

P24/02732/O Demolition of existing structures and erection of residential led-mixed-use development comprising of up to 50 no. residential dwellings (Class C3); primary school, nursery and playing field (Use Class F1); associated landscape, open space and infrastructure, change of use of existing dwelling and associated buildings for community uses (Use Class E, F1, F2) (Outline) with access to be determined, all other matters reserved.

Land At Longcross Farm Cromhall South Gloucestershire

Cromhall Parish Council wishes to OBJECT to this application.

In advance of the specifics of the Cromhall PC objection points below please note the following 3 matters :

NB 1 : A pre-application consultation was held where 2 members of the parish council attended the Tortworth Estate Offices where the pending application was presented to them by the Estate and their professional service providers.

NB 2 : A pre-application consultation was then publicly promoted by Cromhall PC and was held in the Cromhall Village Hall where Tortworth Estate and their professional service providers engaged the public in an open event and took their Q&A. Unfortunately, this presentation to the Village was on the day of a 'Named Storm event' and a number of residents who would have attended were prevented due to flooding. The quantity and quality of awareness and of feedback received would be proportionately less as a result.

NB 3 : Members of the public then attended a meeting of Cromhall Parish Council at which the council's response to the planning application was to be decided. Members of the public raised a number of points, both positive and negative. The parish council took account of the views raised in deciding the objection response detailed below:

Local Plan and infrastructure limitations

Under the most recent draft of the new Local Plan, Cromhall it is designated for the provision of circa 30 new houses in total over the ~15 year lifespan of the Plan. This application, being for over 50 dwellings, represents a disproportionate 66% increase on that cap.

Issues within the village call into question the viability of building even 30 houses let alone 50. Cromhall like many villages in our area is losing much of the limited infrastructure it has:

- The public foul sewer running north through Cromhall (the only main sewer to service the application site) is currently not fit for purpose, let alone capable of receiving the additional demand of 30 to 50 new dwellings. Several times each year, foul sewage regularly backs up in some homes and lateral drainage including road covers “pop” of their mountings leading to pressurised effluent flowing out onto roads. This matter is profound and amplified during times of heavy rainfall. The relevant authorities have been notified but a solution is evasive and out of the control of the Parish Council.
- The last pub in the village closed in 2023
- The village shop, which includes a Post Office counter, is closing in February 2025
- The existing bus services are under constant pressure. Recent funding reductions have left only an occasional service operating on a temporary “use it or lose it” basis.

The application contains no meaningful consideration of these infrastructure factors above. The Local Plan new dwelling volume calculation of circa 30 dwellings would have been capped in part due to the known limitations of the current village infrastructure capacity. This indicates that S. Glos Council are already of the opinion that the village should receive no more than 30 new dwellings only, prior to the reduced infrastructure the village finds itself suffering. Therefore an application for 50 dwellings should be rejected.

School site

The provision of space for a school, while seductive to the village on the surface as the existing school is requiring of new premises, is considered by some residents to be a tick box exercise due to an absence of a funding commitment, Diocese pre- or post-application agreement and sufficient pupil headcount to warrant the public expenditure. Tortworth Estates have said they will not pay for a new school. South Glos. Council, we conclude, will also not pay for a new school. St Andrews School is one form entry and near capacity. If the proposed school doesn't go ahead there wouldn't be space at the local school for any new young families living at the new development to use the local school! So we have to ask what is the value of the gesture of land for a school that is so unlikely to ever be built that it can be considered impossible in the current climate. This one point the school is valid for all three open 30+ dwelling applications being decided upon at this time in the village of Cromhall. However we note that at least this application by Tortworth Estates is mindful and has provided land for this need.

Sustainable transport

Further thought should be given to the public scheduled bus service, which is essential for the elderly and less able bodied, which has declined to the Y8 service that runs through the village to Yate, only four times a day. It is noteworthy that the bus company is constrained to not cross the County Border so there is no service possible at all by them or others beyond Charfield or to Wotton-under-Edge where there are resources such as schools, food and goods shopping, doctors' surgeries and a dentist. Furthermore and quite critically, pupils, parents and teachers in the vicinity of Cromhall village cannot use a scheduled public bus service to get to Katherine Lady Berkeley School either as no public service runs there.

Proposed crossing point on B4058

The Bristol Road crossing point is simply not thought through and in the wrong place. It is also served by such a narrow pavement proposal that a new danger will be presented to the village and to future residents of the proposed development.

Proposed Community Hub

The application wishes to convert an existing residential let property in the ownership of the applicant into a "Community Hub". A Community Hub is considered of only partial utility in a village that is largely a dormitory town. There will we imagine be some uptake of its provision though. However there is ample space on the site where a Hub could be built without disruption or re-tasking of that property with consequences upon the long standing tenants. Several comments were made on this matter at the PC meeting where the application was publicly discussed. The tenants are long standing and respected members of the community the PC serve. So it is thought relevant to reflect this matter in our thinking despite it not being directly a planning matter.

Site access

The two site access locations and new site access road serving the circa eight individual dwellings off Talbots End Lane (ie. the proposed access points to the site opposite Cromhall Village Hall) is a very poor choice for access due to the large number of vehicles parking, turning and traversing this area already. It is also used by 1st Woodend Scout Group due to their hut being on the Village Hall plot. So there are frequently large numbers of children playing and being picked up and dropped in the area and in an unlit extremely dark lane. It is simply not safe to increase the amount of vehicle movements in this location or up Talbots End Lane at all, it is at capacity and safety limits. All access should be off the main road to the inner distribution road for the proposed site as a self-contained proposal though this is itself a significant increase and impact upon an already busy B road that really serves as an A road connection for 44 tonne trucks. The local speed watch group have logged that up to 80% of vehicles moving into and out of area along this route are in excess of the posted speed limit. No serious attempt at traffic management or speed awareness appears to have been made in development of this application.