife and people
Signposting – especially in Fradley South

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT FRADLEY
Fradley junction, canal for recreation, boat trips etc
Nature Reserve, plenty of green space
Active Church
Village Hall
Post office and general store – focal point of village
Good community feel
Like living in a village
Rural location – good quality of life
Access to the countryside
Good facilities – schools, (village and links to Lichfield)
Multi use Games Area
Well connected – Strategic highway network, Access to Lichfield Trent Valley railway station
Jobs locally
Proximity to Lichfield and wider range of services
Ancient woodlands and grasslands
Topography – flat- cycling, walking opportunities

APPENDIX V : Results from community event

HOW COULD FRADLEY BE IMPROVED?	TOTAL	AGREE	DISAGREE
Greater ability to address asset of canal	18	17	1
Pub within the village	48	34	14
Links to the other side of A38	20	12	8
More shops within the Stirling Centre	34	25	9
A centre of the village	25	19	6
Doctors	27	25	2
Public transport	22	20	2
Employment for "professional"/higher skill employment locally.	19	14	5
Primary school with capacity	14	10	4
Adaptable properties for the elderly	20	19	1
Facilities for parents and toddlers	4	4	
Larger village hall	13	9	
Distinctive built form – vernacular architecture	10	5	4
A38 junction improvements	45	35	10
Football/sports pitches.	10	7	3
Improved Broadband	21	19	2
Better connectivity between woodlands, for both wildlife and people	25	23	2
Signposting – especially in Fradley South	15	13	2

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT FRADLEY?	TOTAL	AGREE	DISAGREE
Fradley junction, canal for recreation, boat trips etc	46	46	
Nature Reserve, plenty of green space	41	40	1
Active Church	22	21	1
Village Hall	36	36	
Post office and general store – focal point of village	47	44	
Strong sense of community	26	19	7
Like living in a village	42	42	
Rural location – good quality of life	44	43	1
Access to the countryside	30	29	1
Good facilities – schools, (village and links to Lichfield)	25	21	4
Multi use Games Area	12	12	
Well connected – Strategic highway network,	17	17	
Access to Lichfield Trent Valley railway station	19	16	3
Jobs locally	20	14	6
Proximity to Lichfield and wider range of services	26	23	3
Topography – flat- cycling, walking opportunities	30	30	

APPENDIX VI: Draft Vision for Fradley 2026

“Any future development should respect the quality of the rural landscape and maintain a village atmosphere. The environmental assets of the canal and Fradley Junction should be maximised with attractive green linkages created through any new development incorporating pedestrian/cycle routes. Key views to the surrounding countryside should be secured through appropriate design of any new development.

Any development should provide a range of housing types and tenures to address local needs and achieve a form, structure and architectural design that is distinctive and reflects local characteristics. New sports and community facilities will be incorporated to offer people the opportunity to have a social meeting point which will encourage the integration of existing and new residents within the area to help support a greater sense of community.

Employment opportunities will be created suitable for local residents to fulfill the resident’s aspirations for a different employment offer in the area to assist in the stemming of out commuting and encourage an enterprise culture for all the residents of Fradley.

The development should promote the use of public transport and a healthier lifestyle with the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes to the village and surrounding countryside and to local facilities.

Any development should not have a detrimental impact on the local and strategic highway network.”