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To: _WEB_Local Plan
Subject: Response to SDC Draft Local Plan

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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It doesn't take much reviewing of this plan to see this is a non-starter and a complete fantasy!

Roads - there is only one road into the development from the A38 via Berkeley Heath which is entirely inadequate now, let alone for 5,000 new households. There is no proposal to extend the bypass from Mobley to the A38. You need to take into account the drastic increase in commercial traffic from the two huge warehouses by the docks. All this is confirmed by SDC in the paper "Towards a Preferred Strategy - pros and cons of potential locations for strategic growth October 2011".

Better Alternatives - As the District councils plan is to develop a "powerhouse" of work opportunities between Cheltenham and Gloucester the obvious action would be to build more homes in the north of the district to reduce commuting/access better infrastructure (in line with Stroud District Council Policy DCP1). At present 80% of the required housing is being proposed in the south of the district. With developments at Charfield/Stone and Thornbury building here will cause gridlock with the motorway junctions north and south already beyond their capacity.

Buses - practically non-existent currently.

Rail Links - Is it achievable to build a new station halt in Sharpness, with regular services to Gloucester? This would be astronomically expensive including the additional work required on the line itself for it to be able to accommodate passenger trains. It is acknowledged that there won't be a direct link to Bristol. How would the already full to capacity station at Cam & Dursley deal with a further influx of passengers? If this was a viable option then I think this site would have potential but SDC have to be realistic that this new station halt will never be delivered.

Employment - the Council has previously suggested this is not a good area for creating employment. What has changed? The long term plan for the district is for employment to be created between Cheltenham and Gloucester. The power station site is struggling to attract business due to its remoteness (and possibly because nuclear waste is still stored there). Even if the power station site did thrive it is too far away to commute unless by car.

Green fields - the whole development is on green fields and no brownfield land will be used. There is an irony of the developers promising to create a farm - on former farmland! In addition they can no longer take up CO2 or be used to feed the local population (again this contradicts Stroud District Council Policy DCP1).

Natural Habitats - impact on wildlife including internationally protected natural habitats. Estuarine SSSI, SPA, SAC and RAMSAR sites. Nesting and wading birds will be negatively affected by extra recreational use and by the introduction of a large population of domestic cats.

Flood risk - although just outside a flood risk zone now, have the effects of climate change been taken into account? Once the fields have been built on they can no longer absorb rain water (again contradicting Stroud District Council Policy DCP1)

Fair process - Have the council listened to previous submissions? This area provided the highest number of responses the vast majority of which were against this development.

Education - no secondary school has been proposed until the second phase, i.e. after 2040. As anyone with school age children will know, secondary schools in the area (KLB and Rednock) are already full to bursting without even taking into account current development at Cam, Charfield, Stone and Thornbury. The existing school at Wanswell would be demolished for housing despite new schools being needed if the 'garden village' development goes ahead.

Local facilities - will people be travelling out of the area for leisure, shopping, hospitals which again will impact on infrastructure needs? this will also have a negative impact on shops in Berkeley as people just bypass this area.

Sewerage - current facilities inadequate for such a large development and would require major investment.

Coalescence - Existing communities will lose their character and identity as they merge into one large urban area - Wanswell, Newtown, Brookend.

Scale of development - this is out of all proportion to the area's needs. Some small scale development would be acceptable adjacent to Sharpness and Berkeley to meet local needs.

Cycling/horse riding - the dramatic increase in cars in the area would impact the quieter lanes (including National Cycling Route 41) used by cyclists and horse riders from all over the south west region. There are very few lanes left that are safe for these activities. Cars already over run most of the roads in the area - by building this there would be impact on health as fewer cyclists and horse riders would be able to safely enjoy this environment.

I would also question the calculation used to come up with the figure of 5,000 houses. It should be noted that a current development cannot proceed to stage 2 due to lack of interest. Will there be 5,000 buyers in this area??

I would add finally that councillors should think carefully before voting this proposal through. Once done it cannot be undone and this area of outstanding beauty and its communities will be lost forever. We look at some 60's development approved and think 'How could they do that?' Please don't make the same mistake. This development is not a silver bullet to fix the needs of all your housing requirements. If passed it will you will have an estate similar to those built in the welsh valleys - away from employment with no infrastructure its a recipe for disaster.

Regards

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