

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 January 2020 14:34
To: WEB Local Plan; WEB Local Plan
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Wisloe Development Proposal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Sir / Madam,

15th January 2020

Reference: Wisloe Development

I am writing to make my feelings known and clear regarding the proposed draft strategy and local plan for Wisloe. Whilst I acknowledge the need for a development to support a growing population, I do not support the plan for Wisloe, and the proposal as it stands to create one homogenous development that encapsulates several small villages from the Cotswold AONB through to the Severn Vale. My reasons are numerous and noted below, and I would be grateful for you considering these points ahead of the conclusion to the consultation period on January 22nd, 2020

Firstly, I find the proposed scheme contradicts several the stated objectives of the planning strategy of Stroud District Council, whilst also ignoring some of its own development principles.

a) The proposed development at Wisloe lies in very close proximity to the River Cam. Even before development this water course has a long history of flooding and struggles to cope with the current pressures upon it. The local pumping station has also failed on numerous occasions due to the volumes of water following weather events. A development scheme of the magnitude proposed at Wisloe will have a devastating effect on the River Cam, and the supporting drainage infrastructure. The development of housing on what is currently open and free draining land will remove the ability of the land to absorb rainwater, instead the runoff will be forced into the localised drainage system that currently struggles to cope before any development

b) In addition, the policy also ***claims to want to minimise and mitigate against future flood risks, to recycle water resources and to protect and enhance the quality of the districts surface and groundwater resources.*** Clearly, the Wisloe proposal stands to do the opposite of this and puts at great risk the local drainage regime, substantially enhancing the risks of widespread flooding, and degradation of the ground water quality.

c) The current land use at Wisloe is agricultural, and the land here has been designated as Grade 2 by Natural England, which is defined as ***“Good Agricultural Land”*** This contradicts **strategy SO5** Climate Change and Environmental Limits where you state the desire to ***“Maximise the re-use of buildings and the recycling of building materials”***. Also, that you support the promoting of ***“appropriately brown field sites”*** as part of the development strategy The Wisloe proposal not only seeks to develop good quality agricultural land, but it makes no provision for the re-use of brownfield sites.

d) Furthermore, the proposed Wisloe location, being an area of Good Quality agricultural land is also known to house some rare species of flora and fauna. There are records held by the British Trust for Ornithology for some rare listed birds (Red Data listings) for the Lapwing and Curlew. The area around the WWT in Slimbridge means that migrating birds are also frequent

visitors to the locality, a development at Wisloe would have a detrimental impact on visiting wild birds.

e) The choice of Wisloe as a potential development site further contradicts the planning strategy in that its published recommendations are to “**focus development on a smaller number of strategic growth areas within or adjacent to larger settlements where there is best access to services, facilities, jobs and infrastructure**”. Wisloe, is some 8.5 miles from Stroud, and some 2 miles from Dursley, so not adjacent to either. Furthermore, most residents living in the Slimbridge, Cam, Dursley vicinity commute out of the locality to work. Mainly to the larger towns and cities, such as Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Birmingham, Swindon etc. A development at Wisloe will not change this employment demographic, instead it will put further pressure on the existing road infrastructure and contradict the SDCs environmental policy to become carbon neutral by 2030. Encouraging increased levels of commuting and developing high grade agricultural land completely conflicts with these stated objectives.

f) An intelligent alternative to a concentrated development at Wisloe would be to distribute the development requirements more evenly across the district and closer to where most current and proposed employment opportunities already exist, and where there is already best access to services, specifically closer to Gloucester, e.g. Hardwicke, and also Stonehouse (railway and M5 access) and Stroud existing brown field development opportunities. This would serve to more evenly distribute the inevitable pressures on infra structure, as well as to reduce emissions, and the environmental impact.

g) Finally, notwithstanding my previous points, the proposed development at Wisloe would serve to connect the northern extent of Cam, to Wisloe effectively creating a homogenous development area that runs from the Cotswold area of outstanding natural beauty all the way through to the Severn Vale. The planning policy determines “**that we have a high-quality environment and that there is a need to consider how housing needs can be met without compromising the high-quality environment. One of the challenges is to ensure that new developments are planned to ensure that they do not become simply dormitories for commuters**”

This development as proposed negatively impacts the current environment, degrades valuable high quality agricultural land, locates housing away from most employment sites encouraging commuting, negatively impacts rare flora and fauna, negatively impacts the local water courses adding greatly to the risks of flooding, whilst also failing to address the important issues surrounding global warming and carbon neutrality. The site is unsuitable for such development. A more measured and considered approach should be considered that allows limited development that comply with your stated strategic imperatives.

Yours Faithfully,

