

**COMMENTS TO BE PLACED BEFORE THE INSPECTOR REGARDING THE NEED FOR A FURTHER ALLOCATION OF UP TO 300 UNITS IN THORNBURY**

Having had over 35 years experience as a qualified planner and residential developer within the region as well as being a residential for similar period of time in Thornbury the area is very familiar to me.

Firstly the inspector is best placed to understand whether the forecasted increase in population require additional housing at the level proposed or not. If he decides that an additional 800 units are required and that the shortfall is indeed 300 then land for them will be required.

The question is how this is to be best achieved. My experience is that over a relatively short period of time the market can change considerably in its taste for housing. Indeed densities have increased considerably in recent years and so who is to say that the land already allocated will not in itself provide the missing numbers. An increase of below 2 units per hectare would more than meet the shortfall. Careful monitoring of supply in the early part of the plan period is clearly required an early response to any foreseen shortfall undertaken. However, this is not required now.

If, however, the Inspector is still minded to find further sites in the Thornbury area for up to 300 units then the following may be of assistance.

- a) As a large site has been already agreed at Park Farm it makes best practice in marketing terms to try and find a variety of sites to compliment.
- b) There are a number of sites within the existing town boundary which will provide opportunities to achieve the perceived shortfall rather than commit to build beyond Morton Way.
- c) By moving Castle School sixth form to the main site this will free up a site on the Gloucester Road suitable for a range of accommodation of approximately 100 units.
- d) Plans are currently being formulated for the Old Police Station and the Natwest Car Park. Again capacity could be 50 units/70 units
- e) The government proposal to utilise office accommodation for residential purposes throws up the opportunity for housing at the Council Offices in Castle Street and /or Alexandra Workware offices at Midland Way. 50/150 units
- f) Thornbury is characterised by a large expanse of concrete in the centre used as car parking. It is not beyond the scope of a good designer to utilise the space to accommodate not only necessary car parking but housing well located in the centre of town. Rock Street and /or the car park by the Presbyterian Church would provide 100 units

- g) With the proposed development of Oldbury Power Station pressure will be put on the existing road network. One pressure point is at the bottom of Morton Way and Gloucester Road where traffic turns into Butt Lane and then has to go through a S bend on the journey to Oldbury. By placing a mini roundabout on Gloucester road and curving a new road through the adjoining fields to join a new roundabout after the S bend an area of land amounting to 3.5 hectares would be available inside a firm boundary which could accommodate housing. Capacity depending on mix of 50 units.

The above sites are all suitable for development and in many instances are publicly owned and so would not have constraints of ownership in bringing them forward during the life of the plan when and if required. By doing so there would be no need to propose development on area of land which has no defined boundary and which will totally change the character of this fine market town not mention using high grade agricultural land.

**David Cockerell**