

Good Morning. I am Cllr Haydn Andrew, Chair of Montgomery Town Council Planning Committee. I am speaking today on behalf of the Council and our residents with whom we have consulted in detail at open meetings.

In principle we welcome the proposal at this site to develop a range of affordable housing opportunities. Although outside the Development Boundary it does form the logical extension to the town.

This is a major proposal for our small, historic town and we ask Planning Committee to take the following comments into account when determining the application and agreeing clear and achievable planning conditions.

Access arrangements are the major area of concern for the Council and community. Given there are few employment opportunities in Montgomery, travel to work will increase considerably with the additional housing.

Two proposals for access have been made, both with serious limitations. The Council believe that not all options have been properly considered or the full implications taken into account. For example, accessing the new development from the Forden Road but further from the Forden / New Road junction would give much improved visibility and be a far better, and more economically sensible, option.

The current proposal is for access onto New Road and the closure of the New Road / Forden Road junction. Closure of this junction, where there have several recent accidents, would be a distinct improvement given the notoriously poor visibility onto the Forden Road. However, this will mean that an additional 50 or so private vehicles plus associated deliveries and trades traffic will be travelling both directions along New Road. This is a narrow single track road without passing places. No consideration appears to have been given to the large area necessary as a turning circle at the closed end of New Road. All vehicles will have to exit at the Chirbury Road junction where visibility is also extremely poor and excessive speeds common, despite restriction signs. Increased traffic on the Chirbury Road will, at peak and school times, create additional hazards at the already challenging junction with Pool Road, Arthur Street and Princes Street at the Pound. The serious Highways issues require proper resolution before construction commences. Town Council is pleased that, as a result of our earlier comments, a pavement is to be

constructed along Forden Road. There have been two accidents involving pedestrians along this stretch already this year. This must be a full standard 2 metre width pavement and consideration should be given to promoting Active Travel and including a cycle path. Provision of a standard width pavement may also assist with reducing the currently excessive traffic speeds on the Forden Road approach to town. We fully support this being a planning condition

If any access is constructed onto New Road then the pavement needs to continue to this access and then to join the existing pavement on New Road.

We also welcome the **mix of housing types**. There is a requirement in Montgomery for affordable homes to buy, as well as rental properties, and it is important that the ultimate mix reflects area requirements and that priority is given to local applicants.

In terms of **housing design**, this is an especially sensitive site in an Outstanding Registered Historic Landscape. It is on a main approach to Montgomery and close to the Conservation Area. It is within the setting of the Castle and will be clearly seen from various vantage points on Castle Hill where little building is presently discernable. The planned tree planting and retention of hedgerows are to be welcomed but careful consideration needs to be given to the building materials employed and detail of design. The town is typified by its old and characterful buildings and mix of styles and the new development requires elements to introduce character into individual properties and reflect the unique nature of Montgomery and its rural setting. We would request that building materials are conditioned to ensure a harmonious development in keeping with the character of the old County Town and its sense of place.

Given both the need to reduce energy usage and the predicted significant increases in energy costs, we are surprised at the lack of energy efficiency measures in the design. Town Council requests that consent is conditional on measures such as solar panels being included at minimum.

We have some significant concerns regarding **town infrastructure**. Critical capacity has already been reached for town parking. Although the school has some additional capacity, the medical practice is already vastly over-subscribed with waiting times of many weeks.

Finally, we would hope to see a **Best Endeavour clause** to ensure local contractors have the opportunity to benefit from construction and ground works.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and for giving due consideration to our comments on this application.