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RIDGE

REPRESENTATION OF
LAND AT "BATH ROAD"

REPRESENTATION OF LAND AT BATH ROAD

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Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

Statement Background

- 1.1. This representation will recommend that the site north of Bath Road, Leonard Stanley, be acknowledged as a sustainable, accessible location for a small scale residential site.
- 1.2. There is a clear need for small housing sites in rural communities in the Stroud District, to meet the growth requirements of the District going forward. Particularly when considered in the wider context of Stroud which is highly constrained by environmental, flooding and ecological constraints.
- 1.3. The proposal will then address the principal reason for disapproval at the previous appeal decision, regarding harm to the character and appearance of the area with the proposal being put forward being a far smaller in scale which is in keeping with the ribbon development character of Leonard Stanley while being in line with the existing curtilages and properties to the east, and spilling out into the open countryside on the periphery of the village.
- 1.4. This representation will firstly outline the relevant planning policy. This will be then followed by a site description and how the proposal addresses the reasons for refusal of the previous application. The site is then assessed from a sustainability perspective to understand the site's suitability for future residential development. Lastly, the site is then assessed within the context of the emerging strategy.

2. PLANNING POLICY

- 2.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section provides an overview of relevant planning policy and guidance to the proposed development.
- 2.2. By way of general overview in November 2015 Stroud District adopted a new Local Plan for the district. This plan replaced the 2005 Local Plan in its entirety and now provides the core determination for the determining of planning applications in the district up to the period of 2031.

Stroud District Local Plan

- 2.3. **Policy CP1** states that the District Council will work proactively with applicants to ensure proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. **Policy CP1** further outlines that planning applications that accord with the policies in this District Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.4. **Policy CP3** stresses that proposals for new development should be located in accordance with the Districts settlement hierarchy. Leonard Stanley is identified as a third-tier settlement as an assessable settlement with limited facilities. Leonard Stanley is therefore identified as a village which possesses a limited level of facilities and services that, together with improved local employment, provide the best opportunities outside the local service centres for greater self-containment.
- 2.5. **Policy CP4** states that proposals are expected to place shape and protect or enhance a sense of place. Thereby places should be locally inspired and/or have distinctive character and use appropriate textures, colours, locally-distinctive architectural styles and work within the sites topography, orientation and landscape features. As well as protecting or enhancing local biodiversity, the historic environment and any heritage assets. **Policy CP4** then further states that all development must integrate into the neighbourhood, considering connectivity, appropriate levels of facilities and services, reduce car dependency, improve transport choice, support local community services and meet local employment need.
- 2.6. **Policy CP7** states that new housing development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities in the district by clearly demonstrating how major housing development will contribute to meeting identified long term needs in those communities the development relates to. As such proposals will need to take the following into account:
- An ageing population, particularly in terms of design, accessibility, health and wellbeing service co-ordination;
 - Children, young people and families;

- People with special needs or problems accessing services; and
- The specific identified needs of minority groups in the district.

2.7. **Policy CP7** further states that proposals will need to demonstrate how the factors have informed the development proposal, these include: Lifetime accommodation and the Contribution to meeting the needs of those with an existing long-standing family and educational or employment connection to the area.

2.8. **Policy CP8** highlights that new housing development must be well designed to address local housing needs, incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of housing and create mixed communities. New development should also consider the Districts housing needs, as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Therefore, residential development proposals will need to:

- Be built at an appropriate density that is acceptable in townscape, local environment, character and amenity terms;
- Have a layout that supports accessibility by bus, bicycle and foot to shopping and employment opportunities, key services and community facilities or contribute towards provision of new sustainable transport infrastructure to serve the area;
- Have a layout, access, parking, landscaping and community facilities that are appropriate to the site and its surroundings;
- Enable provision of infrastructure in ways consistent with cutting greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change and its consequences.
- Use sustainable construction techniques and provide renewable or low carbon energy sources in association with the proposed development; and
- Enhance biodiversity on site and, where appropriate, through a network of multifunctional green spaces, which support the natural and ecological processes.

2.9. **Policy CP9** states that there is an overall unadjusted need for affordable housing of 446 dwellings per annum. Planning permission will be granted for residential development providing an appropriate density that is acceptable in townscape, local environment, character and amenity terms, dwelling types, tenures and sizes seamlessly integrated with existing development or proposed mixed-use development. Affordable housing should also broadly reflect the sizes and types that meet the proven needs of people who are not able to compete in the general housing market as well as reflecting the dwelling sizes and design in the proposed development.

2.10. **Policy CP9** further states that all residential proposals of at least 4 dwellings (net) or capable of providing 4 dwellings (net) covering a net site area of at least 0.16 ha will provide at least 30% affordable dwellings, where viable.

2.11. **Policy HC4** states that planning permission may be granted for affordable housing on sites adjoining identified settlement development limits. Such sites should be located adjoining an identified accessible settlement with limited facilities ('third tier') or above in terms of the Plan settlement hierarchy, unless

specific local need and environmental considerations indicate that provision should be met at fourth or fifth tier settlements. The Council shall meet local affordable housing need, where:

- The Council is satisfied that there is a clearly evidenced local need, which cannot be readily met elsewhere in the locality, for the number and type of housing proposed;
- The site is accessible to a range of local services, such as shops, primary schools, healthcare and public transport;
- It is not subject to any other over-riding environmental or other material planning constraint;
- Appropriate legal agreements are entered to ensure that such dwellings will remain available as affordable housing for local need, in perpetuity with the necessary management of the scheme; and
- The gross internal floor area of these dwellings shall comply with the latest recommended standards used by the Homes and Communities Agency

2.12. **Policy EC3** states that permission will not be granted to any development which would be likely to lead to, or result in an unacceptable level of:

- Noise, general disturbance, smell, fumes, loss of daylight or sunlight, loss of privacy or an overbearing effect;
- Environmental pollution to water, land or air and an unacceptable risk to the quality and quantity of a water body or water bodies;
- Noise sensitive development in locations where it would be subject to unacceptable noise levels;
- Increased risk of flooding on or off the site, and no inclusion of measures to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
- A detrimental impact on highway safety; and
- An adverse effect on contaminated land where there is a risk to human health or the environment.

2.13. **Policy EC4** states that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA 1 and 2) will be used to inform the location of future development within the District. In considering proposals for development the District Council will weigh up all the relevant policy issues when giving full consideration to the sequential test and implementing the "Exception Test" where necessary. Applications will be supported by Flood Risk Assessments where appropriate that demonstrate the development will be safe, not increase flood risk elsewhere, and maximise opportunities to reduce flood risk. New developments shall incorporate appropriate Sustainable Drainage Measures (SuDs) in accordance with National Standards.

2.14. **Policy ES6** specifies that all new development will be required to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including all sites of biodiversity or geodiversity value (whether or not they have statutory protection) and all legally protected or priority habitats and species. The council will also support developments that enhances existing sites and features of natural conservation value. Moreover, the district will have a number of undesignated sites, which may have rare species or form part of a valuable habitat. Where a site is indicated to have such an interest, the applicant should observe the precautionary

principle and the Council will seek to ensure that the intrinsic value of the site for biodiversity and any community interest is enhanced or, at least, maintained.

2.15. **Policy ES7** states that in all locations proposals should conserve or enhance the special features and diversity of the different landscape character types found in the District. Priority will be given to the protection of the quality and diversity of the landscape character and development will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

- The location, materials, scale and use are sympathetic and complement the landscape character;
- The natural features including trees, hedgerows and water features that contribute to the landscape character and setting of the development are retained and managed appropriately in the future; and
- Opportunities for appropriate landscaping are sought alongside all new development to ensure the landscapes key characteristics are strengthened.

2.16. **Policy ES8** stipulates that development should seek where appropriate to enhance and expand the District's tree and woodland resource. Development that would result in the unacceptable loss of, or damage to, or threaten the continued well-being of protected trees, hedgerows, community orchards, veteran trees or woodland (including those that are not protected but are considered to be worthy of protection) will not be permitted. Where the loss of trees is considered acceptable, adequate replacement provision will be required that utilise species that are in sympathy with the character of the existing tree species in the locality and the site.

2.17. **Policy ES10** states that Stroud District's historic environment will be preserved, protected or enhanced, in accordance with the principles set out below:

- Any proposals involving a historic asset shall require a description of the heritage asset significance including any contribution made by its setting, and an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance; and
- Proposals and initiatives will be supported which conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of the Districts heritage asset.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.18. The NPPF was updated in July 2018 and contains some major changes and clarifications to national planning policy as well as new measures.

2.19. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. Sustainable development is defined in **paragraph 8** of the NPPF, and includes three overarching objectives, which are

interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways; these being economic, social and environmental factors.

- 2.20. Sustainable development aims to support a strong, responsive and competitive economy, whilst achieving vibrant and healthy communities whose present and future needs are met by providing sufficient housing with accessible local services, a high quality built environment, making efficient use of land, protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment and adapting to climate change.
- 2.21. In that vein, **Paragraph 11** highlights how to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development; for decision taking, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 2.22. **Chapter 5** of the framework encourages the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes. A key principle of the planning system is to ensure a flexible and responsive supply of housing land is readily available. To achieve this **paragraph 59** of the framework indicates that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, a sufficient amount and variety of land must come forwards where it is needed and specific housing requirements for certain societal groups are met.
- 2.23. **Chapter 12** relates to achieving well-designed places and highlights that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. **Paragraph 127** sets out that it is important to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- 2.24. **Paragraph 15** states that succinct and up to date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.
- 2.25. **Paragraph 59** states that to support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward were needed.
- 2.26. **Paragraph 61** stipulates that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families and people who rent their homes).

- 2.27. **Paragraph 71** states that local planning authorities should support the development of entry level exception sites, suitable for first time buyers (or those looking to rent their first home), unless the need for homes is already being met within the authorities area. These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:
- a. Comprise of entry homes that offer one or more types of affordable housing; and
 - b. Be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards.
- 2.28. **Paragraph 78** highlights that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in villages nearby.
- 2.29. **Paragraph 122** relates to achieving appropriate densities and states that in supporting development that makes efficient use of land, it should take into account the importance of the identified need for different housing types and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it.
- 2.30. **Paragraph 127** sets out that it is important to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- 2.31. **Chapter 15** is concerned with the natural environment. The NPPF seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It also aims to minimise the impacts of new developments on biodiversity, whilst providing net gains where possible
- 2.32. **Chapter 16** covers the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 189 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by its setting. This should be proportionate to the assets importance.
- 2.33. **Paragraph 193** highlights that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of heritage asset, great weight should be given to the assets conservation.

3. **ASSESSMENT OF THE SUITABILITY OF SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Site Description

- 3.1. Leonard Stanley is a village within Stroud District and lies approximately 2 miles south-west of Stroud and 1.1 miles approximately north of Stonehouse. The city of Gloucester lies approximately 13 miles north of the village and Bristol is approximately 30 miles to the south. According to the Gloucestershire County Council mid-2013 estimates, the residential population of Leonard Stanley was 1,382.
- 3.2. The site is approximately 3.56 hectares and is currently used as agricultural land for grazing. A small brook runs along both the west and northern boundaries and a ditch with a watercourse is located in the north-

eastern corners. There are several mature oak trees located within the site and along its boundaries. The site is bordered by residential development to the east, south and west with the northern extents defined by hedgerows and open agricultural fields beyond. The topography of the site gently slopes on a north-westerly direction.

- 3.3. It is acknowledged that the site is situated just outside the settlement boundary. However, the site developable has the same characteristics of an infill site which relates to the ribbon housing developments along Bath Road and to the Leonard Stanley settlement character. This is because the northern side of Bath Road, to which the site relates, forms an almost continuous line of development from King Stanley to Bath Road junction with a country lane, approximately 200 meters to the west of the site. To the south of the site, moreover, is further ribbon development along the roads within Leonard Stanley. It is therefore considered the site would act as appropriate infill development, in keeping with Leonard Stanley ribbon development settlement character.
- 3.4. The site does not lie within or contain any national, regional or locally designated landscape, environmental or ecological features. While the site does not contain any listed buildings or heritage assets, there are two Grade II listed buildings within the immediate area. Adjacent to the south-western corner of the site is the former post office at number 4 Bath Road, and the Grange is also located adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the site.
- 3.5. However, it is considered both Grade II Listed buildings have strong perimeter planting and large curtilages which masks the listed buildings from proposed development at site; ensuring no harm to the setting of the listed buildings.
- 3.6. Furthermore, it is also important to note that at a recent appeal decision the inspector stated that there was a significant degree of separation between the Grange and the nearest proposed dwelling to it. Likewise, it was stated that the post office would also be separated from the nearest proposed dwelling by an appropriate gap in the context of the immediate street scene. It was consequently concluded at appeal that development at site would preserve the setting of the Listed Buildings. It is therefore considered that as the degree of separation and existing streetscape with the new proposal has remain unchanged since the appeal, the proposed development will also be considered to preserve the setting of the listed buildings.
- 3.7. Site is located within Flood zone risk 1 and is therefore at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 3.8. A Public Right Of Way (Leonard Stanley Public Footpath 8) runs north-south in the eastern section of the site with kissing gates providing access for walkers into the site along this route.

Addressing reasons for disapproval

- 3.9. The site has been subject to a refusal at appeal for the outline application for a residential development of 44 dwellings and a nursery (S.15/1417/OUT) in January 2016.

- 3.10. The overriding reason for dismissal was the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This section will therefore seek to address this reason for refusal in the context of the new proposal.

Character and appearance of the surrounding area

- 3.11. The inspector concluded at appeal that the dismissed proposal would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area as the proposal would occupy a substantial area of the site. It was concluded that the proposed development would extend a significant way from the road, well beyond existing properties and their curtilages to the west, where the site opens out into open countryside on the periphery of the village. The proposal, would, as such, not be considered to reflect of the ribbon settlement character and would place demonstrable harm to the particularly pleasant open setting to this part of the village that is clearly visible from Bath Road and the public footway. This was considered a compelling objection and despite the provision of affordable housing, together with other benefits of the scheme, these benefits were insufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- 3.12. The proposal put forward, on the other hand, is in keeping with the ribbon character of Leonard Stanley and addresses the principle reasons for refusal. The proposed development is in line with the existing curtilages and properties to the east and west and does not open out into the open countryside on the periphery of the village. The proposal will, therefore, constitute 'infilling' of built development on the northern edge of this part of Leonard Stanley, and the fact that the northern side of Bath Road, to which the site relates, forms an almost continuous line of development from King Stanley to Bath Road Junction. It is therefore considered that a small-scale expansion would not be out of character with the settlement of Leonard Stanley and not represent a significant encroachment into the countryside. This proposal therefore addresses this key concern raised from the dismissal at appeal and is a development that is akin to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- 3.13. Furthermore, as stated by the 2005 local plan inspector, in relation to the site, there is: "no inherent objection to the development of the site for housing" and that the site is suitable for the omission of about 15 homes. Going on to conclude that:

"On balance, taking all the adjoining residential curtilages and the location of existing residential development into account, it is considered that the site is surrounded on 3 sides (if the housing to the south of the road is taken into account) by existing development. For this reason, development at this site would not represent a significant encroachment into the countryside."

- 3.14. This admission, highlighted in the recent inspector's appeal decision report, demonstrates that development at this site is acceptable in principle, but for a substantially smaller number of houses than the 44-prior proposed, on a smaller site, with less impact on the openness of the land. As demonstrated,

the proposed development of 15 dwellings, is considered to be in line with the principle of development the local plan inspectorate envisioned for the site and as such the principle development should be permitted.

4. SUSTAINABILITY OF SITE

- 4.1. This sub section sets out to prove that the land North of Bath Road is a sustainable location for residential development by evaluating the site from an accessibility perspective and assessing its location to key services and facilities. The sites capability to provide affordable homes, its beneficial impact to the local economy and the proposals negligible environmental impacts are then all assessed.

Accessibility

- 4.2. Bath Road runs east-west in the northern section of Leonard Stanley and connects the site to the centre of King's Stanley, the adjoining village, to the east and Frocester to the west. Bath Road also connects to the A419 approximately 1.1 miles north east of the site, which links to junction 13 of the M5 to the west and Stroud to the east. The site is therefore easily connected to major road links and surrounding villages and town centres.

- 4.3. The site is also well served by existing bus services, with bus stops located at Bath Road, adjacent to the site's southern boundary and at Church Lane, approximately 100 meters south of the site. Bus service 66S runs between Gloucester and Fretherne, via Stroud, and stops in Leonard Stanley hourly Monday to Saturday and bi-hourly on Sundays and bank holidays. A school bus service (401A) also runs from Church Lane which provides connections to secondary schools within Stroud. In addition, the bus stop adjacent to the site, is served by a Friday bus service into Stroud (number 242).
- 4.4. In addition, the site is approximately 1.1 miles from Stonehouse Railway Station, easily accessed by public transport (bus service 66S) which provides frequent services to Swindon, Cheltenham Spa and London Paddington.

Access to Facilities

- 4.5. Leonard Stanley is classified as an 'Accessible Settlement' which is the third tier of settlement outlined within the settlement hierarchy. This means it has some facilities and is within an accessible distance of secondary schools and railway stations. The following facilities are located within Leonard Stanley:
- Leonard Stanley Church of England Primary School (approximately 600 meters from the site)
 - St Swithun's Church (approximately 50 meters from the site)
 - Recreational Ground with changing rooms (approximately 50 meters from the site)
 - Village Hall and social club (approximately 350 meters from the site)
 - White Hart Public House (approximately 250 meters from the site)
- 4.6. It would take between 2-10 minutes to walk to these facilities from the site.
- 4.7. The Village Hall hosts numerous community events and clubs which run with Leonard Stanley including the Women's Institute, playgroup, an Art Workshop, a toddlers group and bingo. In addition, there are several businesses that run from the village and the surrounding area including SCDesign printing company, Bed and Breakfasts, IRS computer repair services, taxi companies and a dairy farm.
- 4.8. In addition to the services available at Leonard Stanley there are also a number of services and facilities in the adjoining village of King's Stanley such as a Co-Operative local supermarket, Post Office, hair salon, takeaway and Butchers.
- 4.9. Further key services and employment opportunities are located in Stonehouse and Stroud including: doctor's surgeries, dentists, supermarkets, pharmacies and banks. The nearest secondary school at the main settlements, the closest at Wycliffe College boarding school in Stonehouse and the Archway school in Stroud. The nearest primary school is Leonard Stanley Church of England Primary School whilst there are also further primary schools in Stonehouse and Stroud. The site is connected to these schools via school buses, as identified, whilst Leonard Stanley Church of England Primary school is within walking distance of the site.

- 4.10. The site also offers convenient access by bus to jobs, services and facilities located in the built-up areas of Stonehouse and Stroud.

Affordable housing

- 4.11. By way of general overview, in August 2018, Terra Strategic commissioned GRCC to carry out a survey of housing needs in Leonard Stanley Parish (Appendix 1). This aimed to provide a robust report on the parish's housing needs based on the evidence from reliable sources. The Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was published in November 2018.
- 4.12. The HNS concluded that there is a proven need for affordable housing in the Parish for 7 local families who cannot afford to buy or rent a suitable home in the parish. There is therefore a clear evident demand for a small scale rural exception site which can meet local needs and provide a valuable supply of affordable homes where there is an identified shortage. Helping, moreover, to reinforce social cohesion in the local community by helping ensure families and young people can continue to reside in Leonard Stanley and the surrounding area which is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

Economy

- 4.13. The economic dimension would be met by providing a range of dwellings in a sustainable location which would contribute to economic growth. New residents would help towards the economic dimension, with a proportion of their income being spent on local services and facilities. Additional employment would arise from the construction and sales phases of the development.

Environment

- 4.14. The environmental dimension is met through the development of land that is not constrained by any historic, ecological or environmental designations. The site in addition lies in flood zone 1, the lowest category of flood risk, according to the Environmental Agency Flood Risk Maps for Planning. Although a Greenfield site would be lost, this adverse impact is mitigated by the provision of affordable homes within a sustainable location.
- 4.15. Overall, therefore, it is clear that the site north of Bath Road would meet the principles of sustainable development, demonstrating clear economic, social and environmental benefits.

5. SITE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EMERGING STRATEGY

- 5.1. Within the emerging strategy one of the key issues is the acute demand for affordable housing in rural communities throughout the district; particularly for young people. This has been heightened by the fact that house prices have increased by the highest percentage within the south west compared to other regions along with the fact that much of the housing stock in Stroud being quite old; with the worst most evident in the private rented sector. As outlined in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This is further apparent in the Stonehouse cluster, to which the site relates, where one of the key issues is ensuring the provision of adequate smaller affordable housing and opportunities for local people. The need for affordable housing in rural communities is therefore a vital challenge which must be addressed within the district and within the emerging strategy.
- 5.2. One of the key ways this can be addressed, as identified in the emerging strategy, is by the encouragement of rural exception sites for first time buyers and renters, subject to local needs. The principle of rural exception sites is established at Policy HC4 which states that planning permission may be granted for affordable housing on sites adjoining identified settlement development limits with limited facilities or above. It has been established that the site adjoins Leonard Stanley which is a sustainable location being accessible both to a range of local services, such as shops, primary schools, healthcare and public transport. Furthermore, it has been established that the site is not subject to any overriding environmental or other material constraints namely impact on locally Grade II Listed buildings or with harm identified to the character or appearance to the area.

- 5.3. Turning to the other requirement of Policy HC4 the council will meet local affordable housing need where the council is satisfied that there is a clearly evidenced local need, which cannot be readily met elsewhere in the locality. It has been recognised that there is an evident local affordable housing need for 7 dwellings in the district; in respect to the commissioned HNS. This will be proportionally met by the small-scale development proposed at the land north of Bath road for the provision of around 15 dwellings which will primarily be affordable.
- 5.4. Furthermore, an important recurring thread in the NPPF is to promote sustainable development in rural areas, through housing which will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. As stated in paragraph 78. The Framework also sets out that sustainable development should, where possible, widen the choice of quality homes that are available as well as to make it easier for jobs to be created in our settlements.
- 5.5. As such the development at the proposed site will provide a deliverable housing construction project that in turn will deliver wealth and prosperity to the local economy. The provision of affordable and market housing will provide a greater choice for those wishing to remain in or move to the area whilst also helping to underpin the vitality of the settlement through the increase in disposable income in the village. The proposed site therefore acknowledges the advice of the Taylor Review of rural economy and affordable housing (2008) which at paragraph 55 states that, in order to promote sustainable development, 'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.' This is becoming an increasingly important concern for large villages such Leonard Stanley and the need to ensure the vitality and sustainability of these large villages.
- 5.6. In addition the proposed development will provide a valuable supply of open market and affordable housing to a locality where there is an acute housing shortage of both market and affordable dwellings. The supply of affordable housing stock will therefore help reinforce social cohesion in the local community by contributing to the ability of family connections to continue to reside in the area, whilst also ensuring young people have the opportunity to stay within Leonard Stanley and the surrounding villages in an area which is becoming increasingly unaffordable; helping to thereby ensure a more balanced community. This will therefore identify a key issue stated in the emerging strategy in helping to ensure there is adequate provision of affordable housing and housing opportunities for younger people and ensuring younger people are able to stay within rural neighbourhoods.
- 5.7. Moreover, it is clear that in Stroud settlements are highly constrained by both flood plains, ecological and landscape constraints and by the fact that a large part of the district is washed over by the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This places serious limitations on the scale and nature of development in the district and the accompanied need for sustainable sites which are free from such constraints and are deliverable to meet the demand for housing in the district. As identified, Leonard Stanley is a sustainable location offering key social, economic benefits while also being free from landscape, historical or environmental restrictions. The site should therefore be brought forward to help deliver balanced, sustainable growth to Stroud District.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. It has been established within the Emerging strategy that there is a clear identified need of affordable housing in rural communities in the Stroud District, which needs to be met through the provision of small scale residential sites at sustainable and accessible places to meet evidenced local needs.
- 6.2. In such regard, it is considered that the site north of Bath Road would meet the principles of sustainable development. The site is in a sustainable location with access to public transport, facilities and local services and will help deliver a locally evidenced need for affordable homes. The site moreover is free from landscape, environmental or historic constraints and is deemed suitable for small scale development.
- 6.3. It has further been established that the proposal addresses the principal reason for disapproval at the previous appeal decision. The proposal put forward is in keeping with the ribbon development character of Leonard Stanley and is in line with the existing curtilages and properties to the east, whilst also not opening out into the countryside on the periphery of the village. The proposal will therefore not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area which is the principal reason for dismissal at previous appeal.
- 6.4. Furthermore, as demonstrated, the proposed development of 15 dwellings, is considered in line with the principles of development the local plan inspector had prior envisaged for the site and as such the principle of development is established.



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