**16/02874/FUL Persimmon Homes SW – Land adjoining Holbear Forton Road Chard Somerset**

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council has objected to previous versions of this application and continues to do so.

**HEALTH PROVISION**

Our foremost concern at this time is Health Provision. This is not normally deemed a planning issue but the Parish Council feels it has some responsibility for ensuring that its current and future residents are able to have a reasonable quality of life, supported by adequate health facilities. (Hopefully, Somerset County Council shares this objective).

This is patently not the case at the current time with GP capacity in Chard running at 13,500 people but actually looking after 20,906. This scheme potentially adds 522 which needs to be added to numbers accruing from other planning developments currently underway, eg Snowdon Grange, or proposed, eg Crewkerne Road, Mount Hindrance, in the health catchment area.

It is all very well for an NHS team based in Torbay to calculate a section 106 contribution while the York-based developer argues that this should have been covered by the District Plan. Meanwhile NHS patients in South Somerset are left to literally suffer. Until such time as there are definite plans in place to provide better health coverage for this Parish and Chard’s residents all decisions on major housing schemes submitted to Planning in this area should be deferred.

**EDUCATION**

Primary and Secondary schools in the area are already at or over capacity. There was supposed to be a new Primary School as part of the local plan. This has yet to materialise.

**FLOODING**

Flood events in 2021 caused major damage to homes within this parish. The flooding largely resulted from poor design of attenuation measures associated with building development.

On 17th November 2021 the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) commented that the ‘volume of surface water may overwhelm the current design’ at this site.

In March 2022 a technical note on behalf of Persimmon listed potentialmitigation measures and confirmed ‘that the discharge of flows towards Forton Road is expected to be fully mitigated and the historic risk removed.’

The LLFA has subsequently indicated that further modelling of flow paths is required and that exact details of proposed mitigation measures should be provided before approval.

The Parish Council agrees with the LLFA and requests that any modelling of flooding impact is subject to intense independent scrutiny. It would further question what measures will be taken to ensure that any agreed attenuation features are maintained after the developers have left site.

**TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC**

The applicant claims little impact and points out that the 1 mile to Chard town centre is easily walked or cycled to from the site. They appear to say that Chard gets congested in the morning and afternoon peak periods anyway and the additional traffic from the site will not change the situation. They further imply that Millfield Industrial Estate will be a key destination for walkers and cyclists of working age.

It appears that SCC Highways Department are satisfied with this.

The reality here is that retirees and others shopping in Chard will not be trudging along the busy Forton Road loaded with shopping bags but will instead take the car, adding to congestion and pollution.

Another reality is that unless new firms are attracted to Chard to help replace recent job losses at Oscar Meyer and Brecknell Willis the majority of employees living on this site will be commuting to Taunton or Yeovil. Some may even be trying to use Forton Road, which is very narrow in places, as a ‘rat run’ to the A30 in order to avoid the congestion at Convent Junction in Chard.

The Parish Council is not satisfied that the impacts of increased traffic to and from this site have been properly reviewed and suggests that any decision is deferred until they have been.

**SITE LAYOUT**

Avon and Somerset Police have some concerns on site layout around lighting, sightlines and parking matters, particularly safety issues around residents parking on the link road. The Parish Council agrees and believes this is another reason for refusal or deferral.

There are also inconsistencies between the supplied artist’s impressions covering the link road and the latest plans. These require clarification and resubmission as some of the views depicted represent a major threat to pedestrian safety.

**OTHER**

In the Parish Council’s previous response (5th November 2021) it requested that SSDC and the applicant enter into meaningful consultation with local residents and this council.

This has not happened and is reflected in a highly flawed re-submission by the applicant where it is obvious that the main objective is to fit the maximum number of properties onto a piece of land with the minimum of effort and cost.

Previously, it has been said that the principle of development at this site is not in question as it was included in the District Plan. The developer is now attempting to supplement this with the ‘tilted balance’ argument.

The Parish Council believes that the principle of development at this site **is** now under question because the SSDC District Plan is no longer fit for purpose and requires urgent review. It has not provided or planned to provide Chard or Tatworth and Forton with appropriate Highways, Health and Education or Community Infrastructure (a District Centre has completely vanished from the plans). In addition, the loss of jobs within the Chard area with no obvious plan to replace them means that, locally, housing demand is in question (as evidenced by price reductions at the Tilia Snowdon Grange site).

**Tatworth & Forton Parish Council strongly objects to this proposal and recommends that SCC refuses it.**