

Thornbury Town Council

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BY EMAIL

To: The Planning Inspector, Planning Inspectorate
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To Whom It May Concern

**Ref: Public enquiry reference: 21/00062/FAIL
Land West of Park Farm Butt Lane Thornbury Bristol South Gloucestershire BS35 1RA**

Thornbury Town Council wish to make the following comments in addition to the response made to the original planning application reference: PT18/6450/O. We would be grateful if these comments could be considered in the public enquiry proceedings:

In the statement of common ground, it is agreed that the housing requirement for South Gloucestershire is met at 133% of the target and that the Council's 5-year land supply requirement has been met. Thornbury has been the subject of several speculative developments over the last 7 years and despite local protest about the lack of infrastructure, or plans to improve this in the future, permission has been given to most of the applications.

In the last 7 years planning permission has been granted for nearly 1500 new homes on the Northeast and Eastern edge of Thornbury, nearly all outside the current development boundary. In addition, permission has been given for at least 200 dwellings within and on the edge of the current development boundary. There is therefore no reason why Thornbury should accept further development at this time. It would be detrimental to the community, which is already struggling with over-crowded roads and oversubscribed doctors and dental surgeries.

The schools are also at, or near, capacity and cannot support the number of additional students that will be generated by this housing. The planned primary school will not meet the need for several years and there is no provision for the necessary additional secondary school provision. While the plan includes a site for a primary school there is no mention of provision for the 60 nursery places that the site is calculated to generate. Nursery provision within the town is already at capacity.

The Town Council also agrees with South Gloucestershire Council's stance on the importance of the setting of the Grade 1 listed buildings within the deer park.

This calculation also recognises that such new housing developments are occupied predominantly by young working families. The Town Council cannot see, therefore, how the conclusion is drawn that the road system, with some minor amendments can cope with the amount of traffic that would be generated. The junction onto Gloucester Rd has already been upgraded to accommodate traffic from Park Farm and Post Farm developments but, even before completion of those sites, traffic frequently queues back along Butt Lane.

There is no new employment anticipated in Thornbury at present and although a site has been identified as employment land no planning application has yet been submitted. This housing site will therefore have to be occupied by commuters to major employment areas. This is environmentally disastrous both in terms of

pollution and climate change and is in conflict with strategic objectives to bring housing and workplaces closer together.

Given this situation Thornbury Town Council does not understand how Highways England have accepted supported the statement that *“approximately 23% of work-based trips and 70% of nonwork trips remaining internal to Thornbury”*. (APPELLANT AND NATIONAL HIGHWAYS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND 3.1.2). It is impossible that this percentage of new residents will find work within the town.

That document also suggests that 18% of all external trips generated during the peak periods will distribute via Junction 14 of the M5 motorway. This again seems unlikely as it would intimate that a very high percentage of external trips would use the A38, which is already heavily congested at peak times, to access the motorway. The more likely scenario is that drivers will divert away from the A38. Despite some initial plans that have been consulted on for improvements to the A38 bus corridor, it is not possible to create dedicated bus lanes along the entire route and proposed improvements will only mitigate current problems.

The Town Council does not understand how *“It is common ground between the appellants and SGC that the services and facilities of Thornbury are an acceptable walking and cycling distance from the site”*. This is totally unrealistic; the distances are, possibly, acceptable for a fit young person to walk but the reality of trying to access the Town Centre or a supermarket for a family with small children, or for anyone with less than peak fitness levels, is laughable. It is totally unrealistic to expect families to regularly walk or cycle on all their journeys to amenities. It would be impractical to do a weekly shop or make the unplanned, hurried trip to the convenience store without using a car.

While there is agreement between the parties that walking and cycling routes around the area would be enhanced this does not mean that the routes to essential amenities are acceptable. These would be more useful for leisure purposes

Finally, agricultural land is becoming more important as the effects of global economics become evident. The Town Council therefore believes that this high-grade agricultural land must be protected.

Yours faithfully



Kath MacConnachie, CiLCA
Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
For and on behalf of Thornbury Town Council