

Stroud District Council Local plan Review

Spatial Options: additional housing land

Q1a: Intensify:

Whilst intensifying existing development areas could have the advantage of leading to better facilities and improve S106 contributions to enhance existing infrastructure while providing a better mix of housing, the disadvantages are too many houses on any one site could lead to substandard developments and access roads. With insufficient supporting infrastructure, local education, health provision, retail and recreation facilities this can lead to over saturation especially in a parish or village setting.

However please note comments relevant to Cam

Site PS24 (NW Cam) is proposed in the emerging Local Plan for 700 houses. Developers are already planning for 1100 houses, in which case further intensification beyond that would not be beneficial to either those moving into the new houses or those already living in Cam. It would be better to intensify in phases on a few well planned sites to allow supporting infrastructure provision to keep pace before any next phase is embarked upon. Greater density of housing on any development would need to be carefully controlled to ensure that maximum beneficial infrastructure could be obtained for both current and new residents and to ensure no detriment to quality of life caused by the overwhelming of local facilities and green space. With the potential for increasing working from home, more space within and around houses will be necessary.

Cam has experienced relentless development over the years and recent moves to identify strategic sites on the East side of the River Cam, breaches an hitherto red line, goes against an independent land assessment drawn up during the production of Cam's NDP and the value the community of Cam places on the ancient fields and footpaths in that area that are in clear view of the AONB. Cam is not somewhere with a strong centre unlike the town centres of Dursley and Stonehouse. The employment offering and retail facilities are poor. It has not benefited in these ways from mass development over the years but its image has been exacerbated as a commuter town where the community travel outside for work and to spend their money.

Further intensification of development at Cam would need to go hand in hand with some extra vision and wider investment that would enhance the infrastructure within the area, and respect the environment to create a Village Centre that enhances its character and preserves its garden village feel.

Q1b: Town & Villages:

Most towns and villages would resist over-development as they can usually only support a certain level of new builds with buildings often subject to strict building codes and local plans. However, if done sympathetically and houses address local need then better provisioned areas would be receptive to limited smaller developments.

The Tier 2 settlements named are delightful small towns with long established town/village centres with, for the most part, excellent facilities. They would need to be treated sensitively to maintain their characters and to preserve precious green spaces and corridors, with small areas of development if sites can be found. Tier 3 settlements could possibly take small developments also again with huge emphasis based on character, environment and infrastructure.

Q1c: Additional Growth:

For larger housing demands this is a good option along the A38 corridor. Avoiding flood risks, with a ready made transport route between Bristol and Gloucester, if enough land could be secured this option supported by a better bus service with stops by each development this could work well but would be solely a feeder community unless some retail provisions could be offered on site and surrounding facilities such as health centres and schools taken into account. Neither of the other two options suggested (A419 & A4135) would be suitable for a variety of reasons.

If there's going to be an additional growth point it would be better if it were large enough to be an independent settlement, not a bolt on to a neighbouring one.

Q1d: Wider Dispersal:

It is likely that most small villages would want and benefit from some more housing, particularly affordable (rented) housing.

The argument against would be that smaller developments would not generate funding for extra infrastructure but they would generate some and these could have a beneficial effect on the communities without being overwhelmingly detrimental if the numbers were kept small and the design respectful of character, environment and local movement and connectivity. There is the question of affordable housing to consider also and there could be more support for community housing and self-building. Smaller allocations would have an impact on the affordable housing requirement.

Q1e: Would you support a hybrid / combination option? :

A combination of limited intensification (Option A) and an additional growth point along the A38 corridor (Option C) with local towns and villages having their local demand met in a very specific self-generated manner [ie only providing low cost, starter homes and aged population housing needed by the local population] (Option B) could work well to meet local and national demands. Housing should always be supported by improved infrastructure and transport provision, not as an afterthought.

Q1f – Can you suggest another strategy / spatial option for the identification of additional housing land?

Housing should be provided as close to employment centres and mixed retail as possible, easy access to adequate health and educational facilities and should always address local need first before having to meet national targets. Thought should always be given to flood risk, sewer provision and the ability of the local energy grid and broadband provision to support communities as well as public transport and dynamic travel opportunities and green/recreation sites and of course preserving nature and the environment. This will provide a better linked and planned building strategy than wider dispersal without focus or sense of community while still providing the number of houses required but avoids over-development in any one area.

Question 2 If you answered yes to Q1e above, please explain which of the spatial options (A-D) you would like to see combined in a hybrid strategy, and why?

A combination of B,C and D providing another well designed purpose built garden village with employment and good infrastructure, with some beneficial development throughout the rest of the district.

Spatial Options | a reserve housing supply:

Q3: Do you support the approach of identifying a reserve site or sites, if housing development on the sites that will be allocated in the Local Plan should fail to come forward as envisaged?

No - you should start an immediate review of the Plan instead.

Housing should be carefully planned in conjunction with local and neighbourhood plans so if delivery fails further public consultation should be sought and new sites agreed after due process.

Q3: Which strategy option(s) would you support, if a reserve site (or sites) is required?

Note: Option A – Intensify cannot be used as a means of identifying an additional reserve site.

Q 4b Option B – Towns and villages No

Local villages and towns cannot sustain large amounts of additional housing and should not be seen as a viable high density option but only a supporting strategy.

Q 4c Option C – Additional growth point - Yes

This could provide large numbers of housing along the A38 corridor while dispersing the impact of the resident numbers generated particularly if shared resources such as local convenience stores, bus stops and post boxes were also provided.

Q 4d Option D – Wider dispersal Yes

Q 4e Option E – Would you support a hybrid / combination option? Yes

All favoured options should count towards an assessment of regional needs and provisions especially public transport enhancement, parking (with electric charging points available) and extra employment and tourist attractions to raise living standards in the rural areas and avoiding over reliance on the major conurbations.

It should be noted that it is important that villages/parishes should retain their separate identities and character and not be “merged”.

Q4f: No

Q5: Option D and Option C

The additional growth point would be an opportunity to plan a new community rather than saturating existing areas in an ad hoc manner with towns and villages only getting the extra housing they need and can support while still contributing to the regional numbers.

Q6: Another trigger

What should trigger a reserve site (or sites) coming forward?

A delay in an allocated Local Plan site receiving planning permission? NO

Failure to deliver housing at the build rates set out in the Local Plan? YES

Another trigger (please specify) Please explain your reasons

Neither of the first two reasons should be allowed to derail a planned strategy that has passed public consultation. Reserve sites should require council to go back to reassessing previously assessed backup sites and identifying new sites to avoid costly and damaging mistakes. If there are delays or failures in delivery this should not mean other areas are penalised by hasty stop gap planning.

Only when all other dispersed sites identified have been exhausted. Reserve should mean reserve, not alternative and should only be used when all else fails. Identify enough sites in a dispersed area and the need to trigger reserve sites should not arise.

Additional housing options Potential sites

2.1 New Housing sites

Q7d: (STR065) Support

Small developments on brown field sites should be encouraged.

Q8: Green belt and flood plain land should be avoided if at all possible and climate change taken into account.

2.2 Potential growth points

Q9 Do you support or object to the development of the potential growth points identified, or any sites therein?

Unable to object/support as parish council

Q10: Are there any other sites that you would like to be considered as a future growth point?

No

3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA):

Q11 Do you have any comments to make about the Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies this consultation document?

It should be noted that the most sustainable model is one which enhances existing employment and retail sites rather than creating new sites from scratch. New sites are difficult to network to the energy grid and can often lead to more commuting and therefore more pollution and carbon creation.

Concreting the countryside is no substitute to good urban planning and expansion using brown field sites wherever possible. Green business models should be encouraged as should addressing the goal of reaching carbon neutral builds by encouraging forward thinking house builders willing to build future proofed energy efficient housing. Developments that offer fast charging points for EVs, sufficient space for parking and communal green spaces could be a stipulation.

Cycle networks linked to national routes and super fast broadband should always be considerations reducing the need to commute by car and encourage more home working. Waste disposal, recycling, local access to adequate water supplies and sewerage dispersal are other concerns with more remote sites. Early communications between the local council and local representatives can lead to better quality and more sensitive approaches to builds that add to rather than detract from the local area.