



CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ms J. Desmond

Sent via email

ask for: Tracey Crews
ddi number: 01242 264168
email: tracey.crews@cheltenham.gov.uk
our ref:
your ref:
date: 6 July 2015

Dear Ms Desmond

Re: 14/00838/FUL

Further to contact with my colleague Philip Stephenson in regards the submission of comments in response to revised plans for application 14/00838/FUL, please find below a response on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. I apologise for the delay in getting these comments to you and thank-you for understanding our recent capacity constraints. The comments provided have been reviewed and endorsed by the Leader of Cheltenham Borough Council.

Whilst the Borough Council does not object to the principle of development it does object to development being brought forward in a piecemeal way, failing to adequately demonstrate its contribution to comprehensive master planning of the strategic allocation proposed by the submission JCS. This requirement for comprehensive planning and development of the strategic allocation was a key reason for Cheltenham Borough Council's refusal of outline permission for 650 dwellings (13/01605/OUT) on the 31st of July 2014.

Having reviewed the revised scheme the Borough Council would wish to add to the comments submitted in our previous correspondence to you dated 1st December 2014. I would be grateful if you could bring both this letter and our previous letter to the attention of the applicants and the Planning Committee of Tewkesbury Borough Council and take into account in your consideration of the scheme.

Master planning

Whilst there have been amendments to the scheme, including a reduction in the land take to the sensitive south of the site, the proposals are far from acceptable and do not fit well with the masterplan suggested at earlier stages of our consideration of this area. The result of the masterplan presented is that the built form continues too far towards the AONB. There appears to be no cohesion between the layout subject to application 14/00838/FUL and that proposed in the appealed proposal within CBC's boundary, application 13/01605/OUT.

There is a slight reduction in numbers but the reduction in land-take referred to above and the slight softening of the southern edge has probably pushed up densities further to the north. There are certainly some worryingly dense terrace and courtyard layouts in the northern section of the plan.

Mike Redman - Director

Environmental and Regulatory Services

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL • P.O. BOX 12 • MUNICIPAL OFFICES • PROMENADE • CHELTENHAM • GLOS GL50 1PP
TELEPHONE 01242 264160 • FACSIMILE 01242 227323 • DX 7406 CHELTENHAM 1
• www.cheltenham.gov.uk e-mail: builtenvironment@cheltenham.gov.uk

Internal landscape is weak, and does not match the more sensitive approach being proposed in the appealed scheme.

The NPPF has established a strong basis for sustainable development which involves

"...seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including...

- achieving net gains for nature;
- Replacing poor design with better design;
- Improving the conditions in which people live...;
- Widening the choice of high quality homes."

The NPPF states that the Government attaches "great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."

Elsewhere, NPPF requires developments to function well, create a sense of place, respond to local character, be safe and be visually attractive.

In terms of designing and building places to live these statements mean that the planning system should be creating places which are pleasant to live in and which make a positive contribution to the quality of the local built and natural environment.

Looking at the scheme, parts of the site (particularly the less dense south) will meet some of these objectives (the buildings may be pleasant to live in and have a pleasant outlook), but not all of them. However the northern part of the site will not deliver a "better place for people to live" and has some serious shortcomings. In its worst parts, the site will function badly.

As a whole, the layout does not suggest a strong sense of place which is grounded in a response to local character. The council's Townscape Manager has not analysed the built form, but no matter how visually attractive the built form might yet prove to be, the layout suggests that the scheme will struggle to deliver a satisfactory place to live across the piece and fails to respond to the AONB setting.

Landscape: setting of the AONB

The proposal site abuts the boundary of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The duty of regard extends outside the boundary of the designated area to include development or activities which might affect its setting.

The Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the proposed development shows the principal areas of landscape to be around the boundary of the site (Linear Park, Attenuation Lagoon, Farm Lane Woodland), with one central public open space (Central Green). No other public green spaces are proposed within the interior of the site. The main landscape buffer between the southern edge of the development and the boundary with the AONB would be the Farm Lane Woodland. This is wider in the revised scheme than that originally submitted

Mike Redman - Director

Environmental and Regulatory Services

CHELTHENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL • P.O. BOX 12 • MUNICIPAL OFFICES • PROMENADE • CHELTENHAM • GLOS GL50 1PP
TELEPHONE 01242 264328 • FACSIMILE 01242 227323 • DX 7406 CHELTENHAM 1
• www.cheltenham.gov.uk e-mail: builtenvironment@cheltenham.gov.uk