

Local Plan Review
The Planning Strategy Team
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud
GL5 4UB



19th January 2020

Dear Sirs

Local Plan Review – Wisloe Green Development

I refer to your Stroud District Councils Draft Local Plan Public Consultation and set out below my **observations and objections** particularly to the sections relating to the 'Wisloe Green' proposals.

The proposals do not conform to **good planning principles** or joined up thinking in that it appears to place a major isolated development in an established rural area without regard to the impact on the character of adjoining villages, services, lack of amenities, lack of local employment, the relationship with the established expansion of nearby Cam and environmental considerations.

Location – The 'Wisloe Green' proposals make the development sound like a small green residential haven but in reality it is a major development comprising 1500 houses. This will cover a swathe of prime agricultural ground of the Severn Valley which otherwise would be separated from the adjoining conurbation of Cam and Dursley by the natural boundary of the M5 Motorway. The Wisloe area, together with the small villages of Slimbridge, Cambridge, Gossington and other hamlets are the rural character of the Severn Vale that the Planning Policies are intended to protect.

Scale – The scale of the development proposed will not only merge with the proposed expansion to the north of Cam but its proximity with the adjoining villages would create a coalescence of development from the Cotswold escarpment in the east to virtually the Severn Estuary. The impact on the AONB would be a disaster. The impact on the adjoining group of villages that in the whole of Slimbridge parish presently provides 500

homes would be to totally swamp the area with a further 1500 homes destroying the character and identity of these villages and the rural environs.

Siting – Development of this site raises quite a few concerns that the planning process would normally wish to avoid. Developments usually take into consideration relationship to places of employment to prevent them becoming dormitory settlements. Here there are no major employers locally and occupiers would inevitably have to commute to Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Bristol thus aggravating transport issues. It is naïve to think that in this rural area homeowners would be able to rely on public transport and a huge increase in cars, congestion and pollution will result.

The site also borders the busy M5 Motorway which poses problems with noise and pollution. However 'green' the development aspires to be, trees nor embankments will be enough to make living conditions tolerable for the new residents. Additionally the development would mean the loss of prime agricultural land which provides a green lung to counter co2 generation from existing and already committed developments.

Services and Amenities – It should be noted by the Council that the Slimbridge Parish of 500 homes has suffered from inadequate and aged infrastructure and services. This being the case, it is not appropriate that any permissions are granted without commitments to provide adequate services to not only the existing stock but also to potentially new 2,500 homes. We are talking about new sewage plants, foul drainage, stormwater provision, electricity distribution, as well as local authority waste collections. Road networks will need to be upgraded to cope with increased flows and non-existent amenities including schools, doctors surgeries, etc provided.

I do not believe this will happen and developments of this scale would be better sited adjacent to larger urban centres of population where employment, transport links, services and local amenities are more able to cope with additional development without harm to our countryside.

Environmental- The proposals seem to be at odds with both your own Councils objectives regarding carbon neutral intentions and that of the Ernest Cook Trust who champion the countryside and its management. Whilst the ownership of the land is vested in you both, it is rather hypocritical to put forward a scheme that will lead to the loss of high quality farmland together with its contribution to offset carbon generation and replace with a development that will generate a huge amount of pollution from potentially at least 3000 vehicles together with associated congestion.

This is the rural Severn Vale and it should remain so and development should be located in more suitable locations.

Conservation, Agriculture & ecology – The Wisloe area is the first fully agricultural area beyond to the north west of the Dursley / Cam built up areas. It is further bounded by the M5 Motorway making a distinct demarcation between urban and rural areas. It is appropriate that the agriculture and ecology of the Severn Vale is conserved

and maintained allowing an uninterrupted corridor for bird, animal and plant life to thrive.

In summary, it is acknowledged that additional housing is required in the Stroud District. It does, however, place a greater responsibility on the Council to consider and put forward appropriate and well thought out proposals to ensure that developments are located in positions that prevent the loss of valuable rural resources as these green open spaces will play an ever increasing role in countering carbon emissions from modern day life. New developments should be concentrated around established larger communities where employment, services and amenities are available or areas where regeneration can provide economic and sustainable growth.

Yours faithfully,

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