

Cllr Garth Barnes  
Chair  
Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Committee  
Municipal Offices  
Promenade  
Cheltenham  
GL50 9SA

31 July 2014

Dear Mr Barnes

**Outline Planning Application for up to 650 dwellings, other uses including A1 retail, surgery, pharmacy, primary school of up to 1.72ha land area, principal access and open space - 13/01605/OUT**

The Chamber of Commerce has studied the detail of the above outline planning application. However we do still have the same concerns over large scale development in Leckhampton affecting the southern access to the town as stated in our JCS letter of 9 February 2012. The allocation of over 650 houses potentially increasing to over 1,100 in the Leckhampton area will without doubt worsen the existing traffic congestion along the A46. Whilst the addition of two extra sets of prioritised traffic lights and T junction to provide access for the new development will by the applicant's own admission create longer and slower traffic queues, putting junctions beyond capacity.

- we would like to ask that a detailed master plan is produced prior to approval whilst more detailed traffic modelling is carried out together with some analysis on opportunities for job creation
- we note the transport assessment and highway mitigation work to date highlights future problems on junction capacity across the area. By 2023 it is anticipated that the number of junctions which will be 'over capacity' will increase from 150 to 1500, together with travel times which are increased by 40% thereby creating even longer and slower traffic queues. This all impacts on local business and our ability to attract new business to the town

Contd/...

- *WORKING FOR BUSINESS*
- *PROMOTING CHELTENHAM*
- *CREATING NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES*
- *PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT*

*President*

*Secretary*

Contd/2...

It is therefore understandable why large scale development to the south of Cheltenham is of real concern to the business community and could adversely affect both existing businesses and future relocations to the town. Good maintenance of access to the town from the south is vital for a successful high level strategy but unfortunately the current level of JCS traffic modelling in the assessment of development of Leckhampton has some perceived gaps. Keeping a free flow of traffic on the A46 to the south of the town, providing the motorway link from junction 11A, is we believe vital to the wellbeing of commerce. Worryingly the traffic and transport analysis work documented in the transport assessment to date shows that the highways network to the south of the town is finely balanced with junctions likely to be at full capacity in the near term without this additional development.

To restate one of our principle concerns of our February 2012 letter, creating housing without the necessary employment opportunities, will make Cheltenham even more of a commuter town, serving the rest of the region and beyond. Cheltenham is an extremely attractive town and it is no surprise that people want to live here. It is therefore important that there is an appropriate level of employment which supports both existing and new residents. Unnecessary congestion on a major road network is certainly not conducive in assisting this objective.

We note the Leckhampton green areas are highly valued by both residents and visitors alike and widely recognised as a sensitive area when considering development, providing not least access to Leckhampton Hill. In addition we would question whether employment opportunities have to date been explored around both eco-tourism and agricultural research with our local Universities.

Our request is that this application at least be deferred until more detailed traffic modelling has been completed under the JCS, enabling the Planning Committee to take a more informed view upon the impacts raised both in this letter and by other concerned parties.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ratcliffe  
CE Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce