

Thank you, Alistair,

As a resident of Frome Whitfield, I am obviously biased in my answer to your question, and while trying not to be a NIMBY, the main reasons in order are:

- 1. The Destruction of such a uniquely beautiful piece of rural countryside.** The “Hardy” countryside North of the Frome River, across the water meadows and running up the ridge line is, in my humble opinion, one of the most beautiful in the country. It is the reason I bought here, have continued to invest, raised my family, and hope they can raise their families and continue to enjoy and preserve it for future generations. Its history is amazing. Frome Whitfield alone was listed in the Domesday Book, contains the remains of the Mediaeval Village and Church of St Nicholas, was the residence of the famous civil war Politician Denzel Holles, and was owned by the Henning family for nearly 300 years, while the fields still follow the same layout as introduced by the early Saxons settlers. The well documented Thomas Hardy connection together with its close proximity, yet distinct rural character, compared to both Dorchester and Charminster, should make it worth preserving, and including in the Dorset Area of Nature Beauty. The proposed access road crossing the water meadows, at the time I write (Dec 2020), would have to be an elevated road crossing over at least a mile of a quite deep lake. (The water meadows are flooded as they do every winter). The impact of this road on the environment and the scenery would be devastating. Note also, the proposed development of this area was rejected in the last Local Plan (2016), what has changed to make it an area now suitable to be tarmacked over?
- 2. Concern of the impact upon residences of the area and Dorchester town by flooding and traffic.** The water flows down the ridge to the Frome river are already a major risk to the historic Frome Whitfield houses, and the flooding damage caused by tarmacking over the ridge and fields could be catastrophic. Flood alleviation work would be incredibly difficult and expensive and may still leave a risk given the predicted increase in major flooding. Peak-hour traffic in and out of the area is already very difficult and access into Dorchester, via the Grove and the Hardy roundabout would be near impossible with the 3,500 new houses joining the already capacity road A371 near the Weirs roundabout.
- 3. The impact upon the town of Dorchester** – to have such a beautiful rural area so close the town centre, with the ridge views visible from the town centre, with its walking trails enjoyed by so many, is a major factor in Dorchester’s unique character. In addition the increased traffic impact in town streets would most likely cause the town to be regularly gridlocked
- 4. The unrealistically high projections of housing needs** do not seem to match the local current needs or population growth projections, and do not tie to any large employment projects planned for the town. When I asked the planners about this in 2017, they explained that many of people working in Dorchester at the Council and Hospital currently commute from Weymouth and the neighbouring villages. However my experience is that many have deliberately chosen to live near the beach or in rural villages rather than in Dorchester, and even if they did all move to this new area North of Dorchester, what is to happen to their current houses in Weymouth or the local villages.
- 5. The location of the proposed development in term of access and facilities.** The plans read as if this area is contiguous to Dorchester and the residents will all walk or cycle to Dorchester. Although I agree walking and cycling is beautiful in Summer, from personal experience living in the closest part of the projected area to Dorchester, I know that expecting in winter to walk (or swim) through the water meadow in the dark, is completely

unrealistic, let alone for those people residing nearly 3 miles away up Sylers Lane. Residents will drive into Dorchester, or worse still, make this development a separate community which appears to have very few facilities needed to make it an acceptable place to live.

6. **Building a boring, 1950s Californian style suburb of standardised housing is against the global trend for inner city living.** Dorchester's housing needs should be focused on the vacant shops unlikely to be occupied again, built on top of the town car parks, and in the town's brownfield sites. From 2002 to 2018 I worked as a consultant/advisor to the Mayor of the City of Seoul, South Korea helping to make Seoul one of the great cities of the world. With 22 million people it is now one of the most exciting and liveable cities in the world, and this type of development would be possibly the last type of development the Seoul City Government, or any of their expert advisers used over the past 20 years, would suggest.

It is difficult given my financial and emotional investment in the area to be objective, however I strongly believe that even if I was forced to move, that the area is so beautiful and unique area that it needs to be protected and preserved for future generations.

Keith Newton, December 2020.