

## **6. TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING**

### **6.1 GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING CHAPTER**

#### **The Objections**

TCR/1/0125-CW  
TCR/543/2277

Gloucestershire County Council  
Government Office for the South West

#### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Archaeological assessments should be a requirement of any development within the defined town centres.
- (b) Scope of Chapter should be broadened to include town centre uses other than retailing.
- (c) Positive approach should be adopted for regenerating town centres by making specific proposals to enhance vitality and viability.
- (d) Plan should include an assessment of retail need.

#### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.1.1 The Plan is to be read as a whole and Policy B13 of the Built Environment Chapter protects archaeological remains. The supporting text in 7.6.5 and 7.6.6 lays down the procedure to be followed, including the submission of an assessment, when remains are affected by development.

6.1.2 The Council has agreed that the scope of the chapter should be expanded to include a broad range of facilities in town centres. The rewording of paragraph 6.1.1 in the Revised Deposit Draft has in my view met this objection.

6.1.3 It seems to me that Policies S4, S5, S5A all encourage the regeneration of the town centre and also make it clear what facilities are not at present available. In particular, new Policy S5A deals specifically with the allocated mixed-use site at Cheapside.

6.1.4 To accord with Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 the Council has agreed to set out in the Plan an assessment of need for new retail development in the Revised Deposit version of Section 6.5.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.1**

Make no modification to the Plan in response to these objections.

## **6.2 PARAGRAPH 6.1.1**

### **The Objections**

TCR/para. 6.1.1./1/0159-CW Gloucestershire County Council

### **Summary of Objections**

More could be said about the advantages of traditional town centres.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

In the Revised Deposit Draft, the Council has expanded the text of paragraph 6.1.1 to describe the strengths and functions of the town centres. This helps to put the policies that follow into context.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.2**

Make no further modifications to the Plan in response to this objection.

## **6.3 PARAGRAPH 6.1 - OMISSION SITE OS214**

### **The Objections**

TCR(OS214)/329/1007 Cotswold Canals Trust  
TCR(OS214)/502/2118 British Waterways

### **Summary of Objections**

(a) Land at Capel Mill should be identified as a mixed-use site and included within the town centre; and be supported by a development brief.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.3.1 The Capel Mill site is on the edge of Stroud town centre separated from it by Dr Newton's Way. Although it was identified in a Town Centre Regeneration Strategy as a potential site for redevelopment to help the overall vitality and viability of the town centre, Capel Mills was excluded from the town centre in the Plan.

6.3.2 The Stroudwater Canal and the Thames and Severn Canal, an integral part of the site, are to be restored as part of a strategy being promoted by British Waterways. The consortium has submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which the objector considers will be successful if not in whole, in part.

6.3.3 It is very likely that the restoration would include the Canal from Saul Junction to Brimscombe/Chalford and this would provide the momentum for the restoration of the Canal in and around Capel Mills. A report has been produced, Waterways for Tomorrow DETR 2000,

which emphasises the priority now given to Canal restoration. I understood from the evidence that Cotswold Canals are at the top of the list for action.

6.3.4 Although the site is relatively close to the town centre, in my view it does not in any way read with it. Regardless of the town centre regeneration strategy I consider it unlikely that the use of the site would have any major impact on the vitality or viability of the centre as such. I take this view, even if, as the objectors suggested, part of the site could be used for low key craft workshops, a waterside restaurant, or perhaps a hotel.

6.3.5 Retail use was also suggested but I do not believe a retail use, of itself, would be appropriate here. It would be at least some 530m from the centre and separated by Dr Newtons Way. However, subject to engineering issues, both structural and traffic, being resolved a hotel or restaurant could well be compatible waterside uses making good use of the setting. One of the objector's professional advisors is in a far better position than I am to assess whether such uses would be commercially viable as he deals with such matters locally. It does seem to me, however, that whatever use is compatible with the restoration of the Canal it would not be likely to have an unacceptable influence on the town centre.

6.3.6 I do consider the Capel Mill site is of local importance and that this importance should be recognised in the Plan in some way. Even without the benefit of the results of the Interim Policy Statement I see no need to include the site within the town centre to which it has only a tenuous link. If significant development is proposed, or a mixture of uses, I favour a specific policy incorporating the results of the IPS study, if necessary supported by a development brief. If, however, the development is very low key and the wider influence of the proposal is not significant a paragraph in the supporting text of the Plan may be appropriate. Which chapter should contain the policy and text would depend on the scale and mix of the development proposed although it would probably be Chapter 10 Recreation and Leisure, as Policy R8 already refers to development alongside the route of canals.

6.3.7 The Council considers that Policy S12 could be used to deal with proposals which might come forward on the Capel Mills site. This would be a very crude tool to use, as it is not likely that development compatible with the Canal would materially infringe any of the criteria listed in respect of edge of centre development in Policy S12.

6.3.8 The objectors consider that by omitting the Capel Mills site from the town centre and not including it within the settlement boundary the site would not be given the prominence it deserves. I share this view to the extent that I have suggested action should be taken in accordance with paragraph 6.3.6 above. However, the concern that the site would not be dealt with until a future review of the Plan is in my view not justified. As I understand it the IPS study should be completed in the summer of 2003 before my report is available to the Council. This would enable the Council to devise a specific policy in this Plan, if required.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.3**

Consider including an appropriate policy or text in the Plan once the IPS study is completed.

## 6.4 PARAGRAPH 6.4.1

### The Objections

TCR/para. 6.4.1./556/2411	J S Bloor (Newbury) Ltd
TCR/para. 6.4.1./1/0094	Gloucestershire County Council
TCR/para. 6.4.1./558/3827	Robert Hitchins Limited
TCR/para. 6.4.1./1/3028	Gloucestershire County Council

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Reference should be made in Policy as well as 6.4.1 to encouragement of mixed-use development.
- (b) References to principal settlements should be consistent throughout the Plan.
- (c) Insufficient emphasis is placed upon strategic importance given to regeneration of town centres.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.4.1 A number of policies in the Plan mention “mixed use”. I believe there is enough emphasis on its importance in the way the supporting text is written and the policies that specifically relate to “mixed use” development.

6.4.2 Although the differences are clearly stated in the supporting text, I share the view of the objector that references to “principal settlements” should be consistent throughout the Plan. It seems to me that the definition of a principal settlement in Structure Plan Policy S2 should apply in that settlements “form the focal points for a scale of development which was consistent with the character and function of the settlement.....” I have identified ‘Principal Settlements’ in the Strategy chapter of this report.

6.4.3 Paragraphs 6.5.1a to 6.5.1g lay down what needs to be done for town centres in the district, and in paragraph 6.5.1e specific mention is made of trade retention and reducing distances travelled for shopping trips. These paragraphs do not specifically refer to strategic aims but in Section 6.2 seven objectives are listed, some of which are strategic, and a number of individual policies take a positive line in encouraging regeneration. As there is a strategy chapter in the Plan I do not consider strategic aims need to be repeated here.

### RECOMMENDATION 6.4

Ensure consistency in the Plan with regard to ‘Principal Settlements’.

## 6.5 PARAGRAPH 6.5.1

### The Objections

TCR/para. 6.5.1.c/205/3093	Wotton under Edge Town Council
TCR/para. 6.5.1.d./205/3094	Wotton under Edge Town Council
TCR/para. 6.5.1.e/205/3095	Wotton under Edge Town Council

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Negative assumptions about Wotton may limit future additional shopping facilities.
- (b) Comments on Draft for Deposit Plan indicate that there is interest in Wotton.
- (c) Disagrees that the proximity of Wotton to Dursley limits its catchment area and function.
- (d) A quality supermarket in Dursley can only be achieved by reducing trade from neighbouring towns.
- (e) Wotton and other towns historically serve local catchment areas due to their location, size and not the dominance of Stroud and Dursley. Outside local towns, shoppers use larger towns of Bristol, Gloucester etc.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.5.1 From the evidence I heard at the Inquiry I accept that there is an interest in encouraging some forms of development in Wotton. In my view this interest is reflected in the wording of Policy S11 which clearly states that within Wotton town centre planning permission will be granted for development proposals that support or enhance its role and function subject to criteria on vitality, viability and character being met.

6.5.2 As the influence of adjoining towns is more complex than implied by the supporting text the Council has deleted the second sentence of paragraph 6.5.1c under Proposed Change PRO162 and part of the first sentence of 6.5.1d under Proposed Change PRO163.

6.5.3 Many of the arguments about the future of Wotton town centre came up at Inquiry when the issue of the future of Old Town key employment site EK28 was discussed. See my detailed report in the section 4.6 Employment chapter of this report.

6.5.4 I accept that Wotton does serve a local catchment area but from the evidence at the Inquiry, because of the lack of a supermarket of any size, many residents shop outside of the town. Part of the Council's strategy is to reduce outward travel.

### RECOMMENDATION 6.5

Modify the supporting text at paragraphs 6.5.1c and 6.5.1d in accordance with Proposed Changes 162 and 163.

## 6.6 PARAGRAPH 6.5a, 6.6 and 6.7

### The Objections

TCR/para. 6.5.6./228/0540	Stroud Town Council
TCR/para. 6.5.8./298/0790	CTC Right to Ride Network
TCR/para. 6.5.10./228/0541	Stroud Town Council
TCR/para. 6.6.1./228/0543	Stroud Town Council
TCR/para. 6.7.1./329/1006	Cotswold Canals Trust
TCR/para. 6.7.1./497/2066	Bourne Estates
TCR/para. 6.7.1./1/0030	Gloucestershire County Council
TCR/para. 6.7.1./1/0029	Gloucestershire County Council
TCR/para. 6.7.1./252/0702	Somerfield Stores Ltd
TCR/para. 6.7.1./444/3689	Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Objects to negative and inaccurate description of Stroud Town Centre. It fails to appreciate potential attractions of the centre. This may ultimately deter investment.
- (b) Vital that bicycle use is facilitated and encouraged particularly in Stroud Town Centre.
- (c) No mention of proposed transport interchange in Paragraph 6.5.10.
- (d) Policy on regeneration of Stroud Town Centre should be included.
- (e) Questions how the Council can achieve aim 5 through land use planning policies.
- (f) Definitions of town centre and edge of centre do not correspond with PPG6.
- (g) Paragraph 6.7.1 provides uncertainty as to what constitutes town centre and edge of centre sites. Town centre boundary should be drawn more tightly around primary and secondary shopping areas so that edge of centre sites will be judged against policy S12.
- (h) Site at Capel Mill should be included within defined Stroud Town Centre boundary, identified as a development site for which a development brief will be prepared.
- (i) Waitrose should be not be excluded from Town Centre and part of Merrywalks and Cairncross Road should also be included.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.6.1 The Council has proposed Additional Suggested Changes to the text to take a more positive approach to Stroud Town Centre and the possibilities of development and its potential attractions.

6.6.2 As paragraph 6.5.8 refers to the aims of the adopted Regeneration Strategy it would not be accurate to add reference to bicycle travel to Stroud town centre. In my view the importance of cycling and cyclists is covered by policies in the Transport Chapter of the Plan. The importance could be given greater emphasis in any update of the Regeneration Strategy, and in particular Aim 9.

6.6.3 Paragraph 6.5.10, as revised in the Revised Deposit draft Plan, refers to initiatives that have been implemented. Proposal T7 and paragraph 9.11.2 in the Transport Chapter refer in detail to the interchange. Paragraph 6.5.8 at number 9 of the aims of the Regeneration Strategy mentions improved accessibility both to and within the town centre. As the Plan is intended to be read as a whole I see no reason to mention the interchange here particularly as paragraph

6.5.9 makes it clear that land used based initiatives are developed into policies and proposals in the Plan. One such Proposal is T7. New Policy S5A also refers to the new interchange as does paragraph 6.9.4a added at the RLP stage.

6.6.4 I have dealt with the regeneration issue at paragraph 6.1.3 above.

6.6.5 As I read Aim 5 it is part of the Regeneration Strategy. This is not just a land use planning policy but is part of a corporate approach to the centre.

6.6.6 The descriptions in the supporting text have been altered so as not to conflict with guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6.

6.6.7 In the Revised Deposit draft, paragraph 6.7.1 has been substantially revised to avoid confusion about town centre and edge of centre sites. The town centre boundary was amended following objections. I have dealt with further objections at paragraph 6.6.9 below.

6.6.8 I have dealt with Capel Mill separately at 6.3 above.

6.6.9 Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 Annex A defines edge of centre. Waitrose is outside of the 200/300m walking distance and is not adjacent to the existing defined boundary. I believe it to be well outside the tightly knit centre of Stroud.

6.6.10 Cairncross is remote from the town centre. It is separated from the town by a busy road junction and does not read with the centre. I do not believe the limited commercial activity on the western side of the A46 forms an integral identifiable part of the centre. I found that “on the ground” the present boundary is more compliant with Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 than previously suggested boundaries.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.6**

Modify the Plan in accordance with Additional Suggested Changes set out in the Council’s response proof (TCR/paras 6.5A, 6.6, 6.7/KD/02) by deleting paragraphs 6.5.6 and 6.6.3, and rewording paragraph 6.6.2 as follows:

*“Retailing in Stroud town centre is characterised by small units, which reflects its predominant historic composition, selling comparison goods and operated by independent retailers. The Regeneration Strategy is having a positive effect on the town centre. One of its strengths is the presence of independent retailers, some of whom offer products not found in the larger centres and which enhance the nature of the retail offer available. Evidence of improvement includes the number of national retailers moving into the town centre, expanding the range of goods available further. The introduction of a regular Farmers’ Market has also been successful.”*

## **6.7 POLICY S1**

### **The Objections**

S01/581/2541  
S01/543/2278

Mr RD Grist  
Government Office for the South West

S01/444/1904                      Various Clients of Andrew Watton  
S01/228/0557                      Stroud Town Council  
S01/444/3710                      Various Clients of Andrew Watton

**Summary of Objections**

- (a) Stroud Town Centres regeneration is dependent on increasing the resident population. Plan should encourage change of use of retail premises to residential
- (b) Policy opposes introduction of other uses outside Class A. Introduction of other uses may assist the regeneration of the Stroud Town Centre.
- (c) Defined shop frontage is inaccurate.
- (d) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside primary and secondary frontages.

**Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.7.1        Policy S3 and its supporting text encourage the change of use to residential and mixed use outside of the primary and secondary retail frontages. The conversion to housing of upper floors in town centres is also covered by Policy H15 of the Housing Chapter. The core area of the town is tightly knit and in my view there are adequate areas for the redevelopment for housing, leisure and B2 uses outside it.

6.7.2        Policy S3 and its supporting text at paragraph 6.8.3 do encourage such change from retail or other business uses to residential.

6.7.3        To avoid confusion the tables of postal addresses have been deleted and the boundary of the area now indicated on a map. (Proposed Changes 164 and 165). The Council officers have further agreed that some of the suggestions of the objector should be incorporated and these have been included. These changes remove Nos. 68 &.69 High Street from the primary frontage of the High Street. This is an appropriate revision because of the location of the property.

6.7.4        The objector considers that 2/4 King Street should be included within the primary shopping frontage. Although Woolworth is opposite, the two shops and a bank are on the edge of the primary shopping area and could be either defined as primary or secondary. The Council has chosen secondary and, on balance, I would not disagree with this. With regard to No 24 High Street, which is temporarily vacant, it is on an important north south pedestrian link to which it has flank windows and a secondary entrance. This gives it a greater importance than those shops to the east. It would be the only retail unit to the east of Union Street in primary frontage but, again on balance, having regard to the evidence on commercial values, a factor mentioned in paragraph 6 of Annex B to Planning Policy Guidance Note 6, I consider its importance should be recognised. I also believe the flank frontage of No 22 High Street and Nos. 10 and 12 Union Street should be given protection as suggested by the objectors and the Council has agreed. These properties have been included in the secondary frontage.

6.7.5        I do not really understand the concern about adverse effects that may occur outside of primary and secondary frontages. Policy S3 accepts that changes of use may occur which will assist in *enhancing* the viability and vitality of the centre, and the supporting text lists a number of uses which would be acceptable. In my view these uses, including some residential, would over the years help to concentrate the retail activity in the core of primary and secondary frontages and diversify areas outside of them into mixed use areas complementary to the centre.

**RECOMMENDATIONS 6.7**

- (a) Delete 68/69 High Street from the primary frontage.

- (b) Include 24 High Street within the primary frontage.
- (c) Include the flank frontage of No. 22 High Street and 10 and 12 Union Street within secondary frontage.
- (d) Otherwise modify by deleting Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in accordance with Proposed Changes 164 and 165

## **6.8 POLICY S2**

### **The Objections**

S02/228/0558	Stroud Town Council
S02/444/1905	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S02/581/2542	Mr RD Grist
S02/543/2279	Government Office for the South West
S02/444/3711	Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside primary and secondary frontages.
- (b) Defined shopping frontage is inaccurate.
- (c) Stroud Town Centres regeneration is dependent on increasing the resident population. Plan should encourage change of use of retail premises to residential.
- (d) Policy opposes introduction of other uses outside Class A. Introduction of other uses may assist the regeneration of the Stroud Town Centre.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.8.1 I have dealt with this concern at paragraph 6.7.4 above.

6.8.2 I have dealt with this partially at paragraph 6.7.3 above when dealing with primary and secondary frontages. Three shops wrapping around the corner from Kendrick Street and forming part of George Street (shown as 14 and 15 on the Plan produced by the objector) are also a logical inclusion in the secondary frontage. This was also agreed at Inquiry.

6.8.3 I do share the view of the objector that Russell Street and part of London Road perform an important retail function regardless of some derelict shops. From my visits to the area I consider these frontages to be an integral part of the town shopping area and I believe they should be given the protection of secondary frontage under this policy.

6.8.4 The Council is concerned that if these frontages were to be included there would be less chance of residential development. To an extent this may be so but this is outweighed by the need to retain as far as possible a continuous footfall to shops. I consider that the importance of Russell Street as a shopping street has been underrated. The street is not pedestrianised and with the P.O., the Stroud & Swindon Building Society, HK House and

Peacocks I found it popular with motorists and in particular to those who because of infirmity and age need to park close to the shops they visit. I do not, however, consider that the secondary frontage needs to extend further than, say, No. 54 London Road on the south side and No.6 of the parade of shops on the north side. This would enable housing development to occur at ground floor level in part of Union Street and London Road, in John Street and Gloucester Street. As the centre is tightly knit any housing in these areas would be an integral part of it.

6.8.5 The Policy does oppose the introduction of uses at ground floor level other than Class A. However, from my visit and even with my recommendations to extend the secondary frontage I found this to be a limited area of the centre, and outside of such areas, a range of uses are acceptable under Policy S3.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.8**

Include both sides of Russell Street and part of London Road up to No.54 on the south side and No.6 of the shopping parade on the north side in the secondary frontage.

## **6.9 POLICY S3**

### **The Objections**

S03/228/0559	Stroud Town Council
S03/444/1906	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S03/228/0555	Stroud Town Council
S03/228/0556	Stroud Town Council

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside primary and secondary frontages.
- (b) Policy is too brief and imprecise leaving room for ambiguous interpretation or subjective assessment.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.9.1 As Policy S3 only encourages changes of use which will assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre, I do not see how the policy and the supporting text can be interpreted as doing the opposite. See also my views at S1 and S2 above where I have recommended extending the secondary frontages.

6.9.2 The reason behind the policy is explained at paragraphs 6.8.3 and 6.8.4. The types of uses that might be acceptable are described in the supporting text and I believe the policy is flexible in its approach by accepting a number of optional uses. Regardless of the wording of the policy there will always be some subjective judgement exercised when assessing enhancement and viability.

6.9.3 Although the supporting text encourages residential development outside of the primary and secondary frontages, if my recommendations are accepted that the secondary area

be extended I believe it would be reasonable to encourage housing development within the tertiary areas. The additional suggested change does include the word “may” indicating that residential development will not always be appropriate. It would be contrary to advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 to permit changes that undermine the retail function of the town.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.9**

Modify paragraph 6.8.3 of the supporting text in accordance with additional suggested changes proposed by the Council which are: “Residential uses may also be acceptable in some buildings in addition to that which may be allowed at first floor level throughout the town centre and covered by Policy H15. Normal requirements for amenity space and car parking will be relaxed in town centre residential development proposals”

## **6.10 POLICY S4**

### **The Objections**

S04/444/1907	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S04/252/0701	Somerfield Stores Ltd
S04/228/0576	Stroud Town Council
S04 (StrTC)/340/1088	Harper Homes

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Concerned that any retailing associated with redevelopment of sites may have an adverse impact on established shops in Stroud.
- (b) Policy S4 appears vague and provides no guidance for development proposals to follow.
- (c) There is no definition of major development.
- (d) Cheapside area is a major under utilised and part vacant site close to Stroud Town Centre that should be identified for development.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.10.1 Although there is some overlap with Policy S3 (the intent appears to be the same), requiring development to support the role and function of the centre, Policy S4 covers a wider area, including primary and secondary frontages. Policy S12 already lays down criteria to be met within defined town centres to ensure that vitality and viability is maintained, and provides guidance for development control decisions. It seems to me that part of the concern of the objector is the implementation of policies rather than the policies themselves.

6.10.2 The town centre boundary has now been clearly defined and Prime Shopping Frontages and Secondary Shopping Frontages are shown on the Stroud Town Centre Inset Map to which the Council has accepted suggested revisions; and to which I have recommended revisions in dealing with Policies S1 and S2 above. Both Policy S4 and paragraph 6.9.1 have been altered to delete reference to development briefs and paragraph 6.9.2 which referred to the

scale of major development, has been deleted.

6.10.3 Major development was described in paragraph 6.9.2 of the supporting text as one involving the erection of a building or change of use of over 1000 sq.m. of floor space but this is proposed for deletion, as is reference to major development in the policy itself. I accept that if major development is mentioned in a policy it needs to be defined. However, in my experience 1000sq.m is a low figure to equate with major development. Although a larger figure could be put into the policy, I have no strong feelings about its inclusion for the reasons mentioned below.

6.10.4 It seems to me that one of the purposes of defining major development was to require a development brief. This was mentioned in the policy and paragraph 6.9.1 which is also proposed for deletion. However, although useful, in my view a development brief is only necessary where a site is sensitive or where there is a complex mixture of uses. Many larger scale developments are not complex in themselves and there are few sensitive sites. To require, as the policy and paragraph 6.9.1 did, that in “*each case*, a development brief should be prepared” was to my mind unnecessary and would be a considerable waste of resources. However, it would be helpful to include in paragraph 6.9.1 the requirement that in cases of complex development and/or where sensitive sites are involved a development brief should be prepared and agreed prior to the grant of planning permission.

6.10.5 I accept that Policy S4 is a general policy of encouragement but this reflects the approach taken in Structure Plan Policy TC1. Policy S4 should also be read in conjunction with the background paragraph 6.9.1 which explains that many sites in the centre have potential for redevelopment, but are in locations where a number of uses would be acceptable. To make Policy S4 more specific would take away the flexibility to accept a range of regeneration uses.

6.10.6 Cheapside is an important site and now has a specific policy S5A and supporting text devoted to it. I have dealt with this below.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.10**

Add to paragraph 6.9.1 “Where there is complex mixture of uses and/or where sensitive sites are involved a development brief should be prepared and agreed prior to the granting of planning permission”. Otherwise modify in accordance with suggested changes referred to in paragraph 6.10.2 above.

## **6.11 POLICY S5**

### **The Objections**

S05/429/1746	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
S05/1/0027	Gloucestershire County Council
S05/444/1908	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S05/228/0577	Stroud Town Council
S05/501/2083	Mr Garner
S05/1/0028	Gloucestershire County Council
S05/298/0791	CTC Right to Ride Network

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S05/501/2082

Mr Garner

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Objects to omission of wording “and to nearby residential areas” from the first criterion and corresponding omission from text.
- (b) Concerned that retailing associated with the scheme may have an adverse impact on established shops in Stroud.
- (c) Objects to failure to acknowledge Slad Brook passing below site.
- (d) Comprehensive scheme based on proper review of Merrywalks environment should be devised that does not prejudice any existing interest on the site or vitality of the centre.
- (e) It should be clear that the proposal would not be permitted unless appropriate replacement facilities are made for the bus station use.
- (f) Regeneration of Stroud would benefit from the development of a cinema and theatre complex.
- (g) Vital that bicycle use is facilitated in the development of this site.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.11.1 The Plan is to be read as a whole and Policy T2 in the Transport Chapter already requires provision to be made for pedestrian access. It also seems to me that item 3 “Associated off-site highway improvements” would include links to adjoining housing areas.

6.11.2 The site is allocated for mixed use. It will be for the Council to consider the mix of any scheme to assess whether the impact on established shops within the centre would be acceptable. The Additional Changes include revised criteria to be covered by a Section 106 agreement. I believe that the revised wording and criteria meet some of the objections raised.

6.11.3 This is a brownfield site but the importance of otters has now been recognised by the Council by the inclusion of a new paragraph 6.9.3a. I consider the objection has been reasonably met and it has been conditionally withdrawn.

6.11.4 Clarification about appropriate replacement facilities for buses prior to the development of the Merrywalks site has been added to paragraph 6.9.3

6.11.5 The policy already requires a cinema to be provided as part of the mixed-use development. The wording has been revised to state that any development *should* include a cinema instead of *must* include a cinema. The Town Council objects to this change. Although a cinema is considered by the local planning authority to be an important element of any scheme, as the site lends itself to development other than a cinema I believe the word *should* to be more appropriate.

6.11.6 A theatre would fall under the category of other leisure uses mentioned in the supporting text. I would expect that a feasibility study would be necessary to assess whether a theatre would be viable in addition to a cinema.

6.11.7 Although Policy T5 of the Transport Chapter requires adequate provision for cycle parking item 2 of Policy S5 has been revised to include cycle access to the site.

### RECOMMENDATIONS 6.11

Reword policy and insert new paragraph 6.9.3a in accordance with the Additional Changes proposed by the Council. These read as follows:

**“Policy S5**

*The bus station site, on Merrywalks, Stroud, is allocated for mixed use. Any development proposal should include a cinema. Other acceptable uses in addition to a cinema are likely to be within Use Classes A1, A3 and D2. In conjunction with the development of this site, a Section 106 Legal Agreement will be sought covering the following issues:-*

- 1. Ensuring pedestrian links to the town centre.*
- 2. Contributions to improved public transport and cycle access to the site and*
- 3. Associated off-site highway improvements.*

**Paragraph 6.9.3a** *The Slad Brook is culverted through this site. This is a constraint on the recolonisation of the Brook by the European Otter – a UK priority species. The Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan seeks the national re-colonisation of otters to the watercourses of Gloucestershire. Redevelopment on this site should, therefore, include the investigation of opportunities for providing access along the Slad Brook by otters.”*

## **6.12 POLICY S5A**

### **The Objections**

S05A/228/3128	Stroud Town Council
S05A/228/3130	Stroud Town Council

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Policy and Paragraph 6.9.4c should make it clear than any retail element should not detract from the town centre, be restricted to sites already in retail use and for the sale of bulky goods.
- (b) Policy should require a landmark building in any redevelopment scheme.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.12.1 The policy already clearly requires any development proposals to support or enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre, which is a positive corollary to what is being suggested by the objector. The vitality of a centre depends on a range of uses, not all of them dealing in bulky goods, and not all of them retail. However, Cheapside Wharf is proposed for comprehensive development by means of a mixed-use scheme and I consider it would be unreasonable in principle to insist that only those sites that are currently in retail use should be used for retail. A mixed-use scheme will involve the satisfactory integration of a number of land uses, normally brought together under the guidance of a planning brief.

6.12.2 However, in the case of Cheapside the company owning the land to the south of the canal has no wish to move or be involved in any redevelopment scheme. This takes a large part of the site out of development, but because it is separated from the remainder of the land by the canal this has no particular constraint on what occurs to the north of the canal. As to the land on the north side of the canal it is considered by the objectors to be a jewel in the crown, an edge of

centre site suitable for a mixed role of importance and high quality development.

6.12.3 Whether the sale of bulky goods as such would involve high quality development would depend much on the proposed occupier, but I doubt from the evidence that a bulky goods store is as necessary as it was because of the planning permission for the Far Hill site. Also part of the Cheapside site is already under development because of the approved conversion of the Hill Paul building to housing. At the time the Cheapside site was considered at Inquiry a further planning application had been submitted but not yet determined to increase the height of the building. Since the close of the inquiry, I have noticed that this further development of the building appears to be proceeding, as does some of the development on the former Grahams Builders Merchants site.

6.12.4 Although this leaves a large area of land, from the Council's evidence not much of it is likely to be available for development. This is as a result of negotiations carried out between the County Council and track and station owners. The Halcrow car parking study of the town centre is not yet complete. However, on the basis of the Stroud Town Centre Strategy 2000, it would appear that to enable the exchange of land to take place - to provide for the transport interchange on the north side of the railway - a major part of the remaining area to the south will be required for station car parking.

6.12.5 Although the Town Council envisages a high quality scheme of mixed employment and residential use, with small components of retail or leisure use, without the T Butt & Sons site south of the canal only two areas would be free for development. This is land to the west of the site, an important location fronting the canal; and land where the site tapers away to the south -east. If the parking area is not significantly reduced there is little land to co-ordinate by means of a development brief, and in the circumstances I agree with the Council that the requirement for a development brief on this site is not reasonable.

6.12.6 Both Policy S5A and Policy S12 protect the vitality and viability and function of the town centre. I consider it unlikely that any proposal would contain a significant element of retailing but if the Council is concerned about its impact on the existing centre it could request the submission of a retail impact assessment. However, I do not share the view of the objector that *any* planning proposal containing an element of retail, regardless of scale, should include a retail impact assessment. I believe this would be using a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

6.12.7 Paragraph 5.9.11a, as revised, recognises the importance of the Hill Paul building in its conservation area setting and the need for its replacement to be a fitting landmark for the town. However, from my site visit this building is already in the process of refurbishment and conversion into 36 dwelling units.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6.12**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections, but put into effect the Further Suggested Change, to delete the reference to a development brief, suggested by the Council.

## 6.13 POLICY S5A – OMISSION SITE OS215

### The Objections

S05A (OS215)/228/0537

Stroud Town Council

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Cheapside car park is a major under utilised facility close to Stroud Town Centre with potential for mixed-use development.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.13.1 Because of its importance to the town Cheapside, including the Hill Paul Building and Grahams Yard, with its potential for a mixed use development, is now the subject of a new Policy S5A and supporting text. In my view the area has now been given the emphasis and policy it warrants. The Proposals Map has been amended accordingly.

### RECOMMENDATION

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to this objection.

## 6.14 POLICY S6

### The Objections

S06/30/0218

J E Parsons

6.13 S06/429/1747

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

S06/96/0296

Mrs Tempest

S06/543/2280

Government Office for the South West

S06/424/1619

Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party

S06/444/1909

Various Clients of Andrew Watton

S06/228/0547

Stroud Town Council

S06/1/0083

Gloucestershire County Council

S06 (OS044)/424/1618

Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party

### Summary of Objections

- (a) How will the sale of non-bulky items sold be restricted and enforced?
- (b) Proposal fails to acknowledge the significance of the site to otters.
- (c) Considers there to be sufficient large vacant units to accommodate further retail development in Stroud. Far Hill would operate as a single shopping destination and have a negative impact on Stroud Town Centre. Site should be used for residential development.

- (d) Proposal does not appear to be based on an assessment of need and appears inconsistent with aim of regenerating Stroud Town Centre. Effect on vitality and viability of town centre does not appear to have been considered. Unclear why development should help to restore canal.
- (e) Insert criterion “Improvements of cycle links to the town centre and the cycle network.”
- (f) Retail impact assessment should have been carried out together with an appraisal of alternative sites.
- (g) Development of site should retain a public footpath along the north side of the canal.
- (h) Add at end of first criterion “and to nearby residential areas”.
- (i) Cheapside is adjacent to the town centre and is a positive alternative to Far Hill.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.14.1 Control over type of goods sold would be exercised either by a planning condition or be part of a legal agreement entered into by the Council and the developer. These controls are commonly used throughout the country. The seeking of a Section 106 agreement is now referred to in the policy. I believe this reasonably meets the objection.

6.14.2 From the evidence the Council has already determined that the site is suitable for warehouse units, subject to a restriction on the range of goods sold. I presume this planning decision was influenced by the household survey carried out in 1999 which showed that in excess of 50% of Stroud residents looked to shops outside of the district for a range of bulky goods. The Council’s strategy is to claw back some of this expenditure within the district.

6.14.3 As planning permission has been granted for the 3 retail warehouse units, it would not be reasonable to attempt to add further conditions or obligations regarding cycle links or for the retention and management of otters. However, the objection regarding otters has been conditionally withdrawn as the Council has now included a new paragraph 6.9.6a which recognises the importance of the Painswick Stream and the Stroudwater Canal as part of the critical dispersal route for otters. I consider this additional paragraph reasonably meets the concerns of the objector, particularly as a Section 106 agreement needs to be entered into. The new paragraph should be included in the Plan.

6.14.4 Because of the comprehensive nature of the development and mix of ownership Cheapside would not be a short term alternative to Far Hill. Moreover, as planning permission has been granted for the retail warehouse units at Far Hill I presume the scheme will be well in advance of any commercial development at Cheapside.

6.14.5 Links to nearby residential areas would be included under item 3 as associated off-site highway improvements. I have not seen details of the scheme but I presume the attractiveness for pedestrians would be achieved through improvements to the canal and its environs.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.14**

Insert new paragraph 6.9.6a as follows in accordance with the Additional Change proposed by the Council:

#### ***“Paragraph 6.9.6a***

*The Far Hill car park is bordered to the north west by the Painswick Stream and to the south by the Stroudwater Canal. These watercourses form part of a critical dispersal route for otters – a UK priority species. Painswick stream is the only route whereby otters can successfully recolonise the Painswick Valley. The Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan seeks the natural*

*re-colonisation of otters to the watercourses of Gloucestershire. The development of this site should, therefore, seek to avoid disruption to this critical otter dispersal route.”*

## **6.15 PARAGRAPH 6.10.4**

### **The Objections**

TCR/para 6.10.4./197/0469-CW	Dursley Town Council
TCR/para 6.10.4./197/0470-CW	Dursley Town Council
TCR/para 6.10.4./197/0471-CW	Dursley Town Council
TCR/para. 6.10.4./388/1257	David Cheffings
TCR/para 6.10.4./197/0473-CW	Dursley Town Council
TCR/para. 6.10.4./141/0377	Mr G Moyser
TCR/para. 6.10.4./197/3090-CW	Dursley Town Council

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Objects to redevelopment of Dursley bus station site.
- (b) It is not possible to convert the Weavers House to provide new Town Council offices.
- (c) Broadwell Tavern is now two dwellings.
- (d) It is unclear what enhancements are proposed for Bull Pitch.
- (e) Vacant property adjacent to Wisteria House, May Lane may be suitable for the youth centre.
- (f) Objects to rewording of Paragraph 6.10.4 and deletion of seventh bullet point.
- (g) Regeneration Plan is already out of date and should not be included within the Plan.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.15.1 The supporting text has been updated to take into account objections a, b, c and d above. The Plan should be read in conjunction with the more detailed Regeneration Strategy.

6.15.2 The use of Wisteria House would be considered as part of the Regeneration Strategy

6.15.3 I have no detailed evidence before me about the intentions of the seventh bullet point of paragraph 6.10.4 other than the two paragraphs contained on page 9 section 8.8 of the Regeneration Strategy (CD/L33).

6.15.4 The Council has accepted that the Regeneration Strategy is outdated and is in need of review. This document would be more detailed than is necessary for the Local Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.15**

Make no further modifications to the Plan in response to these objections.

## 6.16 PARAGRAPH 6.11.1

### The Objections

TCR/para 6.11.1./428/1724 Newsquest (Wales & Western)

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Dursley Town Centre boundary should be amended to include the north side of Long Street between 31 - 63, to allow new town centre uses to assist the regeneration of Dursley.

### Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions

6.16.1 Long Street is somewhat isolated by traffic from the rest of the town. It also seems to have adapted over the years to a range of uses. As far as I could see from my visit the properties suggested for inclusion are primarily in residential use and I have no evidence before me that there is a need to extend the town centre. It seems to me that the defined town centre boundary has been drawn around the main concentration of town centre uses. The Council has identified in the Plan a specific need for a supermarket on the Castle Street and Rackfield site which has been dealt with below in the next section of this report.

### RECOMMENDATION 6.16

Make no modification to the Plan in response to this objection

## 6.17 POLICY S7

### The Objections

S07 (DurTC)/317/0927	Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Coop Society Ltd.
S07/21/0207	Cam Valley Cycleway Campaign
S07/162/0410-CW	Mrs Beynon
S07/226/0526	Mr S C Fowler
S07/252/0699	Somerfield Stores Ltd
S07/444/1910	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S07 (DurTC)/564/2469	Airsprung Furniture Group
S07/317/0926	Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Coop Society Ltd.
S07/298/0792	CTC Right to Ride Network
S07/157/0404	Cam Parish Council

### Summary of Objections

- (a) Objects to supermarket allocation, as it makes no mention of cycle provision.
- (b) Objects to supermarket proposal due to lack of need and impact on Parsonage Street shops.

- (c) Site should not be allocated for retail purposes until the need and capacity for further provision has been properly identified.
- (d) Dursley has a substantial foodstore within the town centre and proposed development would have an adverse impact on Dursley and Cam Town Centres.
- (e) Development would lead to loss of car parking in the centre.
- (f) There is no evidence to show that the supermarket could not go ahead without the relief road.
- (g) Concerned that proposed supermarket has insufficient parking.
- (h) Retail allocation should also include Bymacks site.
- (i) Concerned that little thought has been given to the impact on the town centre.
- (j) Development of relief road provides opportunity for safer cycle access to town centre but cyclists should not be expected to use relief road.
- (k) Plan does not address issue of increased traffic flows through Cam which will arise as a result of development.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.17.1 This is a town centre location and Policy T3 of the Transport Chapter requires new development to provide safe and convenient cycle access. However, the Council has added to the supporting text at paragraph 6.12.2 stating that a Development Brief for the development has been prepared, and this incorporates the requirement for the provision of cycle access.

6.17.2 From my visits I did not find Dursley well served by its one supermarket with limited floor space and no adjacent parking. Although there are conflicting views locally about the need for a supermarket, from the details of the Planning Brief consultation there is some support for a supermarket in the town. One of the main planks of the Council's strategy is to encourage residents to shop locally to avoid the need for travel. This is only likely to happen if a modern supermarket is provided in the town. Government guidance makes it clear that a new supermarket can provide a vital role as an anchor, as well as encouraging tourists. Although the supermarket will increase traffic to it, overall the proposal should reduce car usage as it would cut down on the number of longer journeys to supermarkets outside of the town. Because of its location the new supermarket would also be readily accessible to people without cars.

6.17.3 Turning to details of the site allocated under Policy S7 at Castle Street, it extends to about 1.8 hectares and already includes a mixture of uses; two car parks, a youth centre, Dursley Education Centre, Fire Station and an electricity sub station. The allocated site is within an easy walk of the main pedestrianised shopping street and is well within the 200-300m maximum walking distance mentioned in paragraph 3.14 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. It is within the defined town centre boundary of Dursley. This is a long standing intended designation from 1994 and recognises that the site accommodates uses which are an integral part of the town centre. The two existing car parks on the site already serve visitors to the centre. In my view the allocated site is an integral part of the town centre and is properly designated as such.

6.17.4 A study of the town centre commissioned by the Council in 1991 indicated that generally the centre was in a difficult trading position, although it appeared that vacancy rates were about average. The centre was not large enough to attract multiple traders in comparison goods and that to produce a substantial improvement in trading a supermarket was recommended for the town centre. A regeneration strategy was produced for Dursley in May 1997. Paragraph 6.12.2 of the Revised Deposit Local Plan states that it is vital that Dursley's ability to compete with other town centres be enhanced by the construction of a supermarket

within the town centre, where linked trips with the rest of the centre are a real likelihood.

6.17.5 From the latest evidence of the Council the relief road is not now dependent upon the construction of a supermarket. The Council has revised Policy S7 by replacing the provision that the Dursley Relief Road be constructed through the site, with a requirement that a financial contribution be made towards the traffic relief provided through Dursley across allocated sites MU3 and MU4 (now described as the 'Link Road'). Policy T13 which required the allocated site to accommodate the relief road has also been deleted. I support these changes – see the Dursley chapter later in this report. Policy S7 will require some modification to make reference to the 'Link Road' in place of the "Dursley Relief Road through the site" and there will also be a need for consequential modifications to the reasoned justification.

6.17.6 A draft plan entitled "Site Layout Feasibility" showed how the site could be developed. Although this may be subject to future change it was helpful in showing the likely relationship of the new supermarket to its surroundings, how it and the swimming pool could be serviced and the layout and numbers of car parking spaces.

6.17.7 For the reasons contained in the above paragraphs, and also taking into account the proposed regeneration of Dursley by encouraging employment and housing on the Lister Petter and Bymacks Sites, which will bring about an increase in the working and resident population of the town, I believe the principle of providing a new supermarket of the scale proposed is sound. However, I now consider more detailed aspects of the proposal under a number of headings.

#### **Highways - parking and traffic issues**

6.17.8 The Council commissioned a car parking study in August 2002. This was required by the Brief sent out to prospective developers of the supermarket in 1999 and was to determine the overall parking requirement for the town centre.

6.17.9 The study indicated that 308 car parking spaces exist in off-street public car parks in Dursley. At their busiest, these town car parks overall have a spare capacity of between 70 and 90 spaces. The site to be occupied by the proposed supermarket would contain 209 of these spaces. The preliminary layout for the supermarket indicates 223 car parking spaces could be provided, with an additional 50 spaces to serve the swimming pool, a total of 273 spaces. According to the study the total overall car parking capacity for Dursley in off-street car parks would increase by some 60 spaces. This is in addition to the spare capacity identified and is considered by the Council to be adequate to meet the future needs for car parking in Dursley, without the necessity to develop land in Prospect Place. Policy S8 and supporting text are, therefore, proposed for deletion from the Plan.

6.17.10 It seems to me that there was little between the parties on the parking issue at Inquiry and I am satisfied that adequate provision to serve the supermarket and other town centre uses can be made.

6.17.11 The objectors consider that the supermarket relied on the relief road to provide satisfactory access and now that reference to the relief road has been deleted from Policy S7, without such a requirement, severe congestion is likely to occur at either end of Castle Street.

6.17.12 It seems to me that the traffic figures produced by Halcrow in Table 6.2 of the Dursley Town Centre Study – Final Report April 2002, although in themselves not a full transport assessment, provide sufficient information to indicate when and where traffic problems are likely to occur. This table takes into account traffic to be generated by all of the proposed development sites in the town. It was agreed that there is an arithmetical error in the table. The figure of 2167 should be 2067 and that this would represent an 8% change.

6.17.13 Figure B11 of the Dursley Town Centre Study, which was also referred to at Inquiry, shows PM development flows in the town centre with the outer relief road. It was

agreed at Inquiry that on the basis of Figure 11 about three quarters of the traffic using the junction, or junctions, in Castle Street serving the supermarket and car parks would be generated by users of the supermarket.

6.17.14 The study concluded that the development of the allocated sites cannot be achieved without providing some form of relief for the A4135 through Dursley and that an outer relief or distributor road would provide a more modest improvement than an inner relief road, but would provide improvements over a wider area. The worst adverse traffic impact of development would be at Silver Street and the signalised junction of Parsonage Street, Castle Street and May Lane.

6.17.15 As the Council will require a fully detailed transport assessment to include capacity analysis of all key junctions from the supermarket developer at the application stage, I consider that the implications of such a study are a matter to be dealt with at that stage. The Council has suggested that a Grampian condition might be necessary to ensure that the supermarket does not operate until the outer relief or distributor road is open: this seems to me to be the appropriate approach.

### **Impact**

6.17.16 I now consider the impact of the proposed supermarket. "Impact" covers a number of issues including; the visual impact of a new supermarket and its relationship with the main shopping street; the impact on the trading of existing shops within the town and elsewhere; the quantitative need for a new supermarket, linked to population and drive times; and qualitative deficiency within the shops in the vicinity.

6.17.17 On the first matter I do not consider that the construction of a well designed supermarket on the allocation site would have an unacceptable visual impact in the street scene or on the character of the area. If located as shown on the sketch layout it would read with the swimming pool but otherwise would stand in an open setting of car parking. As a shallow building line is proposed the building would be dominant but in my view this would help to subordinate the parking areas to the building. The new building would also be seen through the gap between the shops in Parsonage Street as shown on photograph 20 in the Regeneration Strategy document of May 1997.

6.17.18 In my view although separated by Castle Street the new supermarket would have a close physical and visual relationship to the main pedestrian area. Unfortunately persons walking from the supermarket, or car park, to the main shopping area would mainly see the backs of shops in Parsonage Street. However, the Council has stated in paragraph 6.12.2 of the Plan that an important issue is to improve pedestrian links to the centre. I agree that some visual improvement is necessary but as the allocated site already provides well used parking for the town centre the routes from the site into the main shopping street are well established, whether they are at present visually inviting or not.

6.17.19 .At present the town centre is served by 14 units supplying food and non food convenience goods. These include two pharmacies, a butcher, three newsagents, two bakeries, a greengrocer and Somerfields. The household survey indicated that these existing shops, excluding Somerfields, only account for 2.6% of main food shopping trips in Zone 1 of the survey area, do not fulfil a main/bulk shopping role and are used for top up basket shopping.

6.17.20 Somerfields is a small store of some 465 sq.m. net and has a limited range of products compared with supermarkets in Stroud, Tetbury, Gloucester and Thornbury and the Co-op Store in Cam. The limited size and range of goods in Somerfields and the survey results indicate that although the store is able to satisfy a limited number of main shopping needs that a significant number of shoppers requiring choice of convenience goods travel out of Dursley to get them. I consider that many of these out journeys for main food shopping would be

unnecessary if there were a supermarket meeting most of the expectations of shoppers within Dursley. Kwik Save is outside of the centre and cannot fulfil that roll. Again it seems to me that as the Council's overall intention is the regeneration of the town by an increase in employment and population, a new town centre supermarket would reduce the need to travel by reducing the length of journeys. It would also make it easier for local people to access their weekly shop.

6.17.21 Although a number of the shops within Dursley offer a specialised service which cannot be replicated in the supermarket I consider that it is likely that some of the smaller shops will suffer from competition because there would be an overlap of goods sold. However, I have also had regard to the fact that Dursley would significantly expand its population and this could well make up for loss of custom as long as the small traders concentrate on their specialist function. Changes may occur but with linked trips to the supermarket and other town shops the centre should become considerably livelier than it is at present.

6.17.22 The Co-op in Cam at about 1858 sq.m net is about the same size as the proposed supermarket in Dursley. However, in my view they do not serve the same purpose, and there is no evidence to suggest that the Co-op in Cam would close if a supermarket were built in Dursley. Also the main purpose of the new supermarket is to regenerate Dursley town centre and to reduce the number of vehicular trips outside of Dursley. From the survey information and regardless of its size the Co-op in Cam cannot fulfil these functions. About one third of people in Cam and Dursley at present use the Co-op. The new supermarket will draw some of those shoppers to Dursley. However, Cam has a larger population than Dursley and as advised in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interests or to prevent innovation.

6.17.23 The objectors and the Council used a different base for their data on quantitative assessment and retail impact. It was agreed at Inquiry that Mapinfo as used by the Council was more commonly used. Its population figures were based on enumeration districts, which are more detailed and accurate than the more broad-brush parish figures, and the drive times isochrones, are updated regularly. I accord them considerable weight. The Primary Catchment Area Population in Table 4 of Appendix D of the Retail Impact Study for the objectors was updated at Inquiry and the changes would marginally increase available expenditure. It was also accepted that with the increase in housing allocations alone in Dursley since 2000 an additional £1.41m of convenience goods expenditure will be generated by the end of the plan period 2011.

6.17.24 Taking the household shopping survey information there is considerable leakage of main food shopping and top up food shopping from Dursley to facilities outside of the 15 minute PCA. It seems to me that the implication of this is that existing stores are unable to provide convenience shopping which is sufficiently attractive to draw the majority of local residents.

6.17.25 Although it tends to be common practise to use a 100% clawback figure for Zones 1 and 2 I have found this approach unrealistic but how misleading it is, is difficult to assess. There may well be established patterns of shopping trips but unless these are related to journey to work or some other programmed trip there is no reason why there should not be significant change if a high quality supermarket is available locally. From within Zones 1 and 2, therefore, I consider there would be a claw back of the major part of convenience shopping into Dursley as residents would find it quicker to shop there. With regard to Zone 3 I find the likely change in pattern far more difficult to assess. I accept from both the objector and the Council that regardless of a new supermarket at Dursley many shoppers in Zone 3 would continue to use other centres, particularly Stroud to meet their convenience shopping needs. For this reason I believe the 50% figure is as good an estimate as any. It seems to me that, on the basis of the Mapinfo figures on population and drive times, but taking into account concerns of the objectors

and my concerns mentioned above, although the amount of surplus expenditure may be less than that assessed on behalf of the Council there would be sufficient surplus to justify the new supermarket in 2006.

6.17.26 A number of optional sites were considered on the basis of the sequential tests in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. The only site referred to at Inquiry by the objectors was land north of The Slade. This was considered to have the potential for a greater frontage on to the primary retail frontage of Parsonage Street. The Slade site was allocated for car parking under Policy S8 in the emerging local plan but this policy has been deleted for reasons which are dealt with below. As the site only has an area of about 639 ha in my view the site is not large enough to accommodate a quality supermarket and associated servicing and parking requirements. Even a smaller convenience facility would be difficult to provide having regard to the difference in levels across the site and the overall shape of the plot. Also a smaller store would be unlikely to have the draw, or provide the improvement needed to provide a quality store of reasonable size to avoid the need for residents to travel elsewhere.

6.17.27 In my view as the Castle Street site is within the town centre and available for development there is no need to include a less preferred site on the edge of centre.

6.17.28 As the Plan is to be read as a whole, policies in the Transport Chapter of the Plan, and in particular Policy T3, require safe and convenient access for cyclists. They do not need to be repeated here, although to be consistent with other policies associated off-site works could be mentioned. However, this may not be necessary with the production of a detailed development brief prior to the adoption of the Plan.

6.17.29 The Dursley Town Centre Study – Final Report April 2002 – by Halcrow, on behalf of the Gloucestershire County Council has taken into account the amount of traffic travelling southwards and passing through the Kingshill Road and Kingshill Lane junctions from Cam.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.17**

Modify the Policy S7 to reflect the decision to delete Policy T13, abandoning the Dursley Relief Road, and substitute a reference to the Link Road and make consequential modifications to the reasoned justification.

## **6.18 POLICY S8**

### **The Objections**

S08 (DurTC)/89/0289	Lions Club of Dursley
S08/162/0416-CW	Mrs Beynon
S08/612/2623	Mr Billett
S08 (DurTC)/403/1346	Cecelia Boyle
S08/157/0403	Cam Parish Council
S08/444/1911	Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Objects to proposal to demolish Lions Club building to create access to car park.
- (b) Concern that there will be inadequate car parking for swimming pool following the displacement of parking.
- (c) Entrance to proposed car park could result in congestion at junctions.
- (d) Proposed car park will damage the environment due to pollution, location in Conservation Area and proximity to Listed Buildings.
- (e) Car park will prevent rear servicing and access to shops in Parsonage Street.
- (f) Unclear how supermarket will facilitate car park proposal.
- (g) Adequate alternative car parking should be made prior to commencing development on supermarket site.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.18.1 Following a car parking study it was determined that because of spare parking capacity in the town there is no need to safeguard land in Prospect Place for additional parking. Policy S8 has now been deleted from the Plan and I agree that on the basis of the parking evidence it is no longer necessary.

6.18.2 It is inevitable on redevelopment of a town centre area that changes occur. The development brief requires an additional car park to that of the supermarket of about 50 spaces to serve the swimming pool. The Council considers this will be adequate for the purpose.

6.18.3 This Plan should lay down Policy and not deal with detailed highway improvements to the road network. However, the Dursley Town Centre Study – Final Report has identified the capacity of junctions and where congestion will be likely to occur during the period of the Plan..

6.18.4 I have only sketch proposals before me of the supermarket proposals but I understand from the Council's evidence that about 223 car parking spaces can be provided related to the supermarket use, with additional parking for the pool. From my visits to the supermarket site and the surrounding area, it seems to me that the development would provide a modern retail unit. This would avoid the need for residents to travel elsewhere for their main food shopping, and would also enable environmental improvements to be made to the town centre.

6.18.5 Paragraph 6.12.3 explained how rear servicing could be provided to remove the current need for front servicing. As the supporting text to this policy is deleted I am not sure whether this paragraph will be retained in revised form elsewhere in the text to deal with rear servicing.

6.18.6 The Council has produced a Development Brief which deals with the more detailed requirements expected of the supermarket developer. This has now been mentioned in the supporting text at paragraph 6.12.2.

6.18.7 Alternative parking is dealt with in the Dursley Regeneration Strategy. Replacement parking is to be provided before the new food store is brought into use.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS 6.18**

- (a) Delete this policy and supporting text from the Plan in accordance with suggested changes proposed by the Council.

- (b) Council to consider the need for supporting text elsewhere in the chapter to deal with rear servicing.

## **6.19 PARAGRAPH 6.14 – OMISSION SITE OS217**

### **The Objections**

TCR (OS217)/554/2353                      Unnamed client

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Old Town Hall is well related to the existing town centre and offers opportunities for linked shopping uses. Authority should assess the need for retail development and consider allocating site for retail.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.19.1        It is important to maintain employment sites where they contribute to the sustainability of towns and villages. There a need for employment opportunities to be close to residential areas so that people have a chance to consider working close to home. There are only limited employment opportunities in Wotton-Under-Edge. In the face of these considerations, I do not consider that this objection makes out a justification for allocating this site for a retail allocation, but see my recommendation at section 4.6 of the Employment chapter of this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.19**

6.19.2        Make no modifications to the Plan in response to this objection, but see my recommendation at section 4.6 of the Employment chapter of this report.

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## **6.20 PARAGRAPH 6.14 - OMISSION SITE OS218**

### **The Objections**

TCR (OS218)/554/2351                      Unnamed client

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Bluecoat School site is located adjacent to the Town Centre boundary of Wotton and is well linked to existing shops. Authority should assess the need for retail development and consider allocating site for retail.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.20.1        I have argued in the Employment Chapter when considering Old Town that the Council should assess the need for retail development against other employment generating

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uses. The Council would first need to determine whether additional retail development is required and then whether it should take precedence over other uses, and if there is a demand the Council should weigh up the suitability of one site against another. However, I understand that the school site referred to is brownfield, is allocated for housing, and is the subject of current housing development which is nearing completion.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.20**

Make no modification to the Plan in response to this objection.

### **6.21 POLICY S9**

#### **The Objections**

S09/444/1912	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S09 (DurTC)/317/0923	Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Coop Society Ltd.
S09/228/0560	Stroud Town Council?
S09/543/2281	Government Office for the South West
S09/444/3670	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S09/444/3669	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S09/424/1623	Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party

#### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside primary and secondary frontages.
- (b) Dursley Town Centre boundary has been drawn too widely and includes areas inappropriate to a town centre.
- (c) Theoretical frontages of Berkeley, Minchinhampton and Painswick are inaccurate and too restrictive.
- (d) Policy opposes introduction of other uses outside Class A. Introduction of other uses may assist the regeneration of the centres.
- (e) Extend Stonehouse shopping frontage to include whole length of High Street.

#### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.21.1 This objection has been raised to a number of policies and has already been dealt with above.

6.21.2 From my visit to the area I did not find Dursley town centre boundary defines too wide an area, bearing in mind that prime frontages are protected. The boundary appears to merely include those areas containing a variety of uses forming an integral part of the town centre function.

6.21.3 From my reading of the policy in the Revised Deposit Version it applies to the defined town centre as a whole, not to any prescribed frontages in Berkeley, Minchinhampton

and Painswick, as prime frontages would be difficult to define. Superfluous sections of the plan and errors have been deleted by Proposed Changes 169 and 170 including Table 6.3. This has been replaced with inset maps. The primary frontage has been extended in Nailsworth by including Fountain Street and 4-8 George Street, to accord with objections

6.21.4 It seems to me that the basic approach of the Council to consolidate the retail and A Class uses into a tightly defined core area is sound. This will give an opportunity for a variety of uses to be agreed outside that area.

6.21.5 From my visit to Stonehouse the remainder of the High Street seems to me to be an area of mixed uses with a predominance of residential. Within the defined centres but outside primary frontages I consider Policy S11 provides adequate protection of the vitality and viability of the town.

6.21.6 With revisions proposed I consider the three policies S9, S10 and S11 complement each other and should remain in the Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.21**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections, but modify in accordance with Proposed Changes 169 and 170.

## **6.22 POLICY S10**

### **The Objections**

S10/228/0561	Stroud Town Council
S10/444/1913	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S10/543/2282	Government Office for the South West
S10/554/2354	Unnamed client
S10 (StoTC)/424/1624	Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside frontages.
- (b) Extend Stonehouse shopping frontage to include whole length of High Street.
- (c) Frontages are too restrictive.
- (d) Policy may frustrate town centre regeneration. Approach to change of use should be reconsidered so that new housing, leisure and office development can aid regeneration.
- (e) Considers that an assessment of need for further retail in Wotton should be carried out and sequential approach taken to site identification if a need exists.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.22.1 It is not clear to me how Policy S10, of itself, would have an adverse effect on

properties outside of defined centres or frontages. Defined primary frontages, which are limited in extent, generally contain those retail elements that are particularly important to the function of the centre. Outside those frontages there is greater flexibility to permit other uses, and diversification which would add to the vitality and viability of the centre is encouraged in government guidance. Moreover, Policy S10 is only permissive of changes of use where they will assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre. Following objections this policy now only applies to Dursley, Wotton, Stonehouse and Nailsworth. Reference to other settlements was deleted in the Revised Deposit Version.

6.22.2 See section 6.21.5 above which deals with High Street, Stonehouse,

6.22.3 See my report on Policy S9 about the treatment of frontages..

6.22.4 From my visit I found these towns to be important centres where retailing should take priority over other uses. However, this policy does not prevent changes of use occurring if they assist in enhancing the vitality and viability of the centre. From my visits and having regard to the character of the centres I consider there are possibilities for some housing, leisure or office development at ground floor level.

6.22.5 I have dealt with the arguments about retail development in Wotton in the Employment Chapter of the Plan when considering objections in respect of Old Town.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS 6.22**

Make no further modifications to the Plan in response to these objections but modify in accordance with Proposed Changes 169 and 170.

## **6.23 POLICY S11**

### **The Objections**

S11/1/0082	Gloucestershire County Council
S11/444/3671	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S11/228/0562	Stroud Town Council
S11/554/2355	Unnamed client
S11/444/1914	Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Criterion 3 should be reworded: “be safely and conveniently accessible by public transport, cycling and walking”.
- (b) Concern that adverse effects may occur to properties outside primary frontages.
- (c) Frontages are too restrictive.
- (d) Considers that an assessment of need for further retail development in Wotton should be carried out and sequential approach taken to site identification if a need exists.

(e) Delete policy or provide proper criteria for assessment.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.23.1 Criterion 3 has been deleted as it duplicates policies in the Transport Chapter. This duplication is not necessary as the plan is to be read as a whole.

6.23.2 It is not clear to me how Policy S11 would, of itself, have adverse effects on properties outside of primary frontages. It seems to me that regardless of location within the town centre Policy S11 does not discourage diversification that would sustain or enhance the viability and vitality of the town centre.

6.23.3 See my report at Policy S9 on frontage restrictions.

6.23.4 See my detailed report on Old Town, Wotton in the Employment Chapter of the Plan.

6.23.5 Advice on the factors to be taken into account in assessing the vitality and viability of town centres is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 at Figure 1. I do not believe they need to be repeated in the Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.23**

Make no modification to the Plan in response to these objections.

## **6.24 POLICY S12**

### **The Objections**

S12/444/1915	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S12/444/3672	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S12/554/2356	Unnamed Client
S12/554/3793	Unnamed Client
S12/252/0700	Somerfield Stores Ltd
S12/424/1627	Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party
S12/543/2283	Government Office for the South West

### **Summary of Objections**

(a) New criteria should be added to incorporate Government's policy of identifying need for retail developments not located in the town centre and demonstrating that no sequentially preferable sites are available.

(b) Criterion 5 should be amended. There are likely to be future cases where an alternative use would be more appropriate.

- (c) Considers that an assessment for further retail in Wotton should be carried out and sequential approach taken to site identification if a need exists. If sites cannot be identified Policy should be amended to reflect potential requirement and identify criteria against which to assess proposal.
- (d) Redraft Policy to ensure development is consistent with identified need and size and function of centres, and it applies to retail extensions and other key town centre uses attracting lots of people.
- (e) Changes made to Policy are ambiguous.
- (f) Policy is restrictive and contrary to S6.
- (g) Insert “not be permitted unless the following criteria are met” after “will” in first sentence of Policy and delete remainder of first two paragraphs. Reword Criterion 5: “it will not result in an increase in the number and length of motorised journeys”.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.24.1 This Policy has been redrafted for consistency with advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. It now reflects the sequential approach recommended and I consider the objections have been reasonably met. Mention has now been made of Transport Assessments in paragraph 6.15.5a but this needs to be further revised to recognise that the new Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 has been issued since the Plan was prepared. Criterion 3 would enable the range of goods to be controlled by legal agreement.

6.24.2 I have dealt with Wotton in some detail in the Employment Chapter of the Plan when I consider the objections in respect of Old Town. I basically agree that future retail demand needs to be assessed and balanced against other employment uses.

6.24.3 I do not find the revised Policy S12 to be ambiguous; it follows guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. I see no reason why Criterion 5 should create a presumption that a site is unprotected or outside the settlement boundary. It refers only to sites protected by an alternative allocation in the Plan and reflects advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 at paragraph 3.23 that planning proposals for retail development should not normally be allowed on land designated for other uses. I agree with the objector that the policy does not specifically mention changes of use, but these are included in the term “development proposals.” Proposals for changes of use out of centre would be dealt with under the 5 criteria listed.

6.24.4 The suggested revised wording would fundamentally change the policy and would be contrary to the sequential approach in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. The original Criterion 4 has been deleted as it duplicated policies in the Transport Chapter of the Plan. Criterion 4 now refers to impact on travel patterns and increase in car usage

6.24.5 The suggested change would be contrary to the sequential approach in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6. The policy as written complies with that advice.

6.24.6 There is a particular concern of objectors about the decanting of retail trades from Dursley to Cam, where there are more houses and easier level parking; and concern about conditions being relaxed to allow retail trading to increase out of town. I consider these are more related to implementation of the policy than a weakness in the wording of the policy itself.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.24**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections.

## **6.25 POLICY S13**

### **The Objections**

S13/444/1916	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S13/1/0140	Gloucestershire County Council

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Reword Criterion 5 to improve consistency and clarity.
- (b) Review Policy to allow development adjacent to village or small town centre boundaries subject to no other site being available.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.25.1 Criterion 5 relating to access by public transport, bicycle or on foot has been deleted as it is a duplication of policies in the Transport Chapter.

6.25.2 Policy S13 reflects Section 6.16 of the chapter by protecting and encouraging local shopping centres, community facilities and village shops. In my view these would normally be within settlement boundaries to prevent the spread of development into the countryside. Any proposal for such development outside of the defined settlement boundary would need to be considered on its own merits as an exception and would be assessed against other policies of the Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.25**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections.

## **6.26 POLICY S14**

### **The Objections**

S14/444/3673	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S14/543/2284	Government Office for the South West
S14/444/1917	Various Clients of Andrew Watton
S14 (Str&C/D)/391/1275	Stroudwater Redevelopment Partnership Ltd

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Percent of frontage appears arbitrary. Justify or redraft Policy to allow development where the retail function would not be undermined.
- (b) Ebley industrial estate should be defined as a local centre.
- (c) Relax amended Policy or define settlement more accurately.

(d) Policy is too restrictive.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.26.1 The percentage approach was arbitrarily restrictive but has been changed in the Revised Deposit Plan to meet the objection. I believe Policy S14, as revised, provides for the reasonable protection of the retail functions of a centre in accordance with guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6.

6.26.2 From my visit I did not find that Ebley Industrial Estate would reasonably meet the criteria for a local centre. A local centre is normally formed by a small grouping of shops providing day to day needs, usually comprising a newsagent, a general grocery, a sub post office and occasionally a pharmacy and hairdresser. From my visit I found the estate to be more of a mixed-use location rather than a local shopping centre as envisaged by Annex A in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6.

6.26.3 Cam has not been singled out for total protection any more than other settlements covered by policies in this chapter. Cam has been identified as a District Centre under Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 and I do believe from my visit that control of uses within the defined area is too restrictive. In my view it is preferable to the percentage approach previously proposed before the policy was amended.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.26**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections.

## **6.27 POLICY S15**

### **The Objections**

S15/543/2285

Government Office for the South West

S15/444/1918

Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Redraft Policy to set out a positive approach. Policy should take into account importance of a unit to the community rather than assume facilities should be retained.
- (b) Considers Policy will destroy all commercial operations in villages and small settlements. Final criterion effectively allows the closure of all non profit businesses.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.27.1 As all 3 criteria would need to be met before a change of use is agreed I consider the policy takes a realistic approach to the retention of community facilities. However, I accept that a refusal of planning permission, of itself, would not necessarily ensure that a community facility is retained. No criterion can do this. I have considered whether criterion 2 should be

strengthened by adding at the beginning “such facilities are not essential to the day to day needs of the community”, but I believe this is already implied in the wording of criterion.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.27**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to these objections

**6.28 POLICY S16**

**The Objections**

S16/233/0623	Wyevale Garden Centres plc
S16/424/1630	Stroud & Gloucestershire Green Party
S16/444/1919	Various Clients of Andrew Watton

**Summary of Objections**

- (a) Policy requires definitions as to existing stores, competition and the nature of goods to be sold.
- (b) Reword start of Policy: “Proposals for new garden centres will only be permitted in towns, and extensions to existing centres...”.
- (c) Redraft Policy. Garden centres provide rural employment, require large open spaces to display plants that may determine the need for a rural location and do not necessitate growing on site.

**Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.28.1 The nature of goods to be sold is explained in criterion 1 of the policy -“entirely garden related and consists predominantly of plants,” - and paragraph 6.18.4 mentions the difference between urban and rural garden centres. I find the policy clear. As to competition this is not a matter for the planning system as explained in Planning Policy Guidance Notes. 1 and 6.

6.28.2 Paragraph 6.18.4 accepts that there are certain types of garden centres that require large areas of land. These are normally located on the edge of settlements and form a transition between the urban area and the countryside beyond. Extensions may be acceptable to existing garden centres but this would also depend on compliance with other policies of the plan such as N8 and G1.

6.28.3 From my experience garden centres are located in both urban and rural areas and if rural normally on the edge of settlements. Policy S16 does not restrict garden centres to sites within towns, subject to a site being reasonably accessible by public transport cycling and walking. This is in accordance with national guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.28**

Make no modification to the Plan in response to these objections.

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## **6.29 PARAGRAPH 6.19.1**

### **The Objections**

TCR/para. 6.19.1./444/1921      Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) There is no Policy on goods sold from petrol filling stations or the opening hours of such facilities.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.29.1      I do not consider there is any necessity to have a specific policy to control shops which are an integral part of petrol filling stations, as such retail outlets serve different purposes dependent upon location. Again the opening hours would be a matter for individual consideration depending upon whether the shop at a petrol filling station is the only convenient retail outlet for local residents. Unacceptable expansion of such retail outlets in settlements and their impact on other retailers would be assessed under Policy S12.

### **RECOMMENDATION 6.29**

Make no modifications to the Plan in response to this objection.

## **6.30 POLICY S17**

### **The Objections**

S17/409/140CW                      Buchanan Partnership  
S17/444/1920                      Various Clients of Andrew Watton

### **Summary of Objections**

- (a) Considers Policy should be flexible to meet need for A3 uses outside town centres.  
(b) Policy prevents historic house owners and country restaurants making best use of their properties.

### **Inspector's Reasoning and Conclusions**

6.30.1      As Policy S12 has been made more comprehensive the Council sees no reason to retain Policy S17 and it has been deleted from the Plan. I agree with this approach and find there is no need to pick out A3 uses for separate consideration.

6.30.2      I do not consider that the criteria in Policy S12 would be likely to have any material effect on historic houses or country restaurants, as the purpose of the policy is to protect the vitality and viability of town centres. Policies in the Built Environment and Employment

Chapters of the Plan which encourage tourism and rural diversification lay down reasonable guidance about the acceptability of such uses outside of settlements.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.30**

Make no modification to the Plan in response to these objections.