

Ms. Kath Thorne
Programme Officer
South Gloucestershire Council
PO Box 2081
S. Glos. BS35 9BP

4th February 2013

Dear Ms Thorne

S.Glos, Thornbury: Core Strategy.

I write in response to the 'Preserve Morton Way' leaflet and in order if possible to amplify comments regarding the above made at earlier public meetings. Whilst I am not against the idea that Thornbury should be developed further particularly as with regard to housing, my objections to the possibility of housing development to the east of Morton Way are as follows:-

- Thornbury has already been developed significantly to the east of the town centre to the extent that it is now a rather lopsided town. Any further development to the east will not have the desired effects on town usage, in effect through ease of access to A38 encouraging residents to shop elsewhere therefore participating less in the life of the community.
- Surface water runoff is a major problem possibly creating a significant risk of flooding to housing downstream. I appreciate that this can be overcome by the construction of holding ponds but these in effect are a poor utilisation of developable land and are not a satisfactory long term solution. They will involve the local authority in expensive maintenance programmes.
- I feel strongly that South Gloucestershire Council have failed in the last thirty years or so to develop a land use plan for Thornbury which would give developers some direction enabling them to assess associated risks.
- Whilst the proposed Park Farm development should be encouraged - it lies within a 'theoretical' radius from the town centre and which I assume established Morton Way and Midland Road in the earlier development phase of Thornbury -

the proposals presently submitted are not ideal in that the existing and ancient road system does not encourage access to the town centre. Any vehicular connection to Park Road will only partially improve the situation and could inadvertently increase pressure to widen the road between Castle Street and the Shieling School which I think most would regard as detrimental to the character of Thornbury.

Although possibly not part of your remit a new road to the west of the town centre is I think essential for the future of Thornbury. It could start near the leisure centre/golf club access points on Bristol Road, routed to the west of Dagg's allotments and the Mundy playing fields, crossing Kington Lane to the west of the town cemetery and thence sweeping round to the north of Thornbury Castle linking in with the proposed Park Farm development. A link connecting the High Street to this new road could be formed through Castle Court and across the meadows. It would be essential to preserve the existing meadows as far as Kington Lane together with the Mundy playing fields as these could form an amenity area almost at the heart of the town and in effect encourage the use of the town centre by new development to the west of this road. Pro and cons, probably the latter which will be raised might be illuminated as follows.

- Poor quality agricultural land to the west and north of such a new road will be opened up for housing development.
- Owners of farm land now ripe for development will be able to benefit financially as have farmers over the last forty years to the east of the town.
- Potential revitalising of the town centre as well as the elimination of an unbalanced urban layout.
- Drainage or rather surface water runoff will be a problem but the topography does fall from south to north by about 30 metres or so which in my view should be well within the drainage design scope of a competent developer. A new pumping station may be required in the vicinity of Oldbury to cope with the increased runoff but this may be overdue already.
- Heritage activists as at Park Farm will no doubt rise up in protest at development to the north of Thornbury castle and land which formerly formed part of the deer park. However the landscape in this area is that of 18C field enclosures which are everywhere and so far these interest groups have failed to

demonstrate if any of the boundaries in this area do in fact date from the 16th century or earlier.

- The Community

Infrastructure Levy if invoked will place an extra cost burden on the development of the area as described above to the extent that developers will not be interested if returns from housing do not generate sufficient profit. It is appreciated that developers do already contribute towards facilitating access and other amenities but my understanding is that the scope of this levy is to be substantially increased, e.g. provision of housing for first time buyers which will I think restrict the interests of most of the major developers.
- The route and possible

housing development will conflict with areas that are now 'green belt'. As far as I can ascertain I cannot see any logical reason as to why the area immediately to the north and north east of what was the historical Marlwood estate was designated as green belt unless earlier vested interests saw it as a means of preventing development proposals such as described above when the green belt was last implemented.

Economics and the parlous state of financial reserves of the government may in the end determine the viability or indeed the viability of the above suggestion for the further development of Thornbury. However I do hope that the above will help in the forming of directions to persuade South Gloucestershire to have a greater in depth look at planning for the future of Thornbury.

Yours sincerely,

Michael L. Neale