

CHAPTER 4: ALTERNATIVES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Schedule 4, Part 1, paragraph 2 of the EIA Regulations requires “A *description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of environmental effects..*”

4.1.2 Iterations of scheme design are often made when EIA and consultation are undertaken at an early stage of preparing a planning application. Where this results in the avoidance or reduction of potential significant effects, these can be described as alternatives. Alongside the technical assessments, the design process has been influenced by community consultation and through discussions with SGC and statutory consultees.

4.2 DO NOTHING SCENARIO

4.2.1 The ‘Do Nothing’ Scenario has not been considered as an alternative within this Environmental Statement. The baseline chapters of each technical chapter consider the existing conditions in respect to the Project Site and wider area, and where relevant, reference where there are projected changes to this baseline environment irrelevant of the delivery of the Proposed Development.

4.2.2 Chapter 6 (Socio-Economics) confirms that there is a need for housing within South Gloucestershire to address the current housing shortfall; expressed through the failure to demonstrate a five year housing land supply.

4.3 ALTERNATIVE SCALE, NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

4.3.1 The technical work undertaken by the Applicants’ Project Team has enabled an evaluation of the Project Site, and wider study area, and enabled the identification of the main constraints and opportunities influencing the design of the Proposed Development.

History and Heritage

- Thornbury Castle Complex – a group of designated assets 400m to the south of the Project Site, including the Grade I Castle, separately listed walls (Grade 1), two lodges (Grade II) and associated scheduled monument and Grade II Registered Park and Garden.

- Church of St Mary the Virgin – Grade I listed church circa 650m south of the Project Site, behind the Thornbury Castle Complex.
- Thornbury Conservation Area – approximately 80m to the south.

Access and Movement

- Provision of new vehicular links from Oldbury Lane;
- Delivery of a sustainable transport link to land to the east;
- Two existing rights of way, and creation of a new permeable and connected network of footpath and cycle connections within the Project Site.

Arboriculture

- 75 individual trees (2 Cat A, 29 Cat B, 35 Cat C and 9 Cat U); 13 tree groups (3 Cat B and 10 Cat C); 9 hedgerows (8 Cat C and one Cat U) and 3 Cat B woodlands. Four Veteran trees;
- Ancient Woodland at Park Mill Covert bordering the Project Site to the west.

Ecology

- Park Mill Covert SNCI;
- Habitat supporting a range of species, in particular, slow worms, bats, badgers and birds.

Water and Drainage

- Directing vulnerable development away from areas identified at risk of flooding, in relation to the Pickedmoor Brook;
- Delivery of a SUDS strategy, without an allowance for infiltration on the Project Site;

Acoustics

- Design to consider the impact of sound from Oldbury Lane on proposed uses on the Project Site.

The evaluation of the Project Site is summarised on the Constraints and Opportunities Plan attached at Figure 4.1.

Masterplan Evolution

Initial Masterplan: December 2017

4.3.2 The initial Masterplan (see Figure 4.2) represented an initial concept plan for the Project Site on the basis of initial constraints and opportunities work. This included the following key elements:

- Two access points from Oldbury Lane;
- Delivery of a Sustainable Travel Link to the committed scheme to the east of the Project Site;
- A central green with interconnected green links;
- Large drainage attenuation areas within the south-west of the Project Site;
- A new tree belt along the north-west of the Project Site; and
- Street aligned to offer glimpsed views of St Mary Church spire.

4.3.3 The initial Masterplan indicated the potential for delivery of around 750 units on the Project Site.

Pre-Application Update: March 2018

4.3.4 Following the initial Masterplan, further technical work was undertaken and the masterplan updated ahead of pre-application discussions and public consultation (Figure 4.3).

4.3.5 This resulted in the inclusion of areas for a community hub and allotments and, in addition:

- Drainage proposals were refined to reflect the level of development being proposed;
- The proposed tree belt was extended along the north-western boundary; and
- Green links were reviewed to ensure the retention of the more valuable existing assets.

4.3.6 This Masterplan identified a reduced quantum of residential development (at up to 750 dwellings), following the addition of the community hub and amended green infrastructure proposals.

Public Consultation: May 2018

4.3.7 The May 2018 Masterplan (Figure 4.4) was further refined as follows:

- Introduction of a 1.1ha education site (including one-form entry primary school and early years provision);
- Relocated allotments to more accessible location.

4.3.8 This Masterplan was used as part of the public exhibition, which is discussed in more detail in the Design and Access Statement and Statement of Community Engagement submitted with the planning application.

Masterplan Revision: August 2018

4.3.9 The masterplan was subsequently revised (Figure 4.5) following the public consultation exercise and the conclusion of the technical assessments, and further refined as follows:

- Re-alignment of green links and space to ensure retention of existing utilities and services within the Project Site;
- Re-location of north western site access and the addition of right-hand turn lanes to both vehicular accesses;
- Refinement of the primary street alignment and some residential parcels;
- Primary school site has moved south to allow for creation of a central community hub;
- Introduction of habitat ponds for ecological enhancements;
- Refined play strategy ensuring a network of equipped and un-equipped areas for play across the Project Site; and
- Creation of a central community hub through the location of the primary school, retail-community hub and a Neighbourhood Green.

Final Submitted Masterplan (Figure 4.63-5)

4.3.10 The primary school was subsequently removed from the Proposed Development, with South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) not confirming through the pre-application discussions whether there is a need for a site for a new primary school within Thornbury at this time. The [previously submitted](#) Proposed Development therefore ~~does~~ did not include a primary school. As set out in the Design and Access Statement, land may be secured through the planning application process should a need for a new school site be identified during the determination of the planning application. The delivery of a primary school on the Project Site would require a separate planning consent.

Resubmission Masterplan (Figure 3.5)

4.3.11 Following the submission of the outline application further discussions took place with SGC over the application proposals. This has led to a number of changes to the Proposed Development which are now the subject of a replacement resubmission. These changes are as follows:

- Re-introduction of the primary school site;
- Relocation and definition of the Retail and Community Hub;
- A reduction in the quantum of residential development from 'up to 630 dwellings' to 'up to 595 dwellings';
- Changes to the scale parameter plans which overall reduce the scale of the proposed residential development;
- An increase to the width of the green corridor along Oldbury Lane;
- Retention of a greater proportion of the existing hedgerows within the site;
- Introduction of an additional wildlife pond in the south western part of the site;
- Redesign of the Sustainable Transport Link between the application site and the neighbouring Park Farm development; and
- Updates to the Transport Assessment and the transport mitigation measures proposed as part of the development.

4.4 DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

4.4.1 The EIA supports an outline planning application, the construction and operational practices that would be employed as part of the Proposed Development will be established at the detailed design stage. As such, it is not possible to undertake a comparative assessment at this stage.