

**Notes on Meeting with Taylor Wimpey 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 re potential planning application at Brookfields Nursery site**

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (SG) – Catherine Faulkner (CF), Mike Marshall (MM), Jim Claydon (JC), Dave Duke (DD)

Taylor Wimpey (TW) – Chris Dolling (Senior Strategic Land Projects Manager)  
Vectos (Traffic experts) – Jonathan Lloyd (Director) and Jack Carke-Williams (Principal Transport Planner)

Meeting Place (MP) PR consultants – Tom Lewis (Senior Account Executive)

CF explained that the Parish Council (PC) had requested the SG to meet with TW on its behalf due to the SG members having in-depth knowledge of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was explained that the SG would feed the key aspects of the meeting to the PC.

**Compliance with Local Plan**

MM first asked how did TW's plan comply with the Local Plan and NP (which they had participated in).

TW advised that they have an option on the site and submitted it at the Call for Sites and they know that this site is not within the current Local Plan. TW believe that whilst Somerset Council (SC) says they have a 5 year supply of Housing Land, SC are relying on sites that cannot/will not be developed and TW will contest it. (TW do not have any of these sites but they do have a large area of land at Orchard Portman). TW also stated that the Local Plan for Taunton Deane is out of date and can be challenged. SC does not expect to have a new Local Plan in place until 2028.

Due to these reasons, TW are moving forward with the scheme. TW believe the site is sustainable ie connections and that the scheme has merit to be allocated in a local plan. They stated that the scheme should be brought forward as per the NPPF.

JC advised that the A358 means we can't see any development until the bypass is built. Nearly all land from the motorway roundabout as far a Tarmac is optioned.

Vectos replied that the NPPF talks about projects being plan lead and is in favour of sustainable development; the test is whether there is unacceptable safety not the amount of traffic. They said that at a recent appeal the inspector said that they were not interested in modelling etc but more in how connected to local facilities the project was ie foot/cycle or public transport; if a site is accessible/sustainable this is now becoming a principle for decisions. They added that National Highways are looking at their policies due to emerging changes.

TW denied that they were using their Ruishton development proposal to test the Local Plan and housing land supply as a precursor to develop their land holding at Orchard Portman.

### The site

JC explained that the PC would oppose the application as the site is outside the village envelope and would add extra traffic to the A358. The site adds to coalescence with Taunton. There is also the issue of traffic from 160 houses on Ruishton Land which does not have capacity. In addition, the development is on flood zones 2 and 3.

TW said that the access point to the site will be in the same position. A footpath will run alongside the hedge (other side to the road). The existing hedge will be retained.

TW said they do not have the predicted demographic of the residents of the new site.

TW advised that the revised plan following their surveys, investigations and reports had reduced the dwelling number down from 160 to 150. This was primarily due to the wetlands and commercial mix investigations. The dwellings will be a max of 2.5 storeys high to include 1 and 2 bed apartments, 1-4 bed houses and around 6 bungalows adjacent to Orchard Rise. 25% will be affordable housing.

### Flooding

The members of the SG explained the current impact of flooding within the Parish and traffic difficulties on Ruishton Lane and the A358.

TW said that they do not believe the water will impact on current flooding due to the basin within their design. The basin will hold the water and release it slowly through the hydro break. It will be the responsibility of the management company for the site to maintain the wetland. He added that the attenuation pond is not in the flood plain but the wetland is. He also said that the wetland aspect of the plan is a pilot scheme for TW.

### Ruishton Lane

JC explained that Ruishton Lane is a rat run and their plan does not reduce the traffic on it.

Vectos advised that they will put in a virtual footpath along part of Ruishton Lane. They will also widen the road by a foot or so at the entrance to the private road on Ruishton Lane (Bennett's Farm). TW said that the County Highways maps show this as not belonging to the residents but to Highways Authority.

Vectus informed the SG that the new site will only develop 70 trips during peak hours (8am-9am and 5pm-6pm) (35 trips each way). This is based on a trip rate of 0.5. They believe these trips will be:

- One third school traffic i.e. to include all Infants, Primary, Secondary and Higher Education.
- One third will be commuting (work)
- One third will be leisure

A key argument of Vectus is that people will have choice ie car, walk or cycle, from the site.

Vectus said that they do not believe that the site will add to the existing congestion problems.

Vectus maintain that the proposed virtual footpath will positively encourage people and children to walk to the school. They predict only 5 school trips to Ruishton during peak time.

MM pointed out that the ongoing problem with over hanging vegetation which would impact on the virtual path. Vectus advised that they would leave it to Highways to address this.

### Responses to consultation

MP advised that the responses to the pre-consultation will form part of the planning application and only be published then.

TW said they will update their website as soon as the planning application has been accepted by SC.

### Corridor study

JC explained that there was a request for a corridor study along the A358 in the NP. The aim is to make the A358 a nicer place to live with better facilities and access to them.

### Next steps

TW said they expect to put in outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings in August 2023.

Once the Officer decision has been made on the application, assuming it is turned down, TW will take a view on the merits and possibilities of the scheme as to whether it warrants an appeal.

Section 106 and CIL

TW advised there will be a section 106 contribution to Education (school). The CIL for the site does not cover Education.

TW asked for the project priority list from the NP to be emailed to him.