

29 January 2013

Dear Inspector,

We have felt for some time that Thornbury needed a modest stimulus of younger residents to bring some vitality and bustle to the town. You have permitted a development of 500 dwellings at Park Farm as the most sustainable solution to meet national housing targets. We feel that this development is just within the town's limited capacity to change and absorb and develop new facilities.

We have now considered the proposals at Morton Way North where you have agreed to a development of an extra 300 dwellings (Bloor Homes). We take the view that this is an unwelcome additional burden and taken together these plans for 800 dwellings will outstrip the town's absorptive capacity resulting in unsustainable tensions, congestion, frustration, stretched services for the elderly, stretched health (just try getting a doctor's routine appointment within 7 or 8 days today), policing and even more risk of flooding – even in the new Park Farm development.

We are certain that The Morton Way site is far from being the most sustainable of those possibilities available in South Glos. Our reasons are as follows:

- 1) The site is the first breach of Thornbury's development beyond Morton Way which was constructed about 28 years ago. Once the precedent has been set we have a real fear that this area will then become a developer's paradise with the triangular area bounded by Morton Way, Old Gloucester Road and the A38 all being under threat. There is land there for upwards of 30,000 dwellings. A nightmare scenario for a small market town!
- 2) The Bloor site is well away from Thornbury's services and although a small shop is planned, a trip to town will not be made on foot by any save the keenest walker.
- 3) Similarly the primary schools will not be accessible by young mothers and young children on foot, the traffic chaos at the school gates can only be imagined. Secondary age children should be encouraged to walk or cycle to Castle School but light controlled crossings on Morton Way and Old Gloucester Road will then be essential and segregated cycle lanes and lower speed limits implemented.
- 4) The A38/M5 Almondsbury Junction. The working adults of the proposed new developments (Park Farm and Bloor Homes) will not all find local work. A good proportion will work in Bristol's Northern Fringe. The A38 is the only traffic artery and at its junction with the M5 at Almondsbury traffic will come to a standstill, (it is not far from that now) the queues and congestion can only be imagined. The proposed Bloor development is the last straw and likely to make life a complete misery for those with business in Bristol. The development is simply unsustainable given the development already consented to at Park Farm.
- 5) Crossways Lane cut-through. Crossways Lane has no pedestrian facilities, but is well used by residents on foot, walkers, runners, horseriders, strollers, cyclists, blackberryers, families with children in prams, and furthermore is part of the Avon Cycle Route. South Glos Council has recognised the value of this little lane for leisure purposes, (the green lungs of Thornbury) and placed traffic calming posts in the verges to slow the traffic as there are no refuges whatsoever.

It is obvious from looking at any map that Bloor Homes residents returning home from the north will cut through Crossways Lane to get to their new homes in the quickest possible time. The inevitable increased use of this cut-through will potentially destroy this much appreciated community leisure facility, and without shroud-waving, as a local resident I fear that a serious accident is almost inevitable. Engineering solutions to turn the lane into a double carriageway are out of the question as it will completely destroy its rural nature. On the other hand, new residents returning to Park Farm have no such incentive to use Crossways Lane.

- 6) Quality Farmland. Bloor's submission gives an assessment of the site's quality as farmland. It reached a fairly marginal conclusion which an agricultural expert might question, but I am not that person. What one can observe however is that this is a very green site complete with grazing stock, completely undeveloped in the past. It is impossible for me to believe that there are not brownfield sites or scrubland on the margins of current settlements which is more suitable for sustainable development than this carefully conserved farmland.
- 7) Flooding. I have pictures taken in the last few weeks of surface water streaming from the fields and flooding the lanes within ½ mile of the Bloor Site. This water is running off virgin arable land. The hard surfaces of roofs, driveways and roads in the Bloor site will inevitably result in greater discharges of surface water into the Streamside Walk brook which feeds down into Park Farm. Residents close to Streamside will be at further risk. The issue of flood plain has already been argued by Park Farm Development opponents, the engineers presumably have to work out a sustainable solution, but the prospect of further discharges, from new housing at Bloor's site and the extensive development which it may well prelude, will test the Park Farm drainage solution to its very limits.

In summary, we reject the proposal for development on land to the North East of Morton Way as being unsustainable and certainly not the most suitable solution for a substantial proportion of the extra 800 houses which have to be located in South Glos over the next 5 years.

Yours Sincerely

Terry and Barbara Ray