

Notes from Old Sodbury Planning Engagement Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 19.00 via Zoom.

There were 43 people present including the following:

Tetlow King – Jonathon Adams

Livewest – Katie Stamper

BBA Architects – Nichola Vater

Councillors; James Ball, Andy Williams, Steve Spooner, Phil Rumney, Brenda Allen, Marian Gilpin, Chris Hays, Scott Gibson, Becky Romaine, Adrian Rush (also SGC District Councillor) & Linda Rush

Town Clerk – Cate Davidson

Background – This was an engagement meeting arranged by the Town Council to enable residents of Old Sodbury to engage with the developers for planning application P20/21142/F – Erection of 16 dwellings, The Transport Yard, Old Sodbury.

Councillor James Ball (Chairman) welcomed all to the meeting and advised that; this is not a formal Council meeting therefore no formal minutes will be made although notes will be available in due course; due to the number of people present we cannot see all people on screen at once so we may use the Chat function to take questions; the developers will present and then questions will be taken. The team of developers was invited to present.

- Livewest – Katie Stamper from the Development Team. Explained the background to the Housing Association and the intention to build 16,000 new homes over the next 10 years. South Gloucestershire is a heartland for Livewest and they have had a number of developments in the district over the recent years.
- BBA Architects – Nichola Vater. BBA has worked with Livewest for many years. The layout of this application is very similar to that of the consented planning for 9 houses. There will only be one access off the main road whereas the previous scheme has driveways. There are more units but in terms of floor space and number of bedrooms the two schemes are very similar. Shared ownership allows those trapped in the rental market to get on the housing ladder. The village currently has a range of property styles and this application is sympathetic to the surroundings and offers a modern twist using traditional materials.
- Tetlow King – Jonathan Adams. Tetlow King has been involved in this site for 16 years including the consented application for 9 dwellings. The principal for development of the land has been established and SGC has confirmed that the 2004 development is deemed to have been started so could be completed. The footprint for the current application is very similar to the original scheme and both schemes will accommodate circa 50 people with vehicular trips being a similar number. The 16 homes will accommodate mostly local residents. There will be 8 affordable (shared ownership) units and 8 units available for social rent. No children will be living in the flats so the pressure on local amenities will be similar to that of the 9 houses. The proposed scheme is a better mix of housing and will allow a wider range of people to have a home of their own in an area where the average price of a house is above the national average. The location is outside of the greenbelt and AONB.

The Chairman invited questions these started off via the Chat function which was then abandoned due to verbal comments. The following comments were made, *any responses will be shown in italics:*

- Who has access to these homes? *KS – People will have to be on the SGC Housing Register for the social rent units but not for the shared ownership ones.*
- Can people buy out the shared ownership? *KS – This rarely happens but it may be possible; the units should remain as shared ownership.*
- There are 4 people currently on the register who want to live in Old Sodbury, where is the evidence that people moving into the properties already live and attend school in the area? *KS- people generally don't move too far. In other local developments most people have come from the local (and surrounding) area.*
- There is no local transport, no shop other than the garage which doesn't sell bread and the school is nearly full. The gardens are minimal and there is nowhere for kids to play. *JA – there is a mix of units some of which will have children living in them. Both schemes accommodate the same number of residents so this scheme does not put more pressure on local services than the consented scheme.*
- What other social housing provision is in place for Sodbury and Yate? *AR (Cllr) advised that the SGC Policy is that large developments include 30% social housing.*
- A resident has noticed an increase in buses lately. If development is encouraged in the village then it could support a traffic calming scheme which would be a benefit to all residents, this would be a success in itself.
- This development is off of a very dangerous road and there have been many accidents. Would families really want to live so far from amenities? This will be a dense development within a village with a design that won't wear well or preserve the identity of the village. *JA – Traffic concerns are always raised with new developments and the same happened with the consented application. A response from SGC Highways officers is awaited.*
- It is doubtful that a development for 16 units will contain the same number of people as that for the 9 houses and no additional traffic units. There are no overflow parking options and local roads are already at overcapacity for parking. *NV – the proposals meet minimum Highways Standards designs.*
- Speedwatch members know better than anyone the speeds and volume of traffic through the village. Concerns over no overflow parking, no disabled parking spaces, visibility splay doesn't work as it doesn't take into account cars parked on the main road. Any scheme should be made to undertake section 278 works for traffic calming. There is a lack of private amenity space and refuse/emergency vehicles will struggle for access when cars are parked on the road.
- How many Livewest residents ride bikes?
- Badminton Road is a very dangerous road that has many accidents – the safety of the road needs to be addressed before any development can be considered. A crossing should be installed.
- Developers are invited to attend site with Speedwatch members and monitor the traffic which will include 900 vehicles many of which will be speeding.
- The entrance to The Transport Yard is very narrow.
- *JA – Has made notes of all these concerns and will revert back to the Transport Consultant. There are some parking spaces that can be converted to disabled spaces as they are alongside footpaths.*

- Residents that live alongside the development where the 3 bedroom houses are proposed 6 metres away will have windows directly overlooking their own bedrooms and balcony, how would developers feel if that was them? *NV – the building is as far away from the house as possible but will take another look at the plans. NWR has insisted on a 5metre buffer to the boundary between the building and the railway line. Windows are staggered and not directly facing existing windows.* Discussion was had about how accurate the Surveyors drawings were.
- Too many people are being crammed into this development. Why didn't developers engage with residents before submitting an application?
- This development leads to a lack of privacy for existing residents, being overlooked and a lack of light – this is not a problem with the previously consented scheme.
- Developers have had no respect for local people whatsoever, if this development was for local people then you would be listening to their concerns. *KS – Livewest is a not-for-profit organisation it does not want to maximise profits.* Some heated discussion took place in relation to this which was ended by the Chairman.
- The people in the village did not move here to be surrounded by housing, this is very upsetting for a lot of people.
- Lived next to the Transport Yard for 50 years and it has not been used as such for 25 years therefore there has been minimal impact from traffic using it for a very long time. The hedge that is identified as being part of the development in fact belongs to her. Did support the plan for 9 houses but the unit that was 2 semi-detached houses is now 4 flats which look directly into her garden with the north aspect looking directly into the main bedroom. *NV – there will be obscured glazing so they will not be overlooked but will re-look at this.*
- The development is not in keeping with the village and no consideration has been given to how it will look in 10 years time.
- Access to the development does not work, cars will not be able to pull out without having to nose into the traffic. *NV – the access has already been approved as part of the consented scheme.* Regardless of that you have a responsibility to ensure it works properly, there are many technical restraints which need re-considering.
- *KS – The Housing Association is in a position to be able to control how many car users live on the site, people won't be bringing loads of cars and restrictions could be included in the tenancy agreements.* How will this be enforced? *There is a management company in place who can control this* (some discussion took place about whether this would really work). The development team was invited to attend the site and look at how the scheme would really work.
- *JA – the scheme meets SGC policies and has been designed taking into account the previously consented scheme. This is a consultation process and responses will be received and taken into account.*
- The supporting statement submitted by the developer states that the Town Council supports the scheme, this is untrue. *Some discussion was had about this and the Clerk advised that she has made it clear to the Planning Officer that STC has not made any decision in relation to this matter. At a recent meeting attended by the Developers some members did make positive comments in relation to the plans but that cannot be seen as STC support, concerns/negative comments were also made at the meeting.*
- AW (Cllr) – This scheme is not in keeping with the village and is too many people in that location. The road is very dangerous for development to take place off of it. It would be

nice for local families to be able to live in the location they grew up in but as the scheme is AW would object to it.

- The Developers have a job which is an exercise in meeting quotas and this is a windfall site with complete disregard to local people. Concerns that this won't be available for local people but people on the SGC list. There seems to be little interest for people on that list wanting to live in Old Sodbury.
- Another call for a site meeting with Livewest so they can see the real impact the development will have on the village and close by neighbours. *KS – will go back and look at the concerns that have been raised.*
- Assumptions have been made with this application. The current layby near the site is used for parking by the cottages alongside it which have no parking at all, this would be used for overflow parking by the new residents so will take away a facility from existing residents. *NV – Parking and highway safety is a big issue and will be at the top of the list when considering consultation responses.*
- We can all agree that cars are an issue but we need to know how this scheme can benefit the village. The Government has an emphasis on health and well-being, the scheme could support the improvement of walking and cycling facilities. *KS – Affordable housing is a good thing for the village. It increases the population and young families are needed to ensure the village remains viable.*
- Concerns that it is felt villagers are against affordable housing – that isn't the case, it is the size of this development which is the concern.
- The Clerk raised concerns about the fact STC has to make a decision about this next Tuesday. In order to be able to consider the application properly STC needs to see the response from the Highways Department and also the developer's response to the concerns that have been raised. CD asked JA if the developers would agree to an extension of the planning application process to. *JA advised he would take this to a team meeting tomorrow morning and let CD know asap.* The Clerk advised she will also raise this with the Planning Officer. AR (Cllr) informed people that STC does not make the decision but submits comments like the general public. CD reminded people that the Town Council is a statutory consultee and it would be remiss to make a decision without having the full information.
- Why has the consented development for the 9 houses been dropped and superseded by these 16 units? *JA – Livewest has a remit to deliver affordable housing and they are the developer interested in this site. As previously discussed circa 50 people will live in each development.* What is this assumption based upon? Many people live in large houses but not to full capacity so it was felt that this was a flawed assumption. Concerns were also raised about the fact that additional "unknown" family members may be living in the social housing which will exacerbate an already unacceptable situation.
- Can the layby parking bays be protected for use by the residents of the cottages alongside them? It was noted that the layby is one of two places used for speed enforcement in the village, without this availability enforcement would be greatly reduced.
- A cycle path to local amenities is needed, the garage cannot really be classed as a shop when it doesn't even sell bread. There is a lack of footpath for a stretch towards the garage making access unsafe.
- What is Livewest offering the village? *KS – it is up to the planning authority to state what needs to be done in the village.*
- The point was raised again that there is very little demand for affordable housing in Old Sodbury so how will Livewest fill the properties if no-one wants to move there? *KS – people*

*on the housing list are assessed for their suitability to live in an area before they are placed. AR (Cllr) Hawksbury Upton has a similar development which has 9/10 local people living in the properties. Discussion was had about how priority could be given to local people. KS – a tiered system can be introduced to manage this and Livewest would agree to this subject to reasonable time limits.*

- The 9 dwellings would likely be filled by local people, 16 affordable units will bring people from all over the county which would increase vehicular movements.

The Chairman advised attendees it was 20.55 and that many matters have been raised and will be considered by the developers. JA, KS & NV were thanked for attending the meeting and JA advised he would be in touch with the Clerk the next day, all 3 left the meeting.

The Clerk informed those present that STC has received a proposal for 36 dwellings on a site alongside the Transport Yard, Grassroots Planning has asked the Council to engage with them in relation to this matter. Some of those present were not aware of this proposal so the Chairman held the plans up to the screen (also attached to these notes). This matter is on the agenda for the Full Council meeting next week and the Council will decide whether to engage with Grassroots Planning or not, there will be no consideration of the proposal at that meeting.

PR (Cllr) advised that STC has to object to these proposals, we have objections to proposals for 16 units there is no way we can support a development of 36 units.

SG (Cllr) feels the same as PR – we don't need this and he's not happy with the previous application.

AR (Cllr) this is a speculative application, what pre-application advice from SGC has been sought? CD replied that they state advice has been applied for but not whether it was actually received or what was advised.

Resident - reported that this site is within the greenbelt and is very rich with wildlife. This application would be grossly against the Core Strategy.

JB (Cllr) we cannot object to the application for 16 units and then approve this proposal.

Resident - feels that from what he can see this development looks more appropriate for Old Sodbury than the previous one but he shares the same concerns as others.

Resident – the application for 16 units has created a domino effect for this proposal of 36 units, we have to be very careful about setting a precedent for future development. The potential additional 52 homes will transform the village completely.

Resident – there are several local landowners that could look to develop land if it is felt that to join Old Sodbury with Chipping Sodbury was acceptable.

The Clerk advised that this plot has been submitted to SGC in the recent call for sites and read an extract from the submission. The site lies outside of the settlement boundary but no other protective designations apply (Greenbelt, AONB, SSSI etc).

Resident – Has concerns that when people consider Old Sodbury they only think about the bit in the middle, Old Sodbury runs from The Bell (pub) up to and beyond The Crosshands Hotel. The Village has a responsibility to develop and too much focus is on vehicles. Traffic will increase regardless of development and the safety of Badminton Road is a disgrace. Residents are exacerbating the situation by using their own cars but stating no-one else can. A blanket objection to development is irresponsible.

Heated discussion took place about safety along Badminton Road. The Clerk advised that she has written to SGC numerous times over a number of years and that a site visit was recently held with SGC engineers. CD has also recently written to the Police & Crime Commissioner expressing concern about speeding in Old Sodbury. AR (Cllr) suggested all residents write to the SGC Highways Engineer with responsibility and gave out the email address.

It was felt by many of those present that the safety of Badminton Road should be considered before any development takes place. CD advised that Grassroots Planning had stated this was a concern in their email and expressed a willingness to engage in relation to such.

A resident stated that the village is being let down by the local authority and that a coherent plan needs to be put in place to enable local people to have their say about development in the village.

AR (Cllr) informed people that SGC is consulting on the new Local Plan – there will be a requirement for villages to have development where they haven't had to before. Almost certainly Old Sodbury will have an allocation.

Resident – we cannot keep saying no to development. As a village we need to be more responsible and engage with developers rather than have development imposed.

Resident – Yes to development but not with a negative impact on current residents.

At 21.30 the Chairman asked if anyone else had any comments. There were none so everyone was thanked for attending and the meeting was closed. Notes will be available for circulation in due course.