



Dear 

As a resident of Abwell, between Berkeley and Sharpness, I am sending this letter by email in the light of the local plan for house building from Stroud District Council.

Having lived in Abwell for almost 33 years I am extremely concerned by the proposal to build 1,000s of new homes around Berkeley, Sharpness, Newtown, Brookend, Wanswell and Hinton. This is not least given the housing development recently completed in Sharpness with another currently being undertaken on the bypass in Berkeley. Neither developments have taken into account the inadequate provision locally to meet an increase in demand for education at primary and secondary level and /or medical care.

I understand from your documentation that you recommend that new houses should be built in an area best able to offer employment, services and facilities, and also that this be such that it has the least impact on the landscape.

Whilst I appreciate the need to provide new homes in Stroud District I am sure that the extent of the numbers proposed here is completely inappropriate. You acknowledge in the 'Emerging strategy' that the employment opportunities in Berkeley are small. In my opinion there is a lack of services, facilities required to service these numbers. Also the impact on the landscape of this number of new builds will be such that it will not in fact support leisure and tourism that you say is your intention.

I do not think that the local roads will cope with the increased number of vehicles that this number of households is likely to generate. Given that there are not any large employers in the area I believe that the majority of occupants of any new houses will need to commute to work. This will increase the demand on the already inadequate public transport, local roads, the A38 and access to the M5 motorway at junction 14 and 13. This will have a negative impact on the environment and is unlikely to result in enriching the community in Berkeley, Sharpness and the local area. As noted in your core Strategy Discussion paper the consequences of any large scale development would be extremely detrimental to the

locality.

I also have great concerns about the cumulative effect of traffic on the A38 and M5 generated by building between and around Berkeley and Sharpness and the development around Buckover and in South Gloucestershire.

I note from previous council documentation that the need for new houses in Sharpness by 2031 was identified as 300, approximately ten times less than in the latest plan. I realise that over time you have looked to increase the number of houses in Berkeley but do wonder what has happen to make such a significant alteration in the numbers proposed?

Similarly, the facilities in Sharpness have in your documents been regraded from poor to good over the last 12 months. Back in 2011 Sharpness was described as not suitable for building houses being 'relatively remote from main employment centres and primary services and facilities in the district, would require significant new infrastructure and has flood risk and landscape issues'. I am at a loss to understand how this radical regrading could have occurred and am interested to know on what evidence this has been based? Whilst the village shop there has been refurbished it has not grown in size, nor has the refurbishment made any difference to the facilities or services that it offers.

In the time that I have lived in Abwell I have seen a decline in the facilities in Berkeley and Sharpness. Lots of facilities have disappeared, like the bank and the secondary school, or reduced hours of opening, like the library. The GP surgery is being manned under special temporary measures as no Doctors were willing to take on the partnership there from September 2018. It may be another 9 months before any efforts are made by the CCG to make permanent arrangements.

Before approving this plan my hope is that you will reconsider in its current form so that some additional homes can be proposed in much smaller numbers, in keeping with the area's limited employment opportunities, facilities and services. In its current form I believe that the plan would destroy the character of this historic town and locality.

Regards

