

S.Glos, Policies, Sites & Places Study

It appears that comment by myself and others on housing development in general as it affects the cohesive development of our towns and villages has been mis-directed into a category:- 'non-strategic housing allocations', as noted in, 'Notes, Inspectors Issues and Questions' schedule. Our point is that the very lack of Structural Plans for housing in the 'Core Strategy', The Policies, Sites and Places Study and now the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Strategic Transport Study is jeopardising the proper and sound development of our local communities, the goodwill of our communities and the timely construction of houses, particularly affordable property for the young.

Housing in South Gloucestershire and in particular for Thornbury is a shambles and it is imperative that South Gloucestershire Council be instructed to hold a moratorium on the impending decisions process for all current housing development applications.

The primary reason for the shambolic planning process in S. Glos, possibly stems from the National Planning Policy Framework, in that for whatever reason our Councillors have effectively allowed developers to lead the housing development process by not adopting the rational process of preparing town/village structural plans together and/or in conjunction with the assignment of neighbourhood planning officers for this task. Any response in answer to queries on this matter are either ignored or avoided. This problem was initially highlighted by the Gov't Planning Inspector, Mr Paul Chrysell in 2013 when he alluded to the lack of infrastructure and land allocated in Thornbury for housing in his conclusions on the review of the S. Glos, Core Strategy Study.

S. Glos since then, and under pressure, possibly from developers, have added dribs and drabs of land to the PS&P study and the WoE study without any thought for the cohesive development of the town or its infrastructure. This has led to ad hoc development applications whose approval to date has prejudiced probable infrastructure needs (Park Farm and Thornbury Fields) related to the envisaged nuclear power station at Oldbury and other infrastructure (Park Farm) required for the cohesive development of the town and all other housing development in the town. The Council also appears to have an inability to ensure that Developers adhere to their initial agreements in terms of development layout and allocation of affordable housing and also have

shown a tendency to renege on a promise to retain land already designated and in use as amenity green areas within the town. The term, other infrastructure , includes as well as basic road and link road layout, the need for a pumping station in Oldbury Pill to cater for rain water run-off in the area. Developers currently are being encouraged to provide attenuation ponds within the area of each and every development as method of solving the problem. Without going in to the geology of the area some form of flood prevention is required not only for local residents but those of Oldbury village and the surrounding agricultural land which is highly productive. Attenuation ponds are not sustainable for the following reasons:-

- Reduces the area of land available for housing thereby increasing the unit cost.
- Maintenance is an added cost to the Local Authority already overstretched budgets.
- Health and Safety issues, global warming being a factor.

The proposal for a Garden Village within spitting distance of Thornbury when there is sufficient development potential within a cohesively planned town.

Words fail me!

Michael.L. Neale