



18 January 2020

Local Plan Review
The Planning Strategy Team
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill
Stroud GL5 4UB

Dear Sirs

Objections to Stroud District Plan

In Stroud district we currently have a wonderful mix of countryside, towns and amenities in a largely rural area. The proposed plan appears to completely ignore previous aims to disperse housing across the region by introducing huge developments. These developments would completely change the character of our region and in fact discourage rather than encourage tourism into the area. Do we in fact need all the houses proposed? Doubts have been raised that local housing requirements are correct in an October 2019 study.¹ Housing need in the Stroud area as calculated in Figure 6 in the same document suggests that growth will be 5000 households within the time period 2019 to 2029.

In the 2015 plan, the number of houses required between 2006 and 2031 was calculated taking into account houses already built to the date of the plan and planning approved resulting in 3600 houses being required. Taking into account the government's requirement to increase this number by 40%, the new number of 12,760 is questionable. A similar calculation should be given taken into account the number of houses already built in the time period. For example in Cam, there have been a very large number of houses built this year.

In the 2015 plan, there is a requirement noted to build 450 houses in the Cam & Dursley area of which 135 should be affordable with an 40% uplift this would increase to 630. The proposal to build a Garden Village at Wisloe with 1500 houses was not in the 2017 plan consultation so has not had the breadth of consultation it necessitates.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG) defines a garden village as having 1,500 to 10,000 homes; must be a discrete settlement, not an extension of an existing town or village (although a few existing homes would be allowed) and preference is given for brownfield sites,

None of the land proposed for the garden village is currently brownfield land. It is very good agricultural land currently designated grade 2² by Natural England in 2010 and has

1 Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1071211/2019-10-23-gloucestershire-lhna-consultation-draft.pdf>

been similarly graded since gradings were first made in the 1960s. The current farmer tenants are paying rent based on this grading. There is currently 72 hectares of brownfield land on the Stroud District Brownfield Register, some of which should be suitable for housing.

There is no plan to increase the number of doctor or dental surgeries or hospitals. Where is the proof that existing ones cope with potentially at least 3000 extra people. Whilst a primary school is suggested, can existing secondary schools cope with a large influx of students? Where are all these people going to park to use existing shopping facilities where the carparks are always very busy if not full?

Whilst this site is bounded by the M5 and A38 there is already other housing and development in Cam is gradually filling in countryside to the M5 in particular around the railway. The site cannot be described as a discrete settlement as it requires using local roads and drainage. Indeed in most cases the garden villages have spread to combine with other villages and towns³.

The proposal suggests that this would be a self contained village as it is located within an area bounded by the M5 and A38. This area already contains housing and some industrial sites and any residents such village would need to use the existing infrastructure.

Employment

According to the Town & Country Planning Association 2014 publication *Garden Cities a myth buste*⁴: "For any new community to be successful, jobs need to be provided with homes, and the right community infrastructure must be delivered upfront". Where will people find these jobs? At the time of writing there are currently 135 vacant industrial units of all sizes available to rent on Zoopla in the Cam & Dursley area; a large local employer Renishaw is shedding 200 jobs. The plan proposes 80% of new housing to be built in the south of the area well away from sources of employment.

The likely scenario is that people who come to live in the garden village are not people currently in the area wishing to move to new housing, but will be people who will commute to Bristol or Gloucester by car becoming a dormitory town (indeed this has proved to be the case with other garden villages noted in the appendix of Garden Towns and Villages⁵). In the proposal you mention that people in Cam already have to go outside their town to find work. The garden village will not be any different. The majority of employment is in Stroud and there is no direct rail access and buses take 45 minutes making this an unattractive proposition.

The current level of traffic through Cambridge makes it very difficult to turn right onto the A38, with an additional 1500 houses and potentially as many cars, this will make turning right impossible. The railway bridge is very narrow on the A4135. I have seen on many occasions families having to step into the road as the path is inadequate. If the residents of the Garden Village are to use facilities in Cam this would have to be addressed.

Noise levels

Noise levels for the M5 motorway are currently higher than that recommended for housing

3 GARDEN TOWNS & VILLAGES Unwanted, unnecessary and unsustainable. Smart Growth 2017

4 <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5eb6b9b0-6374-41a8-b4ae-ba2a80937222>

5 GARDEN TOWNS & VILLAGES Unwanted, unnecessary and unsustainable. Smart Growth 2017

at 55 to 60 decibels⁶. Any measures to reduce noise levels which would surely be large and difficult due to the M5 being on a raised embankments will detract from the surroundings. The plan suggests that the school should be located as far from the motorway as possible. Does this mean that children should not be allowed to play in their own gardens? The Wisloe plan appears to suggest that windows should not be opened and require special noise reducing glass.

Sewerage

Severn and Trent water have been tackling sewerage problems in the Slimbridge area for many years. The fact is that the system is inadequate. All sewerage for Slimbridge and Cambridge (both sides of the A38) goes through a pumping station in Ryalls Lane and then to the processing station in Coaley. When rain is heavy, sewerage reaches the top of manholes and overflows and backs up in the toilets. We have personally had to call out Severn Trent at least once a year due to these problems. The sewerage system would need to be completely overhauled and updated to provide adequate systems.

I hope you will take my points into consideration and redraft a plan that is far more suitable for our district

Yours faithfully



⁶ http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2008/05/16/NOISE_1705.pdf