

The Socio Economic Perspective

"The economy depends about as much on economists as the weather does on weather forecasters."

Jean-Paul [Kauffmann](#).

- 1.1. CarlyonBayWatch have continuously supported development on the beach which is environmentally sensitive, proportionate, safe, sustainable, in scale and restricted to the previously developed 'brownfield site' of the 'pre-war' Coliseum complex on part of Crinnis Beach.
- 1.2. There is no suggestion by CarlyonBayWatch that a development would not bring with it benefits to the local economy. However, there are some aspects of the Carlyon Bay Environmental Statement (2011) Chapter F Socio-Economics Impacts that do require some scrutiny. Some of the observations within that report are at wide variance to statements within other reports in the planning submission bundle. We would submit that some of the assumptions within the Socio-Economic framework could be seen as detrimental to the area and to some of our local economy.

25% v. 50% v 100%

- 1.3. One of the first anomalies to draw to attention is the diversity of numbers assumed and projected for residential occupation.
- 1.4. Within the Planning Application, Chapter C, Site Description and proposals:

C3.17

"It is anticipated that about 25% will be the maximum percentage of units that will be occupied as a permanent private residence."

- 1.5. And yet within the Socio-Economic overview:

"Housing

F5.7 The proposed development will contain up to 511 units. For the purposes of this assessment, it is assumed that up to about 50% will be occupied as permanent residential occupation and the remainder as second homes or other short-stay occupation."

1.6. It is suggested that the figure of 50% would give a more conservative analysis. However, it creates a falsity in some of the assumed conclusions.

1.7. For example, dealing with the increase in available bed spaces in the St Austell area:

"F4.50 In St Austell itself, there are currently seven hotels with a total of 265 beds, 20 Bed & Breakfast facilities with 99 beds, nine guest houses or self-catering accommodation with 137 beds, and four campsites that provide a total of 437 bed spaces. Although other facilities lie outside of St Austell town, the main impact area therefore appears to have a fairly low share of Cornwall's stock of visitor accommodation."

"F5.59 The main impacts of the development in tourism terms would include: an increase, by in the order of 256 units, in the amount of short-stay accommodation in the area; this would be equivalent to a major increase (up to 1,280 bed spaces) over the current approximately 930 bed spaces in the St Austell area;"

1.8. We suggest that the figure of 930 bed spaces is very misleading for it includes the number of campsites. Those people using a campsite, such as caravans, campervans and in tents are too dissimilar to the type of clientele that would be looking for 'bed spaces'. Therefore the figure should be revised downwards to approximately 500.

1.9. The figures also assume 50% short stay on the development site on the basis of 50% permanent residential. However, as the residential figure is not likely to exceed 25% then it can be safely assumed 75% short term occupancy.

1.10. Thus the statement above should be amended to read:

"this would be equivalent to a major increase (up to 1,920 bed spaces) over the current approximately 500 bed spaces in the St Austell area."

1.11. At first glance this may appear to be an even greater benefit to the tourist trade for the St Austell area. However, these figures only bring disquiet when viewed against the comments of a local lady, Mrs Anne Langley, who runs a bed and breakfast accommodation near the Eden Project. She has observed:

"As a general rule the season runs from February to October and is very dependent upon the weather. The main season runs from April to the end of September each year. Often September is busier than July August, when families opt to stay in self-catering accommodation."

So far as self-catering accommodation is concerned, the TIC's experience is that July and August are always full, but much accommodation is empty at other times. The only ones bucking the trend are Cornhill Farm down the road from me and their main season runs from Easter to the end of August. The reason for their success is the proximity to Eden and recommendations. They know of lots of other people with self-catering accommodation which are struggling."

"A lot of the small B & B's have closed. We now have competition from the big boys like Travel Lodge and Premier Inn."

"Currently there is a surplus of accommodation in the area - it is never all full and the TIC can always accommodate any visitors that turn up seeking accommodation at short notice."

- 1.12. In the Socio-Economic report they quote Visit Cornwall as identifying sector growth by extending the season for existing provision rather than increasing provision:

"F4.49

According to Visit Cornwall, the focus of future growth for this sector is to increase out-of-season occupancy rates rather than to increase the amount of existing provision as there are a number of major resort proposals coming forward at present."

- 1.13. It is thus argued that the development proposed on the Beaches will not aid the tourist industry but will be in direct competition with it. It is also arguable whether an additional 2000 bed spaces could ever be fully accommodated when the existing 500 cannot. Simply increasing the number of bed spaces will not extend the season.
- 1.14. The second Example in relation to the 25% v. 50% concerns the projections for housing stock within the St Austell area.
- 1.15. For instance the report assumes *"an additional 255 permanent residential units to the housing supply"* and *"This would be equivalent to an increase of just 0.5% to the current stock of approximately 47,600 dwellings in the former Restormel Borough. However, over the period 2006-09, only an average of 350 private dwellings was completed annually in Restormel district. This proposed development would therefore make a sizeable contribution to the area's new private housing stock."* (F5.8)

- 1.16. Not if the figure of no more than 25% is applied. This would equate to a maximum of 127 residential units; hardly a sizeable contribution. But it is a sizeable contribution to Carlyon Bay, which currently has 600 dwellings – if an additional 255 permanent residential units are being added to the supply here this is disproportionate to the size of the area.
- 1.17. The population which occupies that part of the 50% or 25% is perceived by the authors:
- “as likely to be used as permanent dwellings,” (F5.11)*
- 1.18. The estimate of permanent residents is: *“between 600 – 1200” (F 5.12)* and short stay *“of between 83 – 1,225 persons at any time”*, based on a 50% permanent residency. This should be revised downwards for 25% as between 300 – 600.
- 1.19. This will leave a potential of short stay population (revised down for 25% permanent) of 115 – 1837.
- 1.20. I question whether people would find their permanent residency, which would be part of a wildly fluctuating and diametrically opposite type of short stay resident, as being of a quality experience and retaining the air of a cohesive community.
- 1.21. Bearing in mind that this developer is in fact applying for 100% full-time residential occupancy for all 511 of the proposed new dwellings, We submit that, in any event, the whole matrix of their assertions may only be regarded as, to say the very least, speculative.

Employment

- 1.22. The Socio Economic Report calculates that:
- F 5.28 “In total, approximately 358 job opportunities are likely to be created directly on site by the proposed development.”*
- 1.23. At F 5.31 Table 5.2 gives a breakdown of those jobs.
- 1.24. This figure of job creation was one of the major benefits of the development reported in the local press.

- 1.25. This also forms a major part of the argument within the report:

F5.41 In this context, the 320 net additional jobs on-site would make a significant contribution to reducing local unemployment; if all were filled locally, they could reduce local unemployment levels by just over 20%. If all jobs attributable to the scheme, both direct and indirect, are counted, this could reduce local unemployment by almost 28%. There have been very few developments in Cornwall over the past 10 years which would have had this potential level of impact on the local labour market.

And:

F5.42 Reflecting that the proposed development is intended to operate on a full-time basis, most of these jobs will continue all year round.

- 1.26. These claims have to be examined in the context of anticipated occupancy figures. At F5.12 the assessment is that there would be between 600 – 1200 permanent residents and (depending on the time of year) between 83 – 1225 short term occupants. This is again assuming a 50% take up of permanent residents. However, if one applies the anticipated figure of 25% then the occupancy levels could be as little as 300 (permanent) + 125 (short term), giving a total occupancy of 425.
- 1.27. It seems extraordinary that 425 occupants would continue to support a total of 320 permanent jobs on site. This equates to having almost as many staff as residents.
- 1.28. The conclusion is that this development site will follow the trend of every other holiday accommodation in the county and that there will be an uptake of seasonal work during the peak summer months and then inevitable layoffs during the winter period.
- 1.29. This project cannot be viewed in isolation, with the advent of the Eco-bos proposals for 2000 new homes and associated work-space, together with Tesco expansion and the many other local projects, which must mean that the greater likelihood is a shortage of skilled construction workers and a longer-term labour shortage in the making.

Employment and Parking

- 1.30. The authors of the Transport Report, Appendix G1, do not seem aware of the implications that those employee numbers will have.

In Appendix G1:

"6.5 In total some 840 car parking spaces will be provided at beach level. As this element of the application is in outline only at this stage it is envisaged that the level of car parking will be subject to a management regime at the reserved matters stage. On the basis of a 50/50 split between unrestricted residential units and permanent residential units, set out below is a potential split in how the number of car parking spaces could be provided:

Use No Spaces

255 No. Permanent Residential Units 305

255 No. Guests Short Term Occupancy 383

Employee Parking 67

Disabled Visitor Parking 10

Reception Parking 10

Car Club Parking 10

Drop Off/Pick Up area 10

Restaurant/Leisure Uses 45"

- 1.31. The use of the phrase "it is envisaged" is the best admission of just how speculative are these numbers, based as they are upon a solely "outline" application. The total number of parking places set aside for Employees equals 67. The only additional parking will be contained within the top car park with an anticipated number of 170 spaces. This still leaves a deficit of 121 parking places for employee parking.
- 1.32. The conclusions that can be drawn from these figures are either there will have to be a complete re-design of the available on-site car parking, or residents will find there is nowhere for their cars to be parked or, most likely, the estimate of creating 358 jobs is complete pie in the sky. If that is the case, then some of the much vaunted economic and employment benefits must also be viewed with suspicion.

How Many People?

- 1.33. Using the figures supplied in the Socio Economic report it can be calculated that if peak occupancy is achieved then there will be an estimated 2,425 people staying on the beach development at one time. (See F 5.12 1200 resident + 1225 short stay occupants = 2425)
- 1.34. To put that in some perspective the total population of Duporth, Charlestown, Carlyon Bay, and Tregrehan was, at the 2008 census, 2,024 residents.

(Office for National Statistics, see appendix AP 33)

- 1.35. At a stroke, the population of the Parish could be more than doubled in the summer period and yet the impacts on the area are beguilingly described as neutral or beneficial.

Conclusions

- 1.36. CarlyonBayWatch is not opposed to the creation of employment and of economic benefits to St Austell or the wider area. However, those benefits must be balanced against long term disadvantages.
- 1.37. The use of a 50% uptake in residential accommodation does not always result in a more conservative approach to the figures within the Socio-Economic Report.
- 1.38. It is considered that the impact of such a large increase of bed spaces for the tourist industry could have a detrimental effect on existing businesses.
- 1.39. It is considered on the basis of current trends in the short stay business sector that it is very unlikely that the development will achieve its anticipated levels of occupancy, giving rise to a lowering of anticipated economic benefit.
- 1.40. The estimates of permanent on site occupation appear to be highly over-optimistic.
- 1.41. If, however, anticipated levels of occupancy are achieved then there will be a more than doubling of the current population of the entire Parish.