

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT of the Meeting of the Town Development Committee held on 11 October 2016

Present:-

Cllr. Maggie Tyrrell (Chairman)

Cllrs. Vincent Costello
 Angela Symonds
 Clive Parkinson
 Clare Fardell
 Pam Shipp
 Martin Trueman
 Gail Whitehead

Clare Nelmes (Town Clerk)
 Sandra Richardson (Deputy Town Clerk)

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. Guy Rawlinson (out of Thornbury)
 Bob Griffin (out of Thornbury)
 Helen Harrison (work commitment)
 Shirley Holloway (out of Thornbury)

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

3. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

4. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING PLANNING APPLICATION

[PT16/3565/O](#) Cleve Park, Land at Junction of Morton Way and Grovesend Road.
Revised Proposals for residential development of up to 350 dwellings, including 14 self-build dwellings (all use Class C3), development of a 70 unit elderly care facility (flexible use Class C2 and/or C3), development of up to 1,150 sq m floor space flexible community and/or commercial facilities (Use Classes A1, D1 and/or D2), and associated public open space and infrastructure. Access to be determined.

Councillors reiterated their previous objections to the original development including the premature nature of this application in the absence of a Strategic Plan for housing in the area and the current stage of the Joint Spatial Plan, impact on highways and other infrastructure and the management of public open spaces.

Cllr Clare Fardell highlighted the concerns raised by a local resident about building heights in relation to surrounding properties, the site layout, surroundings and views of the countryside from the town centre. The number of units over 2 ½ storeys and their position on the hillside was felt to have an overbearing impact on existing properties and be

inappropriate on the edge of the countryside. Concerns were also raised about anomalies between plans, affecting the ability to accurately assess the impact of building heights. There were also concerns about the visual impact of the development on views along Morton Way and that the frontages of the development onto Morton Way would be dominating, over bearing (particularly OAP home and other 2+ story buildings) and out of keeping with the current streetscene.

The overall scheme design was felt to be unimaginative with no reference to the surrounding landscape, character or setting of Thornbury. Concerns were raised about the proposed bungalows overlooking the play area and it was felt that this would cause a conflict between older people likely to live next to a noisy play area. It was felt that the indicative layout which showed long and straight roads through the development would do nothing to discourage speeding on the site and the secondary route and cycle way runs through houses. There was a desire to see affordable housing provided on site that provided for a mix of designs, tenure and sizes to meet local needs. The neighbourhood square surrounded by tall buildings was felt to be overbearing and considerably out of keeping with the area.

The landscaping plans show a large number of drainage ponds that take up most of the amenity space. Concern was raised about how usable this space would be, the amount of maintenance and up keep it would require and who would be responsible for this. It was felt that a large number of bridges would need to be built and/or footpaths to be diverted to allow access to these areas. The proximity of the ponds to trees and woodland areas raised concerns about impact on tree root systems and health. The sheer amount of drainage ponds raises the question about where all the water will go, in an area locally not known for its good drainage. We note the landscape officers concerns, critical about the impact on Hackett House and the council would agree with them.

It was challenging to consider the traffic and highways issues as there was no transport study available or details about site access or layout or public transport provision. Concerns were again raised about the impact on the Grovesend Road/A38 junction, A38 southbound and the Falfield M5 junction as well as increase in traffic around the town and pressure on town centre car parking.

The local facilities study was considered to be flawed, inaccurate and a misrepresentation of the current situation. It fails to include new development sites at Land West of Glos Rd, Midland Way and Castle Court. We anticipate 3375 additional new residents across the development sites in Thornbury, yet this report only considers the impact of 910. GP and health facilities are already overstretched, yet this report makes no suggestion of how this could be mitigated. With regards to community buildings no reference is made of community use of school buildings/facilities or church halls. The car parking study does not include the Castle Court car park. Considering the amount of accommodation for older people in the town, only some of which is accurately represented in the study, there is no justification for the older people's accommodation on site. The allotment provision does not include allotments provided as part of the Park farm development and the numbers quoted are wrong. The report fails to recognise that the vast majority of facilities and services covered in the report are outside the optimum walking distance.

It was unanimously agreed that Council would OBJECT to the development based on the issues raised during the debate and that the Clerk be instructed to submit a response in conjunction with the Committee Chair.

A copy of the response is attached for information.

PT16/3565/O Cleve Park, Land at Junction of Morton Way and Grovesend Road.

Revised Proposals for residential development of up to 350 dwellings, including 14 self-build dwellings (all use Class C3), development of a 70 unit elderly care facility (flexible use Class C2 and/or C3), development of up to 1,150 sq m floor space flexible community and/or commercial facilities (Use Classes A1, D1 and/or D2), and associated public open space and infrastructure. Access to be determined.

At the Town Developments Committee of 11 October 2016, this application was discussed and it was agreed that Thornbury Town Council OBJECTS to this application on the following grounds.

This site is outside the development boundary and Core Strategy and is another example of speculative and unplanned development which will lead to a significant and unsustainable percentage increase in the population of Thornbury without the necessary strategic planning to integrate it into the community and provide the necessary infrastructure. Thornbury has already accepted enough new development to meet its housing needs and it is unfair that the area is being asked to accommodate even more to meet South Gloucestershire 5 year housing land supply issue. This level of development is beyond Thornbury's capacity to accommodate this growth sustainably and this will increase pressure on local services and facilities and unbalance the community. This proposed development extends the boundary of the town and pushes the development area even further out, increasing the distance to services and facilities to an unsustainable distance.

The design of this site may comply with some general principles of design but there is no recognition of the location and no attempt to link it either physically or aesthetically with the town or the rural area. Important views across and into the site are impeded by badly placed 3 story buildings. Heights of buildings are of general concern and there appear to be anomalies in the various documents that make it difficult to be precise about the specific impacts. The 3 story buildings, including blocks of flats in the centre of the site with narrow road and no green spaces between, are overbearing. The general layout urbanises the street scene which is inappropriate on the edge of the rural area and as the outskirts of the traditional market town. One 3 metre green corridor added into the site does not address previous concerns about urbanisation.

The buildings facing Morton Way, although slightly amended from the earlier plans, still present too hard an edge close to the road. The side of the building designated as a nursing home in particular presents an inappropriate mass at this location. The 1 storey buildings on the southern fringe are presumably to be marketed to older people but the play area is adjacent to these properties. This has the potential to cause conflict and it would be more appropriate to place it nearer to properties designed for families who may prefer their children closer to them and may be more tolerant of the activity.

The open space which surrounds the built area is of most concern. The plan indicates that the whole area of open space is covered in 17 drainage ponds which are likely to be either full of water or muddy puddles for the majority of the year, making the space a liability rather than an asset to the community. Locally it is well known that the land is heavy clay and the natural drainage is very poor. The cost of maintenance of this very large area, which is out of sight of the majority of homes, will be extremely difficult and costly. The only way to ensure the area can be crossed is by installing bridges which would be impractical to maintain due to high costs. It has been claimed that because it is not formal space it will be relatively cheap to maintain but it is more likely to be neglected as people will not want to pay for a space that is of no value to them.

The building spaces allocated for community use have not been fully justified. There is no evidence provided that a nursing home will be needed or supported by the care industry. There is a site allocated for health provision but again there is no evidence that the Health Service has any interest in providing on this site. In fact the preferred option of the local CCG is to redevelop health care facilities on the site they already own in the town. Included in the CCG plan is the provision of nursing care and Extra Care Housing, which is supported by both the CAH Dept and the Town Council. This would make the funding of a nursing home at Cleve Park even less likely and could result in an unused area blighting the site for years.

Traffic and transport are still of major concern. Cllrs believe the traffic predicted to use the Grovesend junction is under-estimated. There is no plan to provide more employment land in the town so the majority of residents will have to leave Thornbury to work. There are likely to be a higher proportion of working age people on a new development than the current overall figure for the town. There seems to be no attempt to calculate the cumulative effect of the new developments on the main roads and junctions leaving the town. The traffic patterns around the town are likely to change due to the extra traffic and traffic calming measures on Morton Way but there has been no work to calculate this. Car parking remains one of the most significant concerns as businesses can only benefit from new development if people can access them. Residents will be forced to travel out of town for services so increasing traffic further. Specific designs and plans for access onto the development site are insufficient to be able to judge the impact on the surrounding streetscene, access to, around and from the site, highway safety and on the wider highway network.

Carney Green – Local facilities assessment for Cleve Park.

It is understood this report was commissioned following a request from South Glos Council. A number of anomalies bring the validity of the report into question as follows:

Consented development figures: CG include Alexandra Way, Park Farm, Thornbury Fields and Post Farm. They do not include Westpark House, Midland Way (Alexandra Workwear site) with 23 homes + 70 nursing home place: Units 1, 8 & 9 Midland Way totalling 18 units: various small sites and conversions since the 2013 plan was adopted. Even if they exclude Churchill Homes Rock St with 35 units because it is already in place they should include the Newlands development at Westpark House which is under construction. The criteria for inclusion is flawed. It is also likely that if Cleve Park achieves consent the Ainscough Land West of Glos. Rd and Castle St office site will have been consented as well which will add another 243 units.

Health Care: they acknowledge the current problem of under-provision of services, offer no solution other than land that the NHS says they are unlikely to use but still put the issue in the RAG rating as orange which indicates limited but sufficient capacity, which is not accurate.

Nurseries and schools: They calculate there is capacity in the nursery sector but still include a site for a new nursery on site. The calculation they use for school places is based on capacity in schools and the number of children the Cleve Park development is likely to produce. Even so they acknowledge under capacity in secondary sector. Their figures seem to omit the numbers from the other developments which will fill places before Cleve Park is built, so undermining all their calculations.

Community Facility: In this case they calculate that there is plenty of capacity in the town but then claim there is a need for a facility on site. There is no logic to this argument.

Allotments: They do not include those to be provided at Thornbury Fields in their calculation so cannot yet justify including them in the plan.

With regards to public open space Deer Park, Cleeve Wood and Thornbury Park are not in public ownership and are not classified as public open space and therefore their inclusion is misleading.

Parking: They await the detailed report but seem only to include Rock St and St Mary St car parks, not Castle Court so the figures are flawed before they start.

The calculated CIL will not provide enough capital to build the facilities on site and support all the various services needed off site and to suggest this is misleading.

The Town Council would be happy to assist SGC in assessing this community facility report as we believe there are various anomalies in this desk based report that do not reflect actual community circumstances.