Response to Roughmoor Lane Proposed Development

Al and Annie Whitley

We recognise the need for additional housing in Westbury sub Mendip – both to provide affordable housing and to support/sustain local businesses.

However we think that a development of 40 houses is sufficient for a village of this size (given the likelihood of future development) and the amount of land allocated. This meets the Mendip Plan development requirements. There needs to be a mixture of starter homes, shared ownership and bungalows for 50+ needing to downsize within the 30% affordable housing target.

Site layout:

Policies in the Mendip Plan have particular regard for layout, building height and soft landscaping to minimise the visual impact. We would therefore anticipate no building over two storeys high and sufficient space around buildings, in keeping with the rest of the village and separated by sympathetic planting of trees and hedgerow. There also needs to be adequate screening to the North side of the development (Roughmoor Lane) to minimise the visual impact for those local residents living closest to the new buildings and for those enjoying the views from Broadhay (AONB) and Deer Leap (AONB). There is simply insufficient land allocated to build 60 houses whilst meeting these requirements.

There needs to be variety in house design and materials, including a significant amount of stone and stone facing as is prevalent in the village. Brown roof tiles would minimise the aerial impact of the development. No street lighting, in keeping with the Dark Skies Policy.

The local plan requires “safe pedestrian links…to enable access on foot to the village core”.

There needs to be safe and effective linkage between the existing footpath network and new foot paths in the proposed development. Footpaths need to be wide enough and pedestrians also need safe access onto and across the A371 via a pedestrian crossing. Without a crossing facility and with an additional 120 people (plus cars) in the village we both fear that a tragic accident is waiting to happen.

We do not agree with the location of land for community use at the NW corner of the site as this would only serve to increase traffic along a dangerous and narrow lane and on the A371 pinch point. Using the brown field site to the East of the development for a multiuse car park and village hall would significantly improve the amenities for the whole village. It would also ease traffic/parking congestion in other parts of the village, whilst replacing parking that is likely to be lost at mortar pits. Access to the church, pub, shop, school etc would be easier and safer for all.

There are significant biodiversity threats from the proposed plan, particularly for the protection of the Greater Horseshoe bat feeding ground and the population of glow-worms in this area. We agree with the suggestion for a 12 metre strip between the development and the lane with a 3 metre high hedge on one side of it and a strip of wildflowers /grassland behind, to give a biodiversity net gain for bats, insects and birds to thrive in.