

PRESS RELEASE

“Is Frome about to become the least sustainable place in Somerset?”

Stop SGC asks Frome residents to consider the devastating impact after learning of imminent plans to submit new proposals for the Selwood ‘Garden’ Community (SGC).

Frome, 28 March 2021

Community action group, Stop SGC, has responded to leaked reports of new plans to build more than 1,500 high-density homes on an unspoilt landscape and productive farmland that risk turning Frome into a broken town.

Stop SGC says that rather than being positive for the town, SGC will only add traffic and pollution, put a strain on stretched local services and will not provide the jobs the area desperately needs.

Residents from the town of 27,000 have come together as Stop SGC to express alarm that land financiers, LVA, will submit a proposal to Mendip District Council (MDC) within months. Combined with two other approved developments nearby, they fear it could see the population swiftly swell by over 20%, with as many as 7,000 more residents and several thousand more cars on already-congested roads.

“Frome residents deserve to know just how unsustainable these plans will be,” a spokesperson for Stop SGC said. “We need to stand up for Frome and Frome residents. Otherwise an area double the size of Bruton, nearly one million square metres, will be added to the southern edge of the town at the stroke of a pen. SGC will destroy the landscape, productive farmland and wildlife habitats here, including the loss of more than two miles of ancient hedgerows. This is a peaceful area that hundreds enjoy walking, jogging and riding every day. SGC will put a stop to this and put huge pressure on our local services that are already struggling to cope with demand.”

The proposed site would cover arable farmland in executive homes, roads and tarmac across the Little Keyford area from the Marston Trading Estate down to the river – 200 acres in total. Combined with sites FR2 and FR3a in Mendip’s draft Local Plan Part 2, the cumulative impact will see the number of houses in Little Keyford rise from around 100 to more than 2,000.

No plans have been released yet but they are likely to follow previous versions. These have shown how LVA is focused on parcelling up land to be sold on at a profit to other housing developers. With no true masterplan for this mega-site, only a road layout, the proposal would also have an impact on residents right across Frome.

“Think about all the extra cars causing tailbacks in and out of town. Or the pollution they will pump out right beside our schools and homes. Take a look at the plans, see past the glossy presentations and ask, where are the badly-needed social rented homes? Where are the new schools, medical facilities or jobs? Not just spaces for them on a fancy diagram but real

schemes to put them in place. We urge anyone who cares about the future of Frome to join the campaign and sign up to the newsletter at stopsgc.org," the Stop SGC spokesperson added.

Notes to Editors

Stop SGC is a community-led organisation concerned that profit-motivated land financiers could shape the future of Frome without ever being asked to.

The fields of Little Keyford are full of wildlife with many important veteran trees and ancient hedgerows that must be preserved. Once lost they will be gone forever. SGC will be built at the expense of the local community and would change Frome forever.

Contact: **stopsgc@gmail.com**

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