

## **2. The Council's Strategy for Development**

### **2.1. Introduction**

2.1.1. Stroud District Local Plan seeks to further the Council's corporate purpose "to make Stroud District a better place to live, work and visit for everyone". It must do this within the context of the principles of sustainable development, and must achieve both the protection of the fine quality of its built and natural environment, particularly the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, whilst achieving social and economic development. The key elements of the Council's strategy are:

### **2.2. National and Strategic Context**

2.2.1. In accordance with strategic requirement, provision will be made for the development of 9400 dwellings during the Plan period, and about 100 hectares of land for employment purposes.

2.2.2. Bearing in mind the need to protect the environment, this will mean imposing restrictive policies limiting growth to those requirements and focusing on locations which provide a good linkage between housing and employment, particularly by the use of public transport and minimising the use of private motor vehicles.

### **2.3. Housing Location**

2.3.1. In doing so, the Council will ensure that most of the new development will take place in accordance with the search sequence set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No 3, concentrating firstly on identified available sites on previously developed land within built up areas. Since not all of the 9,400 dwelling requirement from the structure plan can be met on previously developed land and other sites within the urban areas, new development will take place as extensions to the Principal Urban Area of Gloucester. Other requirements will be met on sites in or adjoining settlements according to the settlement hierarchy. (see also paragraph 5.3.1.)

2.3.2. Extensions to the Gloucester PUA will take place at Hardwicke (Hunt's Grove) and at the former Brockworth Airfield. Since the adopted Structure Plan Policy H5 specifically requires the local plan to make provision for a major urban extension south of Brockworth, and since the Structure Plan's target for housing will not be met without these 2 sites, they are regarded as strategic sites to which high priority attaches. This accords with the need to focus development at the Gloucester PUA as expressed in the RSS and in the Structure Plan, Third Alteration.

2.3.3. RPG10 (September 2001) now forms the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South-West. It directs that the main focus for growth across the region should be the eleven identified Principal Urban Areas (PUA). In accordance with policy SS2 of the RSS, development should take place primarily within the defined PUA, where this is not possible the next best option for development is in the form of planned urban extensions to the PUA in sustainable locations. Thereafter development should focus on Other Designated Centres for Growth, none of which are designated in Gloucestershire.

2.3.4. Part of Stroud District falls within the Gloucester PUA as defined by the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Third Alteration Key Diagram. The Structure Plan Third Alteration has not progressed to adoption because of a Direction issued by the Secretary of State regarding its failure to concentrate a sufficient proportion of the County's housing obligations at the defined PUA and to undertake a review of the Green Belt around Cheltenham and Gloucester. However, greater weight can be afforded to the policies within the Structure Plan that are not subject to continuing objections or the Secretary of State's Direction. The Direction did not specifically take issue with the defined extent of the Gloucester and Cheltenham PUA, as required by policy SS5 of RPG10. Work on strategically reviewing the Green Belt relies upon the PUA boundary as defined.

2.3.5 In accordance with the RSS (set out by RPG10) it is appropriate for a proportion of the District's housing allocations to be provided at the defined Gloucester PUA as a means of promoting sustainable patterns of development. The strategic allocation at Hunts Grove in this Plan accords with the defined PUA boundary.

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2.3.6. Hunt's Grove falls within the defined Gloucester PUA adjacent to a major strategic employment site and the mixed use development on the former RAF Quedgeley site. It represents a good opportunity to create a sustainable mixed use development in accord with national, regional and strategic policy. The site is close to the Waterwells Park and Ride facility and its development will enable contributions to be sought towards securing public transport improvements between this area of the Gloucester PUA and the city centre. This is an important factor in delivering public transport improvements for Gloucester as required by policy SS12 of the RSS. In conjunction with the neighbouring development at RAF Quedgeley development of this part of the Gloucester PUA will deliver significant transport infrastructure and public transport service improvements to the benefit of the southern arc of the Gloucester PUA.

2.3.7. Allocations for development are made within and adjacent to the Stroud Urban Area, and the Principal Settlement of Cam/Dursley. Within the Stroud Urban Area, development will be encouraged to meet the full needs of the community, including employment and housing, town centre and social facilities. Principal Settlements will be the focus of development, consistent with the character and function of the settlement, which supports local services and the social and economic well-being of the local community and the surrounding area. This is to ensure a more sustainable form of development, rather than dispersed development within villages and rural areas.

2.3.8. The Stroud urban area includes the settlements of Stroud: Stonehouse, Thrupp and Brimscombe, North and South Woodchester, and Nailsworth as defined on the proposals map. The core urban area relates to the parishes of Cainscross, Stroud and Rodborough with the remaining settlements having strong functional links to that core. As such, Stroud town is acknowledged as the focal point for this area. Policies in the Local Plan will be used to protect areas outside settlement boundaries from inappropriate development proposals.

2.3.9. The regeneration of Stroud and Dursley town centres will be sought by, among other measures, seeking to increase populations and employment close to these centres. The role of

town centres and local shopping areas generally will be maintained and enhanced, providing a focus for the community.

2.3.10. More modest allocations for development are made within and adjacent to the Small Towns and Larger Villages of Wotton-Under-Edge, Minchinhampton, Painswick, Kings Stanley/Leonard Stanley, Newtown/ Sharpness, Kingswood and Eastington.

2.3.11. There are a number of other settlements – including smaller villages with only basic facilities and services – which are defined with settlement boundaries on insets to the proposals map. They are suitable for a level of growth which can be obtained through windfall provisions on infill plots and affordable housing on “exception” sites.

2.3.12. The other settlements with defined settlement boundaries are: Amberley, Arlingham, Berkeley, Bisley, Box, Brookthorpe, Bussage, Cambridge, Chalford, Coaley, Cranham, Eastcombe, Frampton-on-Severn, France Lynch, Haresfield, Hillesley, Horsley, Longney, Manor Village, Middleyard, Newport, North Nibley, Nymphsfield, Oakridge, Randwick, Saul, Selsley, Sheepscombe, Slimbridge, Stinchcombe, Stone, Uley, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, and Whitminster.

2.3.13. New housing in the countryside and in settlements without defined settlement boundaries will be very strictly controlled. Unnecessary development in the countryside will be prevented.

## 2.4. Employment Location

2.4.1. The Structure Plan's requirement to provide about 100 hectares of employment land will be met. Employment development will be centred on the new mixed use development allocation at Hunts Grove and within the district's economic base lying within the Stroud valleys, at Cam and Dursley, and with outlying major employment sites near Wotton-Under-Edge and Berkeley. Protection will be given to identified key employment land where employment needs take precedence over other uses.

2.4.2. Sharpness provides the county's main port and also has a railway line connection with

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the main Bristol to Birmingham line. Opportunities for enhanced inter-modal freight transport will be sought and proposals which would prejudice the maximum use of the port facilities at Sharpness will not be permitted.

2.4.3. Existing employment locations will be given protection where appropriate and new employment opportunities are provided for at a limited number of focal sites providing good access to the existing population and seeking to redress the current imbalance between housing and employment opportunities.

2.4.4. Small-scale employment opportunities and development for social purposes may be justified within the defined settlements subject to the underlying objective of seeking development which is sustainable.

### 2.5. Environmental Protection

2.5.1 The high quality environment within towns and villages will be maintained making them attractive places to live whilst making the best use of existing land within them.

2.5.2. Long term protection will be given to the character and appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and only limited forms of development will be permitted if shown to be appropriate and without harm to the natural beauty of the area.

2.5.3. The rich historic and architectural heritage of the Cotswold and Severn Vale buildings will be protected, including over 4,500 buildings listed as being of architectural or historic interest, and the 62 scheduled ancient monuments. Development within the 42 designated conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of each area.

2.5.4. The flora and fauna of the district will be given protection and development will not be permitted which is harmful to any special protection area under the RAMSAR convention, to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, to a Special Area for Conservation or a proposed Special Area for Conservation.

### 2.6. Services and Infrastructure

2.6.1. Adequate services and infrastructure will be provided.

2.6.2 Development related to transport and traffic will be judged against the objectives of reducing the overall need to travel; reducing the overall length and number of motorised journeys; providing alternative means of travel to the private car; to locate uses which generate large numbers of trips in places which are, or have the potential to be, served by public transport; to protect the existing provision, and allow for the improvement of, a network of footpaths and off-road cycleways thus encouraging local journeys by foot or cycle; to improve the integration and interchange facilities of different modes of public transport; to ensure that new parking provision does not encourage high levels of car use; and to manage traffic effectively to improve the environment, decrease congestion and limit pollution.

2.6.3. Cultural and leisure facilities will be provided to serve the needs of the community. These facilities will include the provision of space and buildings for sport, art, entertainment and passive recreation.