

FAO: Inspector Paul Crysell, c/o Kath Thorne, SGC

RE: South Gloucestershire Core Strategy Public Examination

Generally, building an extra 300 houses in Thornbury is not a good idea because:

1. Houses don't seem to be selling very fast suggesting demand is not great.
2. 500 extra homes for Thornbury are already planned in the Park Farm area – more than enough for a small Market Town like Thornbury.
3. Thornbury schools are all successful and fairly well subscribed already. Extra pupils are not urgently required.
4. The high performing schools in Thornbury may not be able to accommodate a sudden influx of extra children without seeing a negative impact, particularly if proper resources are not provided which is likely in the current economic climate.
5. There are not the numbers of jobs in Thornbury to support the extra residents for either Park Farm or Morton Way developments. Given virtually all new residents will work outside Thornbury it would be far more sensible to build houses closer to where jobs will be available. The North Fringe of Bristol (Cribbs Causeway, Filton, Stoke Gifford etc) provides lots of employment so creating new housing around these areas would be a better option.
6. More residents will not guarantee more use of the Thornbury shops. If the 12500 existing residents of Thornbury are not using the shops what difference will another 300 houses with occupants working (and therefore buying) elsewhere make? An extra 300, 500 or even 1000 houses in Thornbury wouldn't have stopped Clinton Cards or Julian Graves closing. They were national chains which went into administration.
7. The road infrastructure around Thornbury and along the A38 to Bristol would be unable to cope with the extra commuters. Journey times are increasing already and 300 extra homes will lead to at least 300 cars leaving Thornbury at rush hour (all households have at least one car and at least one worker, more likely two in both cases). On top of the 500 new houses already planned for Park Farm this would be unsustainable.
8. There are no realistic alternatives to Thornbury's residents using cars as there is no train station and a poor bus service. New residents are not likely to be working in Thornbury, so the vast majority will be exiting the town by car at the same time each day.
9. Creating housing around the Yate, Cribbs Causeway, North Fringe areas instead where existing jobs are located should help to actually reduce traffic congestion and prevent further gridlock. These areas are better served by buses/trains which would go even further to reduce the traffic, helping meet targets for pollution/energy use reduction and increasing the numbers using public transport.
10. Existing facilities in Thornbury may not be able to cope if 300 extra homes were built e.g. Doctors surgeries could become oversubscribed leading to a degradation of service. Specifically, building extra houses at Morton Way is unsuitable because:
 1. Morton Way acts as a natural boundary between the housing of the town and the countryside that it sits in. Once this boundary is crossed it would open up Thornbury to

further development all along Morton Way across the green fields all the way to the A38. This would be totally unacceptable for a Market Town such as Thornbury.

2. Morton Way's beauty lies in its openness. Existing development is set well back from the road and the open countryside provides a lovely outlook for people entering the town from A38 North or A38 South. Further development along Morton Way would destroy this for anyone entering the town this way.

3. Development on the outer edge of Morton Way is unsuitable because Morton Way is a route for HGV's into the town/trading estate. Any homes here mean more children attempting to cross the road, particularly since everything in Thornbury (schools/shops/leisure centre) is on the other side, and this would be dangerous with the amount of heavy traffic using this road.

4. The pedestrian route into/out of town from Morton Way would take people through numerous housing areas. This would be detrimental to existing residents due to increased litter/noise/anti-social behaviour, particularly from late-night revellers.

5. The existing subway under Morton Way is often littered with broken glass already. This is only likely to increase if more teenagers are living in houses beyond it.

6. The open fields and wooded areas along Morton Way would be spoiled by any development. Anyone presently having easy access to these areas would lose this valuable asset. Families with young children cannot walk great distances and these areas are virtually on the doorstep of hundreds of existing homes. Replacing these green fields with houses would mean any family presently walking a short distance to the countryside would need to drive instead, which defeats the object.

7. Taking away easy access to country footpaths and green fields would force more dog walkers to use the children's parks and residential footpaths in Thornbury. This creates issues with dogs frightening children and leaving their faeces behind, which is a growing problem already.

8. Unlike other areas in South Gloucestershire that could be developed, the green fields at Morton Way are well used. Just a couple of weeks ago the very location suggested by South Gloucestershire Council for the extra 300 houses was being used by children and their families. I was there three days running with my wife and our three children and there were many families also there enjoying time together playing in the snow. This facility would be lost forever if it is built on, and there is nowhere else nearby with a slope for sledging. Driving off to find a hill is impracticable/dangerous in snowy conditions.

9. As any houses beyond Morton Way would be a considerable distance from the secondary school in Thornbury it's likely extra traffic would be created at school run time. From personal experience walking with my own children to Crossways Junior, Infant and Pre-School, any more traffic would make an already chaotic situation extremely hazardous. It has already been reported of near misses and my own 4 year old daughter was recently frightened off the kerb into the road by an inconsiderate dog owner. It was lucky that she was not run over. This situation should not be made any worse by building more housing that would increase traffic either on Knapp Road or Morton Way. The Crossways Infant and Junior schools along Knapp Rd presently experience awful traffic there every morning and there are no facilities to help children cross the road (which is a 4 way junction so unsuitable for a zebra/pelican crossing and there is no lollipop person).

10. Crossways schools (which are the nearest to Morton Way) do not have much more capacity for extra children. They would not be able to cope with extra numbers from 300 (or

more!) new houses. Conversely, Manorbrook School on the other side of Thornbury has space (though presumably not the staff) for an extra 30+ children in each year.

11. New housing along Morton Way would make Thornbury even more lopsided than it already is. It is the wrong side of Thornbury for proximity to the shops/leisure centre so would mean most residents would drive to the facilities in the town. If there must be new housing in Thornbury it would be far better suited closer to the High Street on the opposite side of the town.

12. No increase to the number of customers of Thornbury's shops would be guaranteed since anyone living across Morton Way would be likely to drive. Once in their car they may well end up elsewhere, particularly since Thornbury is going to lose one of its car parks. If there are not enough parking spaces residents would end up shopping in Yate or Cribbs Causeway where there is plenty of parking, in which case the housing would be better off being built in Yate, or Cribbs to reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

13. The main road out of Thornbury from Morton Way (Grovesend Rd) could never cope with the increased traffic from new houses at Park Road and Morton Way.

14. As much of Morton Way is above level of the town development here may increase the likelihood of flooding for the existing residents of Thornbury. Developers should not upset the delicate balance for existing residents, particularly given the amount of rainfall experienced recently.

15. The Core Strategy was considered at length by local councillors and debated for some time with residents. Previous agreements reached and reasons for ruling out Morton Way for development should not be changed/disregarded at this stage and with little reason.

In summary the additional housing for Thornbury is not sustainable, not required, and Morton Way is certainly not a suitable location for it. There are other places in South Gloucestershire that are far more suited to accommodating any extra housing on top of that already proposed in the Core Strategy, if it is at all required.

Matt Shaw