

**Frome Town Council
Frome Town Hall
Christchurch Street West
Frome
BA11 1EB**

Simon Trafford
Team Leader – Development Management
Mendip District Council
Cannards Grave Road
Shepton Mallet
Somerset
BA4 5BT

17 July 2020

Dear Simon

2019/1180/OTS – Saxonvale, Frome – Amended plans received 11.06.20

The amended plans and documents for the above application were considered at the Frome town council planning committee meeting on 16 July 2020. The following response was agreed unanimously by the committee.

Access road

The access road still divides the site into zones as per our original objection, it should be noted that this hasn't changed, however we welcome the addition of a central median strip and the widening of the bends, and support the detailed design being secured by planning condition that will contribute to achieving a low speed vehicle environment and safe and convenient pedestrian routes.

We also support the revised arrangements for access off Vicarage Street to serve 6 car parking spaces becoming access for pedestrians and cyclists only, the agreement to limit vehicular access to the site from the top of Vicarage Street, the relocation of the pedestrian crossing and car parking, and the inclusion of the dedicated bike routes through the site.

Building heights

We welcome the reduction in height from three storeys to two, of the proposed buildings at the location of the current abattoir building together with the allowance for a partial undercroft to the buildings along Saxonvale.

Disposition of Uses (flexible uses) and Travel Plan

We welcome the fact that non-residential uses will be expressed as a minimum amount and the addition of the potential for flexible ground floor uses on Garsdale Avenue. The flexible units will have the most benefit if they include the provision of an independent access to the ground and first floors.

The plans need to clearly state that ground floor and first floor will have separate access and it must be confirmed that no planning permission will be required to switch between uses. The flexible units must be sufficiently conditioned as part of any outline approval to ensure they are brought forward in any reserved matters application.

Whilst we have welcomed the inclusion of the flexible units, there is still inadequate provision of non-residential space. Saxonvale is by far our best opportunity to create more work opportunity in Frome town centre and thus begin to address the problem of commuting out of town (and reduce car use). The current proposals appear to be providing for greater residential occupancy than commercial/non-residential thus adding to the problem of commuting instead of beginning to address it.

The travel plan suggests ways in which commuting could be reduced and is aspirational, but this is still missing this big point that we need to provide more work opportunity in Frome so that people don't need to commute elsewhere. We would want to ensure that the travel plan sets a baseline target of 50% or higher is set for residents for trips to work by car on their own. In addition to communing regularly with the Resilience Manager, all the monitoring reports should be shared with Frome town council so that we can ensure the targets are being met.

A minimum of 1500m² should be added to the non-residential offering and all of this should be available to rent or buy independently of the residential dwellings. Ideally, we would like to see MDC buy at least some of the non-residential space so that it can be let to small start-up type businesses at low cost. We need affordable business space as well as affordable homes.

Bioregional assessment

We welcome the comments from Bioregional and would like to see a condition as part of any outline consent for a commitment to implementing the recommendations of that report, to further strengthen performance against the principles of One Planet Living.

There was some discussion at the meeting about the footbridge to Willow Vale, it was confirmed that this would not be secured as an "access" through the outline application but would be secured by the S106 agreement. We would want to ensure that this is included within the S106 agreement.

The amended plans do not address our previous objection for the provision of 30% affordable housing for the development. The amount of affordable housing provision needs to be confirmed. Until then our previous objection still stands.

Whilst all the amendments have moved a little closer to something more acceptable, given the comments above and until those objections are dealt with, this is not an application that we can support.

Yours Sincerely



Jane Llewellyn
Planning & Development Manager

By email only

Cc.
Luke Cleary - Acorn Property Group
Simon Gait - Acorn Property Group
Mel Clinton - Nash Partnership