

EAST THAME RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ETRA)

NEWSLETTER- August 2021

Residents should have received a notification from Thame Town Council of a **review of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan, entitled TNP2**, the consultation period for which begins on 2nd August. For those on our email list, copies were sent out as many members complained of non-receipt. Given the importance of communication in what will be a fast-moving period, **we urge residents not on our email list to give permission to communicate by sending that permission to eastthameresidents@gmail.com** .

Consultation events notified by Thame Town Council are as follows:

Tuesday 17th August 9am-2pm at Thame Market

Thursday 19th August 1pm-9pm at Thame Town Hall

The full suite of documents giving details of the proposals can be found on the Thame Town Council website

ETRA asks residents to respond to the proposals as quickly and as fully as possible because it feels that **the proposals and the methodology to arrive at them have a disproportionately negative effect on East Thame** and that residents' amenity values have been unnecessarily ignored.

KEY POINT: East Thame targeted for development (Commentary as follows on the TNP2 process including in respect of its recommendations for East Thame)

1. The proposals have been put together by planning consultants who have ostensibly used only planning criteria for judgement. As such, those **judgements lack empathy** including for the amenity needs of residents. The success of the original Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP1) was built on the involvement of residents in the creation of the plan not just the consultation. There was a shared appreciation of the need for minimising impact. Where necessary, negative impact was shared around the town. Unfortunately, this cannot be said for this current process which is mechanistic and unnecessarily so.
2. Documents have been published and are on the Thame Town Council website. The published minutes of the council do not indicate any formal approval.
3. **The document that deals with the character of Thame has a section on East Thame.** Unfortunately, the associated map puts all the area from Fanshawe Road down to Pickenfield in Lea Park!! It also notes that the Lord Williams's Lower School playing fields are important to the community- seemingly unaware that they are closed to the public. As you may be aware a **public park was proposed for this area in TNP1** which, along with the eastern section of Lea Park, is deficient in public space. **It is no longer proposed.** As part justification, a wide-angle view of green space at Seven Acres is shown for enhancement not understanding the occupation of surrounding bungalows by older people. **Sloppy!**

4. On the map showing preferred site locations, the single activity delineated in East Thame is employment land. **There is no mention of the currently approved application on the DAF site for 129 homes, a 67-bed Care Home and offices. Nor is there any mention of the current application for a Health Centre, 75-bedroom Care Home, up to 51 Assisted Living Units, plus up to 110 Pupil Day Nursery between Towersey and Kingsey Roads. Virtually the whole eastern side of the bypass could be a construction site augmented by the development of the DAF site.** Omission of this data may be legal but it is also less than brave. The amenity values of those residents affected by the gross nature of these developments will be substantially diminished. There is no comparison in any other part of Thame for this scale of development. It is iniquitous and against the principles that guided TNP1.
5. In the SODC Local Plan **339 additional houses are demanded of Thame.** In theory, the following should be the net figure allocated to the preferred site locations, subject to a yet to be published needs assessment:

New homes to plan for	339
Less: DAF	129
TCLT	<u>31</u> (Assuming permission)
Net	<u>179</u> or 210 if the TCLT site is not approved.

Residents should satisfy themselves as to whether the preferred sites are fit to accommodate the new volume specified with a reasonable number allocated to. each.

TCLT=Thame Community Land Trust homes will only be allocated to Thame residents. In contrast, and in respect of all other developments, SODC makes only limited provision, under social housing, for Thame residents. The needs of Thame residents should be prioritised.
6. **Employment land options** are held by Stofords. The latter was responsible for the erection of the (previous) illegal and large sign advertising the availability of development land. There had been no approval of development land. The area under the recommendations amounts to 4.22 hectares which is higher than the demanded 3.5 hectares-the latter itself not being subject to the justification of a needs analysis. There are no reasons, except mechanistic planning ones, why the employment land cannot be allocated behind the current Groves & Windles buildings (as was previously proposed) or on other land to the south approaching the Chinnor Road and not opposite residential areas. The excuse that this is not possible is undermined by the proposal to develop a small patch of land next to Cotmore Wells which is itself well back from Howland Road. Further the impact of the 5-hectare commercial estate that has received planning approval just next to Thame, in Great Haseley parish, is not mentioned or measured in terms of addressing need.

Summary:

This newsletter has concentrated on the impact on **East Thame** which, in the committee's opinion, **is bearing an unfair portion of the development burden.** It is also our view that the process of developing TNP2 is flawed by virtue of its top- down nature and lack of process transparency. These notes are for your guidance only. Please go to the consultation days if you can but do put your views forward. Please make your mind up regarding fairness and be heard!

The ETRA committee

