



January 16th 2020

To The Planning Officer

Objections to the Proposed PS36 development of 2400 houses , community hub etc. by 2040 phase 1; extending to a further 2600 houses by 2050 phase 2, totalling 5000 houses.

If this plan is forwarded for inspection I want this objection to be shown to the Inspectorate.

I understand that if I do not write the above on this letter the council will not necessarily show objections to the inspector. I wonder how many people who may respond to this draft plan are aware of this. Many people say that they have already responded at a previous consultation, without any awareness that their previous objections will be ignored as irrelevant presumably as the proposal is now more than double the number of houses. I find this perturbing as it feels that it could be a deliberate way of ensuring that fewer voices from the public who may object are heard.

Although this is deemed a draft proposal, I am concerned as to how much scope the local population have to influence the council / inspector's decisions.

I have looked at the historical background to this latest proposal, and am aware that Stroud District Council have targets to meet set by the Government which appear to have been increased over the years. I wonder if the council has challenged these numbers. It is difficult to form a true picture of the council's decisions to date as one would need to have a full time job and a degree in planning to understand the complexities of the documents produced. However, I have looked at the 2011 document regarding options and pros and cons of various options and sites.

2011 document on potential locations for strategic growth

I have concentrated mostly on Option A – the single growth area where you state that 3 areas are the preferred option – Cam/Eastington/West of Stonehouse as the most sustainable and viable options. You cover numerous reasons why you came to this decision:

CO2 emissions re: commuting and local traffic at Sharpness is **markedly worse** than at the 3 other areas due to its remoteness.

Remote from any other major employment, retail or leisure hubs. It is noted that there is very little market demand for employment in this location and that land has been available for 30 years with no development

Flood risk over significant areas of this site compared to others; increased long term risk as susceptible to climate change in the scenario of rising sea levels currently envisaged

Motorway access is less convenient

Congestion at Berkeley Heath junction

Poor public transport

Negative impact on Berkeley town shops

Landscape impact issues re: being very visible from the Forest of Dean to name one.

The port of Sharpness is noisy, smelly and incompatible as a neighbour and has a 120 year lease

There is contaminated land risk from old chemical and gas works at the NE tip.

Profound effect on character and appearance of the docks and settlement

Loss of a considerable amount of **high grade agricultural land**

Nationally and internationally important wildlife designations ie along the Severn Estuary

Recent developments

I don't understand why Stroud council appears to be considering this area now as a preferred area for a new "growth point" when there are so many issues that appear to make it clear that it is not the most suitable area to put 5000 houses. I also feel that it is not appropriate to be talking about a date 20 years in the future. I can find nothing else in the plan where you are considering this. It very much appears that you don't consider 2040 to 2050 anywhere else because you feel you will have sorted out the housing demand for the whole area by disproportionately putting over 80% of the council's requirement in the South of the county with Sharpness bearing the brunt of the development. I believe that the district plan is to have a powerhouse of employment between Gloucester and Cheltenham. Why would you then place the majority of new housing in a remote estuarine area with very few facilities?

I am aware that the developers have presented a very professional and detailed master plan for their eco-village which has had various titles. The latest appears to be a nurturing neighbourhood. At the previous incarnation it was a garden village. Perhaps even they can see that 5000 houses is not a village. There are schools and a throng of buses and a train station and open areas and green corridors and a protected area for the wildlife along the river etc etc. If we were to believe the developers this new estate is going to be a utopia. Unfortunately there are no guarantees that any of their grand plans will come to fruition. We have to try and believe that the masses will abandon their cars for a wonderful integrated transport system; that there will be few commuters because 5,000 to 10,000 jobs will be created in 10 hectares of land, that all the facilities will be in place at the start of the development. I do not believe this will happen.

There are no plans to upgrade any of the existing roads so of course there will be congestion; people will take what they hope are short cuts and use existing lanes which will endanger current road users, cyclists, horse riders, dog walkers. In 2011 you state that you feel a 2,000 house development would not place too much strain on lanes and neighbouring settlements. The roads and lanes are already so much busier than a few years ago with commuters and tourists. There is little consideration for the current population let alone increasing it by such a huge amount -- maybe 15,000 people

I think this plan is going to radically change the nature of the whole area. In 2011 you comment that having a development at Whitminster - "the site would envelop the village and radically change its nature". This plan won't change one village but several -- Brookend, Wanswell, Newtown, Sharpness, Hinton but you make no mention of this. You talk about buffering existing hamlets i.e. Nupend -- no mention in this document about any buffering for the existing villages. Instead, these villages would be swallowed up by the enormity of housing on their doorstep and the increased

population and traffic would have a detrimental effect on several other local villages such as Breadstone, Purton, Ham , Stone, Alkington, Newport, Berkeley Heath, Mobley.

I feel that the developers have put a comprehensive plan forward that ticks all the right boxes and has no consideration for the historic, rural culture of this whole area. At a time when climate change is high on the agenda we should not be considering building on the greenfields but we should be doing our utmost to find brown field sites, to urge the government to insist that empty houses of which there are a vast number are put to use and to truly look at sustainable uses for agricultural land that may need to find alternatives to traditional farming. It is not good enough to accept a plan just because it is presented as virtually a fait accompli. I urge the council to really consider the unique landscape that this plan would ruin; I urge the council to think hard about the existing communities whose way of life they are threatening.

Generations of families have existed here, the culture of the area should be protected, the biodiversity of the area can be enhanced, adding to the existing communities in a sustainable and affordable way and adopting a fairer dispersion of the district's housing needs is I believe the way forward. I refer back to the issues that the council identified in 2011 – these issues remain relevant today . In 2011 you appeared to be concerned with the lack of constraints that would limit the development. It appears now that there is nothing to prevent the council from continuing to expand wherever it wants. It doesn't seem to care that the village SDL's will be abutted by this enormous development because it is called a 'separate development'. I guess in the future the council will be able to abut its next new eco nurturing green estate up to the boundary of this one and find no problem with this as it will be a new development in its own right.

I do hope that comments from local people that are abounding in the area [such as "it's a done deal," and "it's no point writing to the council, they've already made their decision"] are unfounded. Other more worrying comments from developers - " when we say 2000 houses we mean 4000; when we say 5000 it will really be 10,000" do little to instil confidence – maybe they are meant to be humorous. I do not find such comments even second-hand in the least bit funny, just alarming. But I did think 2400 houses was an enormous number when it was mooted and this has more than doubled so I feel it is right to be alarmed. Once again, a second hand comment reportedly from someone close to the council - "Are you putting your house on the market before you are living in a building site?" just serves to reaffirm that this consultation is purely a paper exercise. I hope this is not the case.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

