

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Why have a Local Plan?

1.1.1. This Local Plan sets out Stroud District Council's policies and proposals for development and land use in the District for the period 1 July 1991 to 30 June 2011. Its uses are to:-

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

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

1.2. The National Context and Legal Background

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

1.2.2. This Plan has been prepared under the requirements of that and other related legislation and Government advice. Of note in this context is the range of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) published by the Department of the Environment, (see Appendix 1 for a list of these), and particularly PPG12: Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance 1992.

1.2.3. Once this Plan has progressed through the procedural requirements of the relevant legislation it will be adopted by the District Council as a Statutory Plan. This Plan, together with the approved Structure Plan, will form the Development Plan for Stroud District and will be given considerable weight by the

Council and the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions as the major interest to be taken into account when determining planning applications. In most cases the Development Plan policies will be the deciding factor unless there are other clear and overriding material considerations.

Status of this Draft for Deposit Local Plan

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

1.2.5. This Draft for Deposit Plan was considered by the Council's Planning Committees in March and June 1999 and full Council in June 1999. It has been adopted for development control purposes. Therefore, this Plan provides the District Council's most up-to-date approved strategy and policy framework for making decisions on planning applications. It is a highly significant document in helping to shape the future of the District.

1.2.6. All proposals for development in the District will be considered against the policies and proposals of this Plan. **The Plan must be considered as a whole and it is important that proposals comply with all relevant policies of the Plan and its successor versions.** It will be accorded greater weight than all previous non statutory planning policies as the main consideration in determining planning applications. This version of the Local Plan supersedes the Deposit Version Local Plan of 1994 which covered the District.

1.3. The Regional and Strategic Context

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

Regional Context

1.3.2. The key elements of the regional planning framework are set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the South West of England (RPG10). RPG10 was published in July 1994 and covers the period up to 2011. The guidance is intended primarily to provide a planning framework for updating County Structure Plans but it is also

¹ Main documents:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Part II)

Planning and Compensation Act 1991

Town and Country Planning (Development Plan) Regulations 1991

Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 - Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance 1992

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 - General Policy and Principles 1997

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relevant to the preparation and review of Local Plans.

1.3.3. The aims for the region are:-

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

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

1.3.5. RPG10 also stresses how the interdependence between maintaining and enhancing the Region's environment and economic prosperity should be recognised through development plans. Plans should encourage economic prosperity and facilitate employment growth and economic diversification. The importance of an integrated transport system should be recognised in plans and policies should improve links within the Region, with other regions and with Europe. However, provision for new development should be made in ways which reduce the need for travel, reduce congestion and encourage travel choice.

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

Gloucestershire County Structure Plan

1.3.7. The Gloucestershire County Structure Plan was first approved by the Secretary of State in 1981. This was reviewed by the County Council in the late 1980's and the First Alteration to the Structure Plan (approved in January 1992) provided strategic planning policy for the county up to mid 2001.

1.3.8. Subsequently a Second Review has been undertaken to take strategic policy forward to cover the period July 1991 to June 2011. A Deposit Draft was published in December 1997 and was subject to an Examination in Public in September 1998. The Panel's Report was received in December 1998. Modifications have been proposed and subjected to further public consultation.

1.3.9. This Local Plan has been prepared to be in conformity with the Structure Plan as modified by the Panel's Report and it is published as if the Structure Plan had been approved as provided for in Section 46 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

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

1.4. Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

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

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

- Residential Design Guide.
- Landscape Assessment.
- Historic Buildings - their repair and conservation.
- Parking Guidelines.
- Stroud - Regeneration Strategy.
- Dursley - Regeneration Strategy.
- Residential Development and Outdoor Play Space.
- Conservation Area Policy Statements.
- Golf Courses.

1.5. Using the Local Plan

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

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

The main **policies and proposals** are distinguished in the text in **bold**. The Written Statement also contains a number of appendices which form part of the plan and are equally open to public scrutiny.

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

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

1.6. The Next Steps

1.6.1. The preparation process of the Local Plan is shown in the diagram over the page. The stage now reached, the Draft for Deposit stage, is the start of the statutory adoption process. It is intended that this version will go forward to become the Statutory Local Plan for Stroud District following this period of statutory public consultation.

1.6.2. Any person or organisation may comment upon this Local Plan. Comments, whether they be objections or statements of support, should be submitted on the special comments sheets available from the Council Offices at the address below. Comments must be received by Stroud District Council before the end of the public consultation period, (which is separately notified).

1.6.3. If there are objections made to the Plan that cannot be resolved then a Public Local Inquiry will be held. This will be conducted by an independent inspector nominated by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Inspector may make recommendations to the Council for modifications to be made to the plan. These would be duly considered and the Council may decide to modify the Plan further. Any modifications will be advertised for further comment and any objections will in turn be considered before the Plan is finally adopted by the Council as a Statutory Local Plan.

1.6.4. A fuller explanation of this process and the public's role in it can be found in the publication 'Development Plans - what you need to know' - available directly from the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions at:-

**Government Office of the South West
Fifth Floor
The Pithay
Bristol
BS1 2PB**

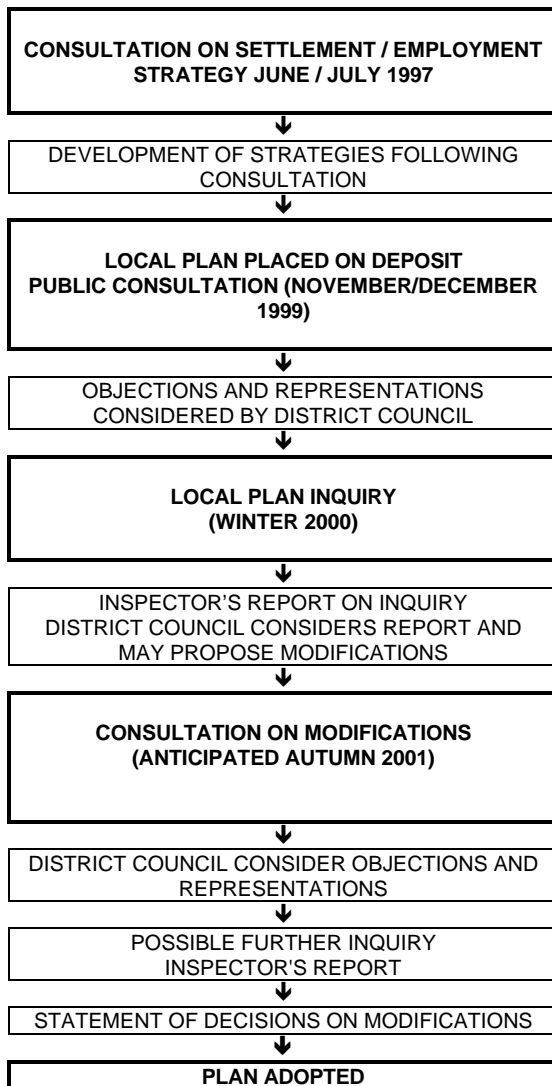
or at the address below:-

**Planning Strategy Team
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill Stroud
Glos GL5 4UB
Tel: No: 01453-754308**

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1.6.5. The Government has recently produced a Consultation Draft Replacement PPG12, and the above procedure may be amended as a consequence of the publication of Replacement Guidance.