

**Information extracted from Planning, Highways and Transport Committee meeting of 31 October 2017 relating to the Application by Persimmon Homes to build house along Canal Way.**

4 members of the public attended the meeting, all of whom spoke regarding the application for outline planning permission for land south of Canal Way  
The key points included:

**Speaker 1:**

At the Area West meeting there was discussion about the proposed number of houses. The new documents submitted by Persimmon show virtually no change and does not address the key issues.

- The Briefing Note says there will be no significant harm to the environment whereas the speaker feels there will be significant harm to the environment and wildlife including dormice.
- The Briefing Note also says the area has lowest probability of flooding, this therefore suggests there must be some probability of flooding occurring.
- The single point of access to the development. The medical centre is located off the proposed access route and their car park is usually full. The same access road would be used for the proposed school and this gives the speaker concerns especially regarding safety
- The application says it wants people to use buses, but the bus service has now further been depleted as Nippy Bus have ceased trading.

**Speaker 2:**

The points raised by the speaker included:

- The original application was for 460 homes which the highway authorities rejected;
- One access road will be chaos with so many properties having to use the same exit/entrance route.
- The outline planning application has now been reduced to 400 homes with the addition of a zebra crossing, which the Highways Authority have accepted although said is not ideal;
- The recent traffic survey said 400 extra homes would double the amount of traffic;
- The existing housing developments on both sides of Canal Way have narrow roads which causes difficulty when cars are parked on the roadside and lorries are trying to get through – that is with 5 entrance /exit roads.
- Flooding: on the original plan a holding pool was proposed on the revised application it is now shown as children's play area this is likely to increase the potential for flooding and result in an increase in house insurance premiums

**Speaker 3:**

Speaker 3 raised a number of points referring in particular to the impact on the visual amenity of the development proposed in the application. Points included:

- Impact and loss of visual amenity.
- Not in keeping with landscape;

- Landscape study classified the valley area as being of low visual sensitivity which would support a high density build but this does not take into account recreational use of Bridal Path nor the impact upon recent residential developments. Looking left along bridle path towards Mitchell Hill and Herne Hill one would conclude that the proposed development will be of at least medium impact. Every field on left side of bridle path has a significant incline. Herne Hill is over 100 metres high. Why build a high-density development where it will have a medium visual impact?
- The bridle path can be safely used by people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters as well as toddlers and people with pushchairs which is in addition to people riding horses. The proposed emergency access would cross bridle path thus changing a safe area to an unsafe area.

**Speaker 4:**

This speaker said she agreed with the previous speaker about the visual impact of the proposed development and raised further points which included:

- The proposed development will have a negative impact on residents.
- The visual impact will affect the lower level and footpaths rising from Herne Hill.
- Concerns that the flat area known as “back fields” will not be available for recreational use leaving only the hills;
- Traffic volume. if all the current applications which have been approved are built there will be an increase of 677 vehicles - based on the approved figure of 1.3 vehicles per house;
- With the existing one-way system the east and west approaches to the town will be affected.
- The proposals will cause the severance of existing paths which will reduce safety for the disabled, etc.
- Cannot control the disruption when accidents occur on the A303;
- A bridge over the road or a tunnel do not appear to be viable options.
- The natural land drainage will be reduced resulting in an increase in flooding problems.
- Properties will be deemed at increased risk of flooding and therefore insurance premiums will increase.
- The size of the development
- The length of construction period - do you want construction site to go on for 10 years?

**P133 Planning Applications and Listed Building Consents**

The Committee considered applications as detailed below:

**a) 16/05500/OUT – Land South West of Canal Way, Ilminster, Somerset**

Outline application for residential development for up to 400 dwellings with associated access.

Consideration was given to the additional information that has been received regarding the planning application.

Issues raised during consideration of the agenda item included:

- The reasons why the Town Council had previously recommended that the planning application be refused

- That the Canal Way area is the preferred direction of growth for the town in the Local Plan
- That the application is for “up to 400” homes
- The target in the Local Plan for the number of new homes to be built in Ilminster
- That the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment suggests Ilminster has land available for 260 dwellings in addition to the current target in the Local Plan
- That Ilminster is an example of where the target growth has been or is likely to be exceeded
- The height of some of the proposed dwellings
- The visual impact of the proposed development
- The density of the proposed development
- The type of dwellings that Ilminster requires compared to that which is mentioned in the application documents
- The expected increase in the 65+ years living in the town
- Highways issues
- Potential for increased flooding risk
- The volume of traffic using one access road
- The traffic modelling used does not include the additional traffic that will be generated if the development of the site goes ahead
- Emergency vehicles need to use routes with minimal obstructions
- The proposed emergency access was not considered suitable to be a second access to the proposed development, therefore how can it be suitable for emergency access?
- Employment opportunities in Ilminster are limited so people will be living in Ilminster but working elsewhere
- Public transport in Ilminster is limited, especially since Nippy Bus ceased trading
- Health service needs of residents of the new development.
- The possibility of postponing a decision on the application whilst the infrastructure issues such as flooding, education and health are sorted
- Whether or not the existing schools had capacity for increased pupil numbers
- The likelihood of a new school being built in Ilminster
- The process by which Somerset County Council agreed to sell the land
- Potential conflicts interest for Somerset County Council as the current landowner but also as consultees on planning applications
- Whether it would be possible to request independent reports on matters such as impact on highways where Somerset County Council may have a conflict of interest

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Town Council’s recommendation that the application is refused is unchanged
- (ii) That South Somerset District Council is informed that the Town Council has considered the additional information and in particular still has concerns about:
  - The density of development including the over development of the site The overall impact of the proposed development and the height of some of the buildings on the visual amenity – in particular how this will affect recreational users of the adjacent bridleway

- The additional traffic volume that will be generated by the development
- The potential of the development increasing the flood risk on other areas and properties
- That this application needs to be considered in a manner that is consistent with previous similar applications