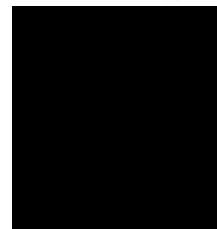


Local Plan Review
The Planning Strategy Team
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 4UB

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
RECEIVED

04 DEC 2017



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

29th November 2017

Dear Sir

Local Plan Review - Issues and Options Paper

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Council's Issues and Options Paper with regard to its Local Plan Review. Having reviewed the documentation I would make the following comments.

In general terms the document identifies the employment and housing needs of the district, and balances these against environmental and health considerations.

That said I would be concerned about, and would object to, any release of land for development in Oakridge Lynch and Bisley, which falls outside of the existing settlement boundaries. These settlements should remain defined by their existing boundaries and all development beyond these boundaries (identified as OAK A, BIS A, and BIS B in your Issues and Options Paper) should be resisted in order to protect the integrity of these largely unspoilt Cotswold villages, along with the character and quality of the AONB. Regrettably, if these settlements are damaged by further expansion and development, their character and charm will be lost forever.

Furthermore, any in-fill development within these settlements should be the subject of extremely close scrutiny to ensure that it is both sensitive and sympathetic to the established character of the area (provided via the historic stone buildings and the Cotswold landscape). In this regard development control policies should be shaped to offer protection in terms of: architectural style; scale; massing; and the use of appropriate, traditional and vernacular materials that are in keeping with the status quo.

I am also concerned about the disproportionate impact development in Oakridge Lynch and Bisley would have on the infrastructure (highways, utilities and the two primary schools) that currently serves these communities. The roads serving these villages are unable to accommodate additional traffic and in my view existing road use (the size and weight of vehicles, and the number of vehicle movements) has significantly contributed to the erosion and destruction of dry stone walls (field, highway and garden boundaries), as well as the grass verges that were once such a feature of these villages. These characteristics (amongst others) are what define the Cotswold landscape and provide the backdrop to the AONB.

Whilst the Council has responsibility for accommodating housing and economic growth, it is also (by virtue of its plan making and development control powers) the custodian of the landscape (in itself an important economic driver and a significant catalyst for the local economy). As such, settlements

like Oakridge and Bisley should be protected at all costs. Existing protections should be extended (Conservation Area Status) and additional protections should be included within the Council's emerging Local Plan to safeguard and protect the character of these settlements in perpetuity.

In addition I would also like to express my concern about the possibility of development (and settlement boundary expansion) in Chalford (CHA A), Minchinhampton (MIN A and MIN B), and Horsley (HOR A). Chalford's growth in recent years is such that the green buffer between it and neighbouring Bussage and Eastcombe has been eroded and further development would only serve to compound this problem.

Development at Mincinhampton would also erode the integrity of this settlement as would development at Horsley. In my view growth at Horsley would best be accommodated within neighbouring Nailsworth, which is an established town with the necessary infrastructure (albeit strained) to accommodate additional (albeit modest) housing and economic growth.

I would be very happy to discuss my comments and observations with you in more detail, and would wish to participate in any future consultation with regard to the Council's emerging Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

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