

STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Why have a Local Plan?

1.1.1. This Local Plan sets out Stroud District Council's policies and proposals for future development and land use in the District to 30 June 2011. Its uses are to:-

- provide a clear framework to enable co-ordination of infrastructure provision;
- provide clear policies against which development proposals can be assessed;
- develop the strategic policy of the County Council's Adopted Structure Plan into more detailed local policy; and
- bring planning issues before the public for debate and to develop public 'ownership' of the Plan.

1.1.2. Planning is required to control the development of land in the public interest. There are development needs in the area that it is necessary to accommodate. This Plan takes these and provides a positive framework in which they can be met. However, it also sets out those interests that may be damaged by insensitive development and it establishes policies to protect those interests. This Local Plan therefore addresses the balance between the competing needs of development and the desire to protect the best of our environment.

1.2. The National Context and Legal Background

1.2.1. All District Planning Authorities are required to produce a district wide Local Plan. This is set out in the relevant legislation¹.

1.2.2. This Plan has been prepared under the requirements of that and other related legislation and Government advice. Of note in this context is the range of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) which are being replaced by Planning Policy Statements (PPS's) published by the

¹ Main documents:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compensation Act 2004
Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) Regulations 2005
Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 - Development Plans 2000
Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 - General Policy and Principles 1997
Planning Policy Statement 1 (2005) Planning System/General Principles
Planning Policy Statement 12 (2005) Local development Frameworks

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (see Appendix 1 for a list of these),

1.2.3. The plan has been through the procedural requirements of the relevant legislation and the Council has adopted this as a Statutory Plan. This Plan, together with the adopted Structure Plan, forms the Development Plan for Stroud District and will be given considerable weight by the Council and the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister as the major interest to be taken into account when determining planning applications. In most cases the Development Plan policies will be the deciding factor unless there are other clear and overriding material considerations.

Status of this Adopted Local Plan

1.2.4. Local Plans are of key importance in the planning system now that it is established that the system is plan-led. The law requires that decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991).

1.2.5. This Plan was adopted by the full Council in November 2005. It has been adopted for development control purposes. Therefore, this Plan provides the District Council's most up-to-date approved strategy and policy framework for making decisions on planning applications. It is a highly significant document in helping to shape the future of the District.

1.2.6. All proposals for development in the District will be considered against the policies and proposals of this Plan. The Plan must be considered as a whole and it is important that proposals comply with all relevant policies of the Plan and its successor versions. It will be accorded greater weight than all previous non statutory planning policies as the main consideration in determining planning applications. This version of the Local Plan supersedes the Modifications Version of the Local Plan May 2005.

1.3. The Regional and Strategic Context

1.3.1. The Plan has also been prepared within the framework of regional planning guidance and the strategic guidance of the Adopted Gloucestershire Structure Plan, Second Review.

Regional Context

1.3.2. The key elements of the regional planning framework are set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the South West of England (RPG10). RPG10 was published in July 1994 and covers the period up to 2011. Under provisions in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 this is saved as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) until it is reviewed and replaced. A new RSS is in preparation and is programmed to be adopted in 2007. The RSS will provide a planning framework for the preparation and review of Local Development Frameworks (LDF).

1.3.3. The aims for the region are currently:-

- To safeguard and enhance the distinctiveness and diversity of the South West's environment.
- To encourage and maintain a diverse and healthy economy throughout the South West.
- To secure a sustainable level of growth and distribution of development.
- To provide a framework for the provision of infrastructure and services to ensure an enhanced quality of life.
- To provide for a safe and efficient transport system to serve the existing and future needs of the South West.

1.3.4. Sustainability should be the cornerstone of the Region's development plans and planning decisions. The Region's environmental quality and diversity should not be put at risk and development plans should ensure that nationally and internationally designated areas and features are protected. Regeneration should be promoted and degraded areas enhanced.

1.3.5. RPG10 also stresses how the interdependence between maintaining and enhancing the Region's environment and economic prosperity should be recognised through development plans. Plans should

encourage economic prosperity and facilitate employment growth and economic diversification. The importance of an integrated transport system should be recognised in plans and policies should improve links within the Region, with other regions and with Europe. However, provision for new development should be made in ways which reduce the need for travel, reduce congestion and encourage travel choice.

1.3.6. The RPG underlines the Government's approach of encouraging development in towns and cities and discouraging scattered development in the countryside. Outside the main urban areas of the Region, development plans should identify settlements which have good public transport links to main urban areas or are capable of serving as self-contained towns with a mix of uses as suitable for accommodating growth.

Gloucestershire County Structure Plan

1.3.7. The County Council adopted the Structure Plan: Second Review in November 1999. This provides strategic policy guidance to cover the period from July 1991 to June 2011. The Local Plan is prepared in the context of the adopted Structure Plan and correlates with the time period within it (1st July 1991 – 30th June 2011) in terms of its allocation requirements as set out in the Structure Plan. The Local Plan takes into account completions and commitments in relation to its housing and employment allocations from mid-1991.

1.3.8. Gloucestershire County Council has given written notice that the Stroud Local Plan is in full conformity with the adopted Structure Plan.

1.3.9. The Structure Plan indicates, in general terms, the areas to which development should be directed and the areas requiring protection from development. One of the main functions of this Local Plan is to interpret and apply the strategy of the Structure Plan by developing its policies and proposals in relation to the District Area. The two plans are therefore complementary and together form the Development Plan for Stroud District.

1.3.10. The County Council has since progressed work on a Third Alteration of the

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Examination in Public and reached a stage of Second Modifications before a Direction by the Secretary of State in April 2005 prevented its adoption unless further changes were made to three of its policies. The County Council has decided not to progress the Plan any further, but its contents form the most up to date strategic policy guidance that is a material consideration in making planning decisions.

1.3.11. Where appropriate, the strategic background to each topic in this Local Plan is provided at the beginning of the chapters.

Environmental Appraisal

1.3.12. Local authorities are required to prepare their development plans in a way that comprehensively and consistently takes environmental considerations into account. Such a mechanism for doing this is the appraisal of the plan against environmental criteria. An environmental appraisal weighs up and reports on the environmental and other costs and benefits of the plan. Its purpose is to demonstrate that these concerns have been fully integrated into the plan-making process. The value and purpose of environmental appraisal is:

- To clarify the environmental objectives of the plan
- To understand the implications for the environment of any policy option, or interacting group of policy options
- To enable the implications for different, wide ranging, and potentially conflicting aspects of the environment to be taken into account
- To demonstrate to users of the plan how the policies have had regard to environmental matters

1.3.13. The Council aims to produce a plan led by environmental and other considerations of sustainability. An Environmental Appraisal was developed and published for public consultation alongside the Revised Deposit Local Plan. It serves to identify those policies that will be successful in achieving this aim and those that will fail to achieve it in certain aspects. The plan's policies have been appraised in respect of their environmental, social and economic impacts at both local and global level. As and when major modifications are made to the policies of the

Plan, the Environmental Appraisal will be reviewed.

1.4. Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

1.4.1. In addition to its Local Plan, the District Council has traditionally provided further planning guidance to support its mainstream policies and proposals. Such supplementary planning guidance has generally taken the form of design guides and development briefs for specific sites. This guidance is more detailed than that contained in Local Plans and may not always be strictly land-use related, though it is of relevance when considering planning issues and should be taken into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

1.4.2. The District Council will continue to use its existing supplementary planning guidance and publish new guidance to support this Local Plan as and when necessary. Whilst this cannot be accorded the same weight as the Local Plan in the decision making process, its importance will increase if it has been prepared in consultation with the public and has been formally approved by the Council. Where guidance and documents are to be used or are to be prepared, in support of policies and proposals in this Local Plan it is clearly identified in the supporting text and in the Stroud Local Development Scheme (LDS).

1.4.3. Current documents that have the status of supplementary planning guidance are:-

- Residential Design Guide.
- Landscape Assessment.
- Historic Buildings - their repair and conservation.
- Residential Development and Outdoor Play Space.
- Conservation Area Policy Statements.
- Golf Courses.

The Stonehouse Design Statement has also been approved as supplementary planning advice.

1.4.4. In future such guidance will eventually be replaced by Supplementary Planning

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Documents produced in accord with the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Council's Local Development Scheme contains further guidance on this.

1.5. Using the Local Plan

1.5.1. The Local Plan consists of two elements - a Written Statement and the Proposals Maps. The Written Statement contains:-

- the background information on each of the subjects discussed;
- the planning and land-use policies and proposals; and
- appendices to inform and support the policies and proposals of the plan.

The main policies and proposals are distinguished in the text with a grey background. The Written Statement also contains a number of appendices which form part of the plan.

1.5.2. The Proposals Maps consist of two 1:25,000 scale maps which cover the northern and southern parts of the District. These are supplemented by a series of inset maps which show settlement boundaries, Conservation Areas and other land-use designations in built up areas in greater detail. The Stroud Urban Area and the principal settlements of Cam and Dursley are shown at 1:10,000 scale on a third large sheet accompanying the plan.

1.5.3. Land-use policies and proposals in the Written Statement are illustrated on the Proposals Maps and are cross-referenced to the Written Statement by the appropriate policy/proposal reference number in the key to the maps. A key to the maps is included on each large accompanying map sheet and at the front of the Inset Maps section of the Written Statement. Those policies/proposals which relate to specific parts of the Plan area are also identified on the Proposals Maps. Other policies not so defined will apply to either the whole Plan area or specifically to land within, or land outside, the settlement development boundaries.

1.6. The Next Steps

1.6.1. The preparation process of the Local Plan is shown in the following diagram. The

Council has adopted this version of the local plan.

1.6.2. A fuller explanation of the process and the role the public have been able to take can be found in the publication Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans – A Guide to Procedures - available directly from:-

Government Office for the South West
2 Rivergate, Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6EH

or at the address below:-

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STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

CONSULTATION ON SETTLEMENT / EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY JUNE / JULY 1997

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

LOCAL PLAN PLACED ON DEPOSIT PUBLIC CONSULTATION (NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999)

OBJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS CONSIDERED BY DISTRICT COUNCIL

REVISED VERSION OF PLAN PLACED ON DEPOSIT PUBLIC CONSULTATION AUTUMN 2000

LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY JANUARY 2002 – JUNE 2003

INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON INQUIRY NOV 2004 DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSIDERS REPORT AND IN MAY 2005 PROPOSES MODIFICATIONS

CONSULTATION ON MODIFICATIONS JUNE/JULY 2005

DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSIDER OBJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS NOV 2005 AND RESOLVES TO ADOPT

PLAN ADOPTED (ANTICIPATED FEBRUARY 2006)

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1.6.3. Under the new planning system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004, the Local Plan policies can be saved for 3 years as part of the Local Development Framework. In turn, new Local Development Documents will be prepared as set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. As these progress through the new planning system and become adopted, the policies contained within them will replace the policies in the Local Plan.