

STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS

NOVEMBER 2020

General Overview

The general strategy should be to place major housing developments in sustainable locations near to employment opportunities and with good communication links, especially with public transport. It would also be preferable for these developments to be near leisure, entertainment and retail facilities, although the latter are becoming a little less relevant with the growth of online shopping.

Another issue is that the Government is reported to be reviewing the algorithms used for calculating the housing numbers required and this could well result in a reduction in the target for Stroud. Furthermore the main driver for the increase in population growth in recent years has been immigration and the Government has stated their intention is to reduce this.

The Review makes the comment that brown field sites are more expensive for developers to build on, that may well be true but presumably these additional costs can be reflected in the price paid for the land so it can still be profitable for these sites to be developed. Thus there should not be any reason not to concentrate development on brown field sites in preference to green field ones.

New housing would be more acceptable to the local community if it were better designed so that it looked more attractive rather than just standard house types scattered around the sites with little use of local materials and overall “look” of the estates. Furthermore houses being built now should be approaching carbon neutral, whereas the developers seem to be doing all they can to avoid this to minimise their costs.

Sites

The Consultation gives only two major housing site options, Whitminster and Hardwicke giving a total potential 3,750 dwellings. Both these sites have a reasonable match to the criteria in paragraph one above and are a far better match than the site in the Local Plan between Berkeley and Sharpness. It is therefore recommended that these are brought forward before the Berkeley and Sharpness one, for this reason. There are also an other issue with the latter site as it is within one mile of Sharpness Docks, which has a licence to store up to 15,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. This is a major concern as some 2,500 tonnes recently exploded at Beirut causing damage to buildings up to six miles from the explosion centre. The Health and Safety Executive are looking into what lessons can be learnt from this explosion and will then make any changes required to the rules and legislation applying to such storage sites in the UK.

Incidentally the Hardwicke site is close to Javelin Park where the Energy from Waste plant is, so it would be relatively easy to use this plant to supply a heat network to the new development, thus enabling the buildings to have zero carbon usage in respect of their heating requirements.