



BERKELEY HEATH
ENTERPRISES LTD

Berkeley Heath Farm, Berkeley, Gloucestershire, GL13 9EW

Office Telephones

Cattle Country Adventure Farm Park [REDACTED] - The Barn Function Centre [REDACTED]

Comments on proposals for the Berkeley Cluster and PS 36 New Settlement at Sharpness.

I would like to attach these points to the response I have already made online.

Introduction.

My family and I are farmers and owners of The Cattle Country Adventure Farm Park and The Barn at Berkeley wedding and conference centre. Further housing in this area would provide more visitors to our attraction, but for many reasons I cannot support this proposal.

I think most people appreciate that more housing must be provided in our district. But to create a massive development in such an inappropriate area is just madness. I cannot understand why planners have even considered such a proposal when there are so many negative factors associated with it.

Distribution around the district.

I'm puzzled why the council plans to build 80% of its allocation of housing in the southern part of the district, when a more scattered approach would have less impact on our rural community and help to revitalise villages that are struggling to provide services. Furthermore, it's more sensible to put new housing close to existing facilities to reduce travelling and associated CO2 emissions.

Current District Council plans are to create a "powerhouse" of work opportunities between Cheltenham and Gloucester and to reduce commuting and access infrastructure (SDC policy DCP1)

Access.

I live alongside the B4066. This is already completely insufficient for the amount of traffic it takes, particularly with regard to heavy lorries. During a previous application for only 300 houses SDC stated that the access onto the A38 was not suitable for this development.

Several years ago my son almost lost his life when he was knocked down walking along the edge of this road that still does not have a continuous footpath. Luckily he recovered, but has been left with life long injuries. **Until the bypass has been completed I believe that no further development should take place.**

I understand that 75% of current employees in this area work in Bristol. I often have to travel there myself early in the morning and always have to join a queue to join the M5 at Junction 14. This problem is bound to increase significantly with more housing development.

Rail link.

I'm sure many residents have highlighted the problems associated with joining into the existing railway system and the inability to travel directly to Bristol where most people work. There is already insufficient parking at Cam and Dursley station.

Employment.

There is very little employment for people already living in this area. Excluding the Magnox site, we are the largest employers and always have many more people looking for work than we are able to provide jobs.

I understand there is a very low take up of existing commercial units available at both the old power station and Sharpness sites. Indeed, the Council has previously suggested that this is not a good area for creating employment.

A while ago I considered transferring the farm supplies business I previously owned to Sharpness, but found it would be un-viable because of the extra distance customers and suppliers would have to travel.

Demand for housing.

There has been a lack of uptake for houses being built on Canonbury Hill to the extent that the developer has stopped building.

Schools.

There is no plan to build a secondary school until Phase 2 of the development. Existing schools are already full to capacity.

Garden village.

At first sight this idea presented by the developers sounds idyllic, but in reality I can't see how it can work. They tell me there is no other similar project in operation at the moment. If more people do begin to work from home they will still need to travel a considerable distance for shopping and leisure activities.

An example of an ill-conceived idea from the developers is that the proposal includes building a small farm using hydroponics to produce food. As a farmer and farm equipment supplier I have researched and tried hydroponics on an experimental basis myself. At the moment it is unviable, except for very specialist crops. It's expensive to run and requires a considerable amount of energy. When we have natural farmland all around us, the idea seems ludicrous.

The environment.

This is a very valuable wildlife area. We're passionate about maintaining and improving the environment on our farm and have registered our water meadows as a Key Wildlife Site. However, such sites cannot work in isolation. It's important that surrounding areas are also environmentally sensitive.

Apart from the Focus school site, all the proposed development would be built on green fields, all of which is currently prime agricultural land, or could be used for rewilding (if that is required in future to support this environmentally rich area). This land is also a valuable CO2 absorber and development contradicts SDC policy DCP1. Once developed, it will be lost forever.

Contradictions to the Draft Local Plan.

This proposal contradicts the Draft local plan in too many ways to list here without boring you, so, I'll just listed a few examples:

Priority issues.

Ensuring new housing development is in the right place, supported by the right services and infrastructure.

I can see no evidence that this policy matches any of this.

Conserving and enhancing Stroud district's countryside and biodiversity, including maximising the potential for a green infrastructure network.

**providing a robust policy framework for protecting and conserving the green infrastructure network .*

This development would destroy rather than conserve our natural and farmed environment.

Maximizing the potential of brownfield and underused sites to contribute to housing supply.

There are no brownfield sites in this proposal.

Economy

3. Addressing the high level of daily commuting out of and into the District, particularly out commuting to Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Bristol.

As mentioned above, this cannot be properly addressed.

A final point.

Has there been any evidence from local communities that this development would be a good one?

Thank you for reading my comments.

