

Media release: 9 December 2016

WELL-CONNECTED 'VALE' NEW VILLAGES SHOULD REPLACE COUNCIL'S UNSUSTAINABLE BANWELL PLANS

- *PROPOSED 5,400 BANWELL HOMES WILL CLOG-UP ROADS WITH AN EXTRA 17.8 MILLION COMMUTER MILES PER YEAR*
- *FOUR COUNCILS' OWN ASSESSMENT SAYS BANWELL DEVELOPMENT WOULD LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ON A371 & A38*
- *RELYING ON BANWELL WILL UNDERMINE JOINT SPATIAL PLAN, LEAVING RURAL TOWNS & VILLAGES VULNERABLE TO 'UNWANTED' PLANNING APPLICATIONS*
- *VITAL EVERYONE HAS THEIR SAY BEFORE 19 DECEMBER DEADLINE*

North Somerset Council's plans to locate 5,400 new homes around the villages of Banwell and Churchill will clog-up already congested roads, with new residents adding an estimated 17.8 million miles every year commuting to Weston-super-Mare and Bristol by car.

The extra mileage would lead to an estimated 3,500 additional tonnes of CO2 emitted per year.

An official report from the four Councils involved in the Joint Spatial Plan (*West of England Joint Spatial Plan Emerging Spatial Strategy: Transport Topic Paper November 2016*) states that the new development proposed for the Banwell area will lead to significant congestion problems on the A371 into Weston-super-Mare and the A38 all the way into Bristol, as well as creating rat running on more local roads as traffic seeks to avoid congestion on these main roads.

And experts believe there is also doubt about whether the much-talked about by-pass for Banwell - and M5 junction with the A371 – will ever happen.

“The incentive being offered is the promise of the long-talked about by-pass to relieve pressure on the villages of Banwell and Churchill, as well as a new M5 junction with the A371. The Joint Spatial Plan states that the by-pass and motorway junction would need to be built before the housing. However, there are major technical, planning and cost issues which are likely to prevent this road from being built within the next 15-20 years,” said PBA’s Transport Director, Neil Thorne.

But – as well as the direct impact on Banwell and Churchill - the proposals will also have major consequences for other North Somerset rural towns and villages, as it will leave them unable to defend themselves against further ‘unwanted’ planning applications (as planning expert Savills’ Nick Matthews explains below).

However, the traffic chaos and lack of protection for rural towns and villages could be simply resolved by replacing the Banwell proposals with Taylor Wimpey’s plans for three new villages adjacent to Bristol.

Taylor Wimpey’s proposals include: a new college; three new primary schools and one new secondary school; 130 hectares of parkland open to everyone; employment land; space for GP and dental practices; village centres; as well as many other community benefits.

“Our ‘Vale’ proposals are on land next to Bristol, where most people work and study. As well as providing for people’s everyday needs within the development, we have the new South Bristol Link Road already built, including a dedicated Metrobus lane taking just 17-20 minutes to get into Bristol city centre. We are also looking at a potential new train station on the Weston-to-Bristol line, giving commuters another option to leave their cars at home,” said Taylor Wimpey’s project director Gareth Hawke.

“There are extensive cycle routes into Bristol from the Vale, including along the popular Festival Way. We are proposing a new Park & Ride on the A38, extending the existing Long Ashton Park and Ride and are looking at a potential light rail link along the A38 to Bristol Airport. And those are just the transport advantages over Banwell.

“Commuters from Banwell will be almost entirely reliant on driving to work, with or without a new bypass. But the majority of people will commute into Bristol where most of the jobs are. Would you rather drive 19 miles from Banwell along the A38, or jump on the Metrobus and be there in 17 minutes?” he said.

More details on The Vale can be found at www.thevale-northsomerset.co.uk.

The formal draft Joint Spatial Plan consultation closes on December 19. It is important that as many people as possible have their say by visiting:

<https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti/system/register>.

Why replacing Banwell with ‘The Vale’ will protect North Somerset’s rural towns and villages. Savills’ planning director Nick Matthews explains:

“Along with the neighbouring three local authorities, North Somerset Council has agreed to find land for 105,000 homes, as part of the four authorities’ so-called *Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)*. The final number could be higher.

But North Somerset Council’s plans to locate 5,400 homes around Banwell and Churchill are simply not sustainable or deliverable, undermining the JSP.

Firstly, the location is too far away from jobs and key services and – with few alternatives to driving – would lead to unacceptable additional car usage. Secondly, even if the location was suitable and the development was achievable, it is extremely unlikely that the development

would provide much needed new housing quickly enough (i.e. within the JSP plan period which runs to 2036).

Schemes of this size – reliant on major enabling infrastructure - can take 20 or more years from conception before they deliver any homes - and the Banwell proposal has only just been identified. Even if it can be started before 2036, it will simply be unable to deliver anything like 5,400 homes proposed by 2036.

If a major development such as that proposed at Banwell is not delivering enough homes, it will limit the Council's housing land supply. This is extremely important. Why? Well, planning applications for housing are judged on whether the Council has enough land identified for new homes for the next five years. If not, then there is a presumption that applications for sustainable development should be granted permission.

For a number of years North Somerset Council has been unable to maintain a five year supply of housing land. This has allowed developers to make applications and appeals on land never before earmarked for housing - exactly what many North Somerset towns and villages are currently fighting. The allocation of a development which is failing to deliver enough homes would mean that housing land supply would not increase and piecemeal applications and appeals would continue to be successful.

Taylor Wimpey's proposals for three new villages adjacent to Bristol is on land it owns or controls, so the Council can be sure the new homes and necessary infrastructure can be delivered - unlike Banwell and Churchill which are in a multitude of separate ownerships. The development would also be using infrastructure which is already under construction – the South Bristol Link Road and the MetroBus network – so it would not be necessary to wait for costly infrastructure to be delivered before development could go ahead.

Relying on Banwell and Churchill to deliver a large amount of housing will leave the towns and villages of North Somerset - already under pressure - extremely vulnerable to more applications and appeals. This will continue unless the JSP can truly demonstrate a secure and

sufficient supply of land for new homes. We believe that The Vale is a genuinely sustainable and deliverable alternative which should be identified through the JSP.”

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Notes to editors:

[Taylor Wimpey UK](#), part of Taylor Wimpey plc, is one of the largest residential developers in the UK, developing new homes and communities across the country.

Taylor Wimpey operates from 24 regional offices across England, Scotland and Wales and builds over 13,000 homes each year. Taylor Wimpey is a responsible homebuilder that is committed to health and safety, environmental sustainability, providing excellent customer service and engaging with local communities.

1. Taylor Wimpey has a strong and sustainable customer base, with over 90% owner-occupiers. First time buyers accounted for 36% of Taylor Wimpey’s completions in 2015, with a range of offers available to help first time buyers purchase a home of their own.
2. Taylor Wimpey’s Customer Service Charter is fully compliant with the 2010 Consumer Code.
3. Taylor Wimpey does much more than build homes; it strives to make a positive contribution to both local communities and the local area. In 2015 Taylor Wimpey contributed over £335 million to local communities in which it builds across the UK via planning obligations, providing local infrastructure, affordable homes, public transport and education.



4. Taylor Wimpey is committed to a continuous programme of engagement with local communities throughout the lifetime of a development. Taylor Wimpey actively seeks the views of local communities and other stakeholders, and develops a tailored planning and community engagement strategy for each site, working closely with communities and other local stakeholders throughout all aspects of the planning process.
5. Taylor Wimpey continues to innovate with its range of house designs on developments across the UK. Its range is designed to be high quality and extremely energy efficient. The house types are very flexible with different internal layouts and a wide range of exteriors that will complement local landscapes and streetscapes.

For further information please visit www.taylorwimpey.co.uk