

## Notes of meeting with Gleeson Strategic Land and partners on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Those present:

### Malmesbury Town Council

Councillor R Sanderson

Councillor W Blake

Councillor A Carnegie

Councillor C Vernon

### Gleeson Strategic Land

S Chamberlin

M Newton

L Flannigan

Note taker J Penfold

### Introduction

1. The purpose of the meeting was to have exploratory discussions with Gleesons to better understand their intentions, to express town council concerns on behalf of those we represent, and to get some feed back on the public exhibition they held in November 2010.

### Discussion Points

#### THE MALMESBURY DEVELOPMENT FORUM (MDF)

2. Gleesons were told how the Malmesbury Development Forum came into being and the role originally envisioned for it which is now under review due to the Localism Bill requirement for parish and town councils to take the lead.

#### GLEESON GENERAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

3. The company stated that Gleeson Strategic Land were always prepared to work with communities and he felt that the exhibition had produced some useful information. They added that it was their understanding that:

a. the content of the Bill indicated a willingness to streamline the development process at the national level, ensure sustainable development to deliver housing required whilst seeking to encourage local communities to work together with developers.

b. the local community would not be able to ignore any National Planning Standard or local plan but the Bill would provide greater local control or influence over design. Therefore the control over the principle of development is not likely to rest with the community. However, the detail of the Bill is still emerging. One of the main messages in the Bill for developers is that the best achievements will be gained by working with the community.

c. in October 2009 the Wiltshire Council identified 200 houses to be developed and this formed the basis of Gleeson's exhibition, to explain how they would address the proposal. They have a legal obligation to promote their land holdings even if the community felt development should be located elsewhere. Such an approach would inevitably lead to an Inspector making recommendations. The Core Strategy 2009 looked at specific sites and the Wiltshire Council considered the areas as one with the result that the assessment may have been deficient with some potential sites missing.

4. Gleasons went on to mention what they described as their recent successful Burgess Hill Plan which covers a period of 20 years. The plan is such that any future development will be in a single strategic location and of sufficient critical mass to provide for the future needs of the town rather than on any sites that become available. Gleason is working in partnership with the town council and community to achieve a sustainable vision for the town.

5. They added that their aim would be to work with the Malmesbury community to deliver what is required for the future. The company currently hold options on 50 hectares including the Worthies, but the option precludes any development on that site. The current landowner has indicated that there should be no development there. The emerging Wiltshire Plan proposes 200 houses on the top site.

6. The company reiterated that they would not do anything without advising the Malmesbury Town Council of their intentions and it was their philosophy to work with the town and community.

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

### **Insufficient Car Parking Space**

7. It was pointed out to the company that there is a severe shortage of car parking in and around the town.

### **Infrastructure**

8. Gleasons were informed that there is great concern over the likely inadequacy of what currently exists to accept and cope with any further demands placed on it. It was pointed out that the infrastructure of the town is believed to be already at maximum capacity. For example water pressure in some parts of the town is known to be inadequate and the education authority is already talking about bussing pupils to other schools. Gleason responded by saying that the water company had not raised any issues about the adequacy of the pumping station for any proposed new development. They also understand that studies of educational provision are on-going and that there is potentially spare capacity at St Joseph's Primary School.

### **Community Needs**

9. The company explained that a small site with 180 houses would not deliver a massive contribution. Any such contribution contemplated would need to be directly related to the impact of the development on the immediate area. The company did not want to pre-judge what the community might want and they will therefore need to discuss this fully with the Town Council and the community at the appropriate time. The opportunity was taken to remind the company that whatever scheme was put forward it would not be welcomed by the community at the present time.

### **Outline Planning**

10. Gleasons advised that they were not intending to submit an application at present but should circumstances change then the company will enter into debate with the community. Should for example another submission be lodged with Wiltshire Council they may feel obliged to respond. In the event that this happened the timescale would change but not the process as the company views pre application discussions with the community as the key to a successful development.

11. They added that it would be their normal stance to submit a full application with detail unless forced into a different approach by another developer.

### **Wiltshire Council Core Strategy**

12. It was pointed out to the company that it was understood that a public consultation to review and revise this would shortly be embarked on by Wiltshire Council, and that in responding to it the town council would have to recognise the current views of the community with respect to future development proposals. The Core Strategy 2009 looked at specific sites and the Wiltshire Council considered the areas as one with the result that the assessment may have been deficient with some potential sites missing.

### **November 2010 Presentation Feedback**

13. Gleesons advised that access issues were raised at the exhibition and comment was also made about the need for pedestrian crossings and extension of the bus route. There were also concerns about the speed of traffic and the creation of "rat runs". Any development would need to ensure that these fears were taken into consideration.

### **Development Density**

14. The company's attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory high density of housing at the development at the top of Tetbury Hill and invited to say what their approach would be. They advised that density was probably driven by the national policy on housing developments which had now been scrapped. Comments received at the exhibition indicated that a style of the development similar to that at Reeds Farm would be more acceptable.

### **Environmental Aspects**

15. Gleesons advised that they recognise that the view of the Abbey would need to be safeguarded and the impact of any landscaping would be a high priority. There may be potential for a drainage scheme to benefit Reeds Farm by reducing the surface water impact.

### **Road Access Issues**

16. Concern was expressed to the company over the impact of extra traffic on roads surrounding the proposed development area. Gleesons responded by saying that they had modelled this aspect and felt that it could be addressed to minimise this.