



Persimmon

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OFFICIAL PARTNER

PERSIMMON HOMES SOUTH MIDLANDS

Aspen House
Birmingham Road
Studley
B80 7BG
Tel: 01527 851 200
www.persimmonhomes.com

Our Ref: RG/TA
Your Ref: 2020/00759/FUL

Tim Atkins
Managing Director of Place,
Cheltenham Borough Council,
Municipal Offices,
Promenade,
Cheltenham,
GL50 9SA

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY TO: tim.atkins@cheltenham.gov.uk

4th January 2023

Dear Tim,

Re: Swindon Farm, North-West Cheltenham (Planning Application: 20/00759/FUL)

Further to my letter of 13 May 2022, I am again writing to you to urge that the Swindon Farm planning application submitted by Persimmon Homes is put forward for consideration by Planning Committee at the earliest opportunity.

I am concerned that artificial barriers are being putting in the way of the application's progress, as there are no technical or procedural matters to be resolved. Please would you intervene to ensure due process is followed.

Since my previous correspondence in May 2022, the application has been the subject of further discussion with officers. We have received an email from Liam Jones indicating that two matters are still required to be addressed prior to officers putting the application forward for a decision. These matters are:

1. S106 contributions GCC Highways contribution request towards M5 Junction 10 of £2.5 million.
2. Provision of a joint statement to answer anticipated Member questions:
 - a. Explain to members why they should support this application in advance of making a decision on the Elms Park scheme.
 - b. Help answer obvious questions that members will ask such as 'when is the rest of elms park being built? How will the sites link together? When will the community facilities be available for residents?'
 - c. Elucidate on the relationship between the developers and confirm that Bloor Homes are supportive of this part coming forward first.

I respond to these points as follows:

S106 contributions

I confirm Persimmon Homes' agreement to the inclusion of the proposed M5 Junction 10 contribution of £2.5 million in the Section 106 Agreement. We would have provided the same response if we had been asked this question in time for the December committee report deadline. Our viability work indicates that the application can support this contribution and we are confident that Gloucestershire County Council will provide the methodology which supports their request in due course.

Reassurance for Members

Please be reassured that Persimmon Homes and Bloor Homes are continuing to collaborate to bring the wider Elms Park site forward. This is evidenced by the submission of an Addendum application pack earlier this year and continued discussions between the project team, both Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils and statutory consultees. Coupled with this, Bloor Homes have already formally clarified that they are comfortable with the Swindon Farm planning application in an email to Tracy Birkinshaw and this note is on public record. A copy is attached for your reference.

Whilst I do appreciate that it is important to properly communicate with Members, my understanding is that the appropriate information necessary to make a decision on a planning application would be contained in the Committee Report, supplemented by an officer presentation. Persimmon Homes' opportunity to advocate for the application would be in the three minute speech allowed for scheme supporters at Planning Committee. The purpose of a Planning Committee is for Members to scrutinise applications, debate, ask questions of officers and make a decision. I would not expect this process to be rehearsed behind the scenes as a means of qualifying for a committee. Additionally, I would also question the value or weight that could be formally attached to such a statement from a third party. There is no procedural requirement set out in statute, or policy requirement in the development plan or National Planning Policy, which requires a joint statement from developers, where one of the developers is not the applicant.

Members should support the proposed development at Swindon Farm in advance of the Elms Park scheme as it is policy compliant; designed to facilitate development of the wider Elms Park site; not subject to any objections from statutory consultees; and amounts to sustainable development. It was actively invited by your officers to assist with much needed housing delivery: a situation which has subsequently become even more pressing.

The proposed scheme will be climate change resilient, mirroring the high standards currently set by Cheltenham Members in addressing the climate change emergency. Persimmon have committed to the development being zero gas for boilers, for example. It will also result in a 35% saving in carbon dioxide emissions over Part L of the Building Regulations and be fully compliant with the revised Building Regulations and where applicable the Future Homes Standard.

The proposed scheme has been designed to be self-sufficient in movement terms but also to dovetail with the wider Elms Park scheme. For example, the scheme's spine road, which leads from the Manor Road access, has been designed to link through to the wider site. Excerpts from Gloucestershire County Council formal highway response (Steve Hawley, 8th July 2022) provide a further indication of that movement has been adequately addressed, both in terms of access to current facilities and access to future ones:

'The application has been subject to revisions to ensure that the proposal provides suitable walking and cycling infrastructure to connect into existing services given the sites promotion in advance of the services and amenities which will otherwise be forthcoming within the Strategic Allocation, this has resulted in improved linkage along Manor Way and towards Swindon Village, and additional connections will be made in the wider site as and when that develops.'

'The proposal includes a new footway on Manor Road which will allow for a direct walking route to access Swindon Village and primary school education. This connection is suitable given the anticipated additional demands and looked at in context of the adjoining walking network.'

It is also essential that Manor Road is made suitable for pedestrians and cyclists given the lack of active travel routes and derestricted speed limit. The proposal looks to maximise the opportunities recognising the limitations of the existing highway and larger vehicles that use it to support the surrounding employment uses.'

With regard to community facilities, Persimmon have not been asked for contributions towards their provision, for example, with the county council confirming sufficient capacity in local schools, at

primary and secondary level, to accommodate the demand arising from the development. In terms of access to the Elms Park facilities and when these will be available, Elms Park is anticipated to come forward in phases, with facilities being available to the Swindon Farm residents as the site progresses.

Persimmon Homes is committed to developing out the wider Elms Park site in continuing collaboration with Bloor Homes. The M5 Junction 10 Development Consent Order submission, as well as resourcing within local government, undoubtedly serve to present a challenging background to achieving this. My view is that the timing for the Elms Park development very much rests in the hands of the Local Planning and Highway authorities.

I trust that the application can be put forward for a decision at the next Planning Committee without further delay. If I can be of further assistance to you in talking over the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Griffin
Managing Director
Persimmon Homes plc (South Midlands)

Encs.

CC. Tracey Birkinshaw tracey.birkinshaw@cheltenham.gov.uk
Liam Jones liam.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk



25th January 2023

Ms Lucy White
Cheltenham Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Promenade
Cheltenham
GL50 9SA

Dear Lucy

I refer to my previous letter dated 7th March 2022 and wanted to re-confirm Bloor Homes position in respect of Persimmon's planning application (Ref 20/00759/FUL).

Prior to my letter of 7th March 2022, Bloor had submitted an objection to the planning application on the basis that we had concerns over the impact any approval may have had on the delivery of the wider Elms Park project, in the absence of a formal Collaboration Agreement between Bloor and Persimmon.

I am pleased to confirm that Bloor entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Persimmon Homes in 2022 and we have confidence that approval of Planning Application 20/00579/FUL (Persimmons 265 dwelling scheme) will not prejudice the comprehensive development of the wider Elms Park scheme.

For the avoidance of doubt, I can confirm that on behalf of Bloor Homes, that we do not object to this planning application.

Yours sincerely

Spencer Claye
Senior Planning & Development Director

50 YEARS
& COUNTING

JS Bloor (Services) Limited Ashby Road, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 7JP
T 01530 270100 F 01530 273665 purchase@bloorhomes.com

Registered No. 02164993 England.

Registered Office Ashby Road, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 7JP VAT Reg No. 125 4938 61

bloorhomes.com