

Selwood Garden Community

Summary of feedback from the breakout sessions at the engagement meeting on 23 October 2020

Vision and Principles

- Majority felt this masterplan was full of promise but would not deliver anything that is promised - mistrust of the process
- It is not radical enough for Frome
- The overall size of this development will change the nature of Frome itself.
- It is being built on the 'best' side of Frome and a concern that we can't keep developing onto green spaces in the town - we have a climate and ecological emergency
- There was a feeling that using someone local was just cynical and that they wouldn't have any power in the development ultimately - others said that they were really pleased the architects are involved (NVB)
- Concern over the loss of biodiversity - you can't just replace this
- This is a big development so it must offer that Frome doesn't already provide - adults with learning disabilities/respite/care so that they can stay near their family.
- There is a housing crisis nationally - Frome has to take its turn in providing enough housing
- How will the greener aspect of the plan work alongside their principle of inclusivity
- Some very positive feelings about the design and principles - they were aware of the change in culture around development. Needs design with 'fabric first' - passive housing

Sustainability

- How can we ensure that the plans that LVA make and approved are followed through by the ultimate owners/developers of the land? It was noted at the second session that potentially it will be a condition of sale that the new owners follow the plans developed by LVA but it would be useful to clarify this.
- What opportunities will the public have to make comments on this scheme throughout the planning process?
- Have LVA produced a Sustainability Appraisal or EIA?
- On the solar farm, who will finance it, bring forward its construction and manage it in the long term?
- At both of the sessions, there was a desire expressed that the highest sustainability standards should be followed i.e. Passivhaus or similar as we are in a climate emergency
- A number of participants were concerned that it is green fields rather than brownfield land that is being built upon and that is wrong
- Concern was expressed about the loss of biodiversity especially hedgerows and grasslands and species that are dependent on them. There was a specific question around how LVA had come up with the figure of 13% net gain in biodiversity?
- Some participants would like to see solar on roofs rather than a solar farm
- What does 'EV points on plot' mean? By plot, do LVA means individual dwelling plots or larger development plots?
- There is a concern that decisions around the detail on sustainability may not be made until reserved matters stage
- This scheme should address tomorrow's technology not today's especially as it will be many years before development is implemented
- Where do the housing numbers quoted by LVA come from? Shane Collins indicated that the Government has set targets for the whole district i.e. 1080 dwellings p.a. but where the

houses are built is a matter for the Local Plan. Shane went on to say that the proposals are speculative as SGC is not promoted in the Local Plan but as Mendip doesn't have a 5 year land supply for housing, it is more likely than not that LVA will get consent.

- A view was expressed that this consultation is simply a marketing exercise ticking a green box

Highways and Active Travel

- Additional 4000 plus residents will have a huge impact on Frome's already inadequate road infrastructure.
- Why are LVA seeking to delay publication of their transport modelling until they have to for the planning application?
- Frome's existing cycling infrastructure is non-existent and even the routes for walking are very poor in places.
- Extra congestion is inevitable so drivers will find new routes through inappropriate streets, thus spreading problems.
- Residents unlikely to walk or cycle into town due to hills and distance.
- Train station is attracting new development to Frome but services are inadequate and need to be improved to accommodate more commuting etc.
- Cycle parking, public transport to Frome station and links to Westbury all need improving.
- Barton approach to layout interesting but not ambitious enough. At least some areas should be car free and parking elsewhere kept away from housing.
- Safe pedestrian and cycling links (under pass/bridge) across bypass should be included in the plan.
- Approach to controlling car movements unworkable and ill thought through.
- Doubt whether additional bus services will materialise or be adequate.
- Additional traffic on the bypass may cause problems especially at the Rodden Down junction.
- Little Keyford Lane inadequate to cope with proposals - will need to be widened.
- General feeling that the development is far too big.

Open Spaces and Recreation

- Concern over the large loss of recreational space that is well used by Frome residents. It's a hugely popular spot for cyclists, ramblers, dog walkers, horse riders and deer wandering from Longleat.
- The environmental impact would be significant; it is an area of land prone to flooding and the chosen land is inappropriate.
- The increase in traffic will have a negative impact.
- Wetlands will not lend themselves to dual use if they are also intended to support and nurture diverse wildlife.
- Dry attenuation basins in other areas often result in unusable recreation space and therefore 10% of the open spaces will be water and a further 10% potentially boggy and unusable.
- There is flooding concern – that this area is already prone to flooding and that will only increase when the houses are built.
- Too small ratio of green areas have been planned for the number of houses.
- The River Frome area appears squeezed and under-utilising this natural asset.
- The over design does not appear to represent a post-Covid change in the way people are living and working. For example – people might be interested in seeing more co-working spaces or a business hub and more shared green space.
- Ecological loss could be enormous with a huge impact on specific species; including foraging bats, barn owls amongst others. The proposed bat corridors are not necessarily fit for purpose with light pollution and traffic interference.

- The solar farmland allocation (off-site) takes away further green space and further impact the ecological impact of the site. The proposed site for this is a very popular recreational area for families, dog-walkers, etc.
- Consideration must be made to the preservation of 'best and most versatile agricultural land allocation'. There is some discrepancy over the rating of the proposed land.
- There is a need to building more housing in the UK and Frome should consider taking its fair share of housing. It was argued that this plan is more than the fair share of the Mendip District's target.
- This housing could be better placed in another Mendip town who would provide a sustainable solution.

Heritage & Community

- There is an opportunity here to provide facilities and amenities for children and adults with additional needs and disabilities, with long term and respite care.
- This community will just be bolted on, how will that work? It will either be self-sustaining or a satellite community that doesn't have anything people can use so they will drive into town and commute out of town.
- The promoters have no responsibility, they are just getting the profit from the land, but have no responsibility after that when it is sold off to developers.
- Is there a need for all this housing?
- Do not feel that the development fits in with the historical design of Frome and its architecture, we are not a town of 4 storey houses with car parks.
- The environment of the area to be developed will be destroyed, it is a vital part of the historical Selwood Forest. The proposals do not make any compensation for the historical landscape that will be lost.
- Trees are important wildlife habitats and there will be the loss of ancient hedgerows and wildlife corridors will be destroyed.

Additional comments received by Email

- Objection to the height of the 4 storey buildings along Marston Road (by the Masons Arms) and the impact this will have on the existing properties.
- 40 further emails from residents whose objections are reflected in the feedback above