**BRA Bulletin 15th November 2017**

**Proposal for 700 houses around Grove Farm**

Dear Member

We are trying to keep you informed on this important topic, so here is yet another bulletin! It is attached as a WORD file in case you prefer a hard copy.

There are 2 related activities regarding this land. It is helpful to keep clear the distinction between them.

**Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)** This is the proposal, which has been created by the 4 councils (Bristol City, Bath and North-East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset (NSC)) known as “West of England”. The JSP allocates housing across the area up to 2036. Unfortunately, Backwell is one of only 4 villages in the NSC area allocated a “new community” on its doorstep, with a proposal for 700 houses and building starting in 2028. The land is around Grove Farm to the west of Backwell. An almost identical long-term proposal was put forward in 1998, which the village objected to in great numbers (over 500 objectors on one occasion and 1600 signing a petition on another). The proposal was dropped after a long fight. BRA members have been kept in the picture over the last couple of years of another likely attempt to allocate this land for housing.

The latest version of the JSP was approved by NSC last evening and will be explained by NSC staff at the meeting in the Backwell Parish Hall on Thursday Nov 30th from 4pm to 8pm., and also in the Tithe Barn, Nailsea on Thurs Dec 7th from 2pm to 6.30pm (Nailsea has an allocation of 2,600 homes, and the infrastructure proposals affect both locations).

The consultation process for comments on the JSP starts on Nov 22nd and ends on Jan 10th 2018. **Comments from residents will be crucial**, as the JSP will be the backcloth for the future of Backwell till 2036, along with the associated Transport Strategy. We suggest that residents wait until the Nov 30th consultation event with NSC before submitting comments. BRA will be providing a list of key points on its website which residents may like to consider in their responses.

**Taylor Wimpey Proposal** Taylor Wimpey hosted the session in the Parish Hall on Nov 9th, where large posters were displayed (which can be seen on the BRA website <http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Taylor-Wimpey-Grove-Farm-Proposal.pdf> ) and further information on their proposal for 700 houses on the land. They have indicated that they would start building houses in 2022. The BRA committee considers the proposal to be premature, in that the JSP has yet to be confirmed, and the timing is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan (running up to 2026) which has no building on this land. The timing is also well out of step with the draft JSP. However, TW own or have options on the land, and the proposal gives an idea of what the development could look like. It has also had the effect of alerting the village generally to what could happen and sparked much conversation and exchanges on social media. Most of these have expressed huge concern. TW has invited comments, with a request for this to be done by Friday 18th Nov, although TW suggested that comments after this date will be taken into account.

This can be done by email to: [andrew.smith@conversationpr.co.uk](mailto:andrew.smith@conversationpr.co.uk), or via the website [www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/grove-farm](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/grove-farm)

**Key concerns regarding the TW proposal**

Over 350 residents called in to the event on 9th Nov, despite a patchy delivery of the TW leaflets. The following key concerns were raised by those attending

1. Timing – the start date being 6 years ahead of the JSP. TW's strategy is phased housing led, with infrastructure to follow.
2. Access to the site. Comments from TW staff were not consistent. The main access would be from a new roundabout on the A370 just outside the west end of Backwell. There was one suggestion that another access could be near the Scout Hut, but residents suggested this was not a good idea, given the current traffic in Rodney Road! A Moor Lane access would be for emergency vehicles only. It was not very clear.
3. Problems were raised with the location of the new school at the far western edge of the village, and the implications of this in relation to the existing schools have not been thought through.
4. Many roads in Backwell are very busy now, and these would get busier, even with the new infrastructure planned, which was only given in vague terms, and no definite funding in place.
5. It appears that TW has not allocated any of the site for the creation of employment opportunities.
6. There is a general demand for affordable housing. TW’s idea of "affordable" is not affordable to most of those seeking to acquire their first home".

**BRA position** The BRA committee presented its case against the JSP in December 2016, which can be viewed on the BRA website. Our main point was that land at Ashton Vale, by the new link road, would be far more suitable for a large development. This area has excellent transport links already in place, with easy access to Bristol employment sites. In contrast, most Grove Farm residents would be faced with a lengthy, costly and unnecessary commute, given the lack of any major local employment sites. It seems very “ungreen” to build houses in fields away from where the work is. This view has been echoed by almost everyone who attended the TW afternoon, by our District Councillor, the CPRE, and even by TW themselves, who would much prefer to develop the site at Ashton Vale.

**Backwell Resistance** An ad hoc group of concerned people, using social media, has called a meeting in the Parish Hall on Thurs Nov 23rd at 7pm. The chairman of the Parish Council and BRA committee members will be present also. Given that we all have the same goal of the interests of our community, it is good that we communicate with each other, prior to what will be an important few months for the village.

**Formal Planning Application from Taylor Wimpey** Their proposal may be converted into a planning application to NSC at any time in the near future. If it does, this will require as many residents as possible to make their comments, and we will provide advice on the key points to make.

**BRA Website** We encourage you to use this resource. We post all our bulletins on there, and have brought together key pages from the JSP, from TW, and our previous letter of comment on the JSP dated 5th Dec 2016 which can be found <http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Joint-Spatial-Plan-BRA-Letter-of-Comment-December-2016.docx> . This letter remains our stance – virtually nothing has changed in the last year.

**Next Steps**

1. Comment on the TW proposals, ideally by Friday Nov 18th
2. Attend the Resistance meeting on Thursday Nov 23rdfrom 7pm
3. Certainly attend the NSC meeting on Thursday Nov 30th 4pm to 8pm
4. Attend the meeting at the Tithe Barn, Nailsea on Dec 7th,2pm to 6.30pm, which might have further information on infrastructure changes
5. You can make your views known to BRA, or the BPC via [clerk@backwell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@backwell-pc.gov.uk) or https://facebook.com/BackwellPC/
6. Be prepared to comment on the JSP before Jan 10th, once the proposals have been fully considered.
7. Keep an eye on the BRA website.

Best wishes

From your BRA Committee 15th November 2017

**Visit our website on** [**www.backwellresidents.org.uk**](http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk/)

**Email us at backwellresidents@btinternet.com**