

Name of respondent: Sue Rowley (Mrs)

Question 2

A number of respondents say the Council's aim to retain and improve services, facilities and employment in Thornbury is not supported by the evidence. What information has the Council relied upon in reaching its conclusions on the need for and the scale of development appropriate for the town?

The Council has actively sought to move its workforce from Thornbury to the new offices at Badminton Road, Yate thereby deliberately reducing services and employment in Thornbury. It has been clear, since the new offices were built and the workforce considerably reduced, that the move to Badminton Road has been envisaged for some time.

Quote from the Gazette 4th March 2010 - A South Gloucestershire Council spokesman said: "Badminton Road is part of the council's ongoing drive to become a more efficient organisation - it will save taxpayers around £1.3million per year over the lifetime of the building, by allowing the council to move out of existing inefficient and expensive buildings.

Therefore, the Council's aim to retain and improve services, facilities and employment in Thornbury is not supported by the evidence.

Question 3

In relation to proposals for development at Park Farm a number of potential constraints have been identified. These include heritage and archaeological assets, wildlife and agricultural land quality as well as concerns with flooding, the loss of open space and access issues. How far have these factors been taken into account in identifying this location as the Council's preferred choice?

The Sheiling School - The close proximity of the proposed Park Farm development to the Sheiling School has not been taken into consideration at all.

- School buildings are next to the boundaries which would adjoin part of the proposed development.
- The access road onto Park Road is expected to be next to the Sheiling School boundary. This would adversely affect the ethos of the school and its biodynamic status, with increased noise, light and traffic pollution.

Core Strategy, Section 15 – Thornbury, Page 186, Figure 13

- The school therapy rooms are deliberately housed in the building in the quietest part of the school site. This building would be right next to the proposed development site which can be clearly seen from this building.
- One of the buildings near the boundary is locally listed.

Much consideration has been given to the aspirations of the Castle School but no consideration has been given to the Sheiling School and the potential destruction of a very delicately balanced way of life.

The Water Table & Natural Springs – The natural springs which provide water supplies to local properties and to the medieval fishponds will be severely threatened if this development is approved.

The water supplies for several properties in the vicinity of this proposed development are partially supplied by natural springs. Any further development is likely to jeopardise the water supplies to these properties.

The medieval fishponds at Park Farm are entirely supplied by natural springs. That's why they are there.

Flooding – It is known that housing developments can affect the water tables and that the exact affects are not known until the developments are built and it is too late. One can see the affects in other parts of the country where large scale flooding has occurred in recent years because of over-development.

The proposed site at Park Farm is on the flood plain and is an area where flooding already occurs on a regular basis. There are photographs available which confirm this. Any development will only exacerbate the problem elsewhere. The stream which flows through the proposed development acts as a drain for Thornbury where all the natural drainage is directed. This then drains towards Oldbury where properties are already prone to flooding. Adding to this problem will put lives at risk and threaten existing properties.

These factors have not been taken into account in identifying this location as the Council's preferred choice.

Question 4

Do alternative sites in the Thornbury area particularly to the east and south have advantages over the Park Farm location and, if so, what are these?

Alternatives to Park Farm and large scale development have not been properly explored.

- There has been no proper consultation to determine whether or not any more houses are needed in Thornbury.

- In recent years a number of small developments have already been built in Thornbury. Should new houses in Thornbury be needed, they would be better built very gradually and using infill land or brown field sites so that the town can more easily adapt and grow at a natural pace.
- The Council offices in Castle Street – Please see answer to question 2 above. I would anticipate that the Thornbury offices would look to close within a few years and within the life of the Core Strategy. This would make an ideal site for a small housing development. This would be small enough for the town to accommodate, be sustainable and would be in easy walking distance of the town centre - an ideal site to increase the vibrancy of the town centre.
- Land near Thornbury Golf Club entrance – I understand this is classed as Green Belt. However, Green Belt land is being used for housing in other parts of South Gloucestershire. Should a need for housing be determined, this land would be ideally suited because of its proximity to the town centre. Car usage and parking within the town would be minimal because of the easy access to the town centre, Tesco and the Leisure Centre.
- Castle Court Car Park - It is now clear that the short stay car park at Castle Court is to be sold and will be used for development. Although this car park will be a great loss to Thornbury, it would make an ideal site for sustainable development with direct access to the Town Centre without the use of cars.

The above sites have definite advantages over the Park Farm location should the need for more housing in the Thornbury area be established.