

CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN AND EMERGING STRATEGY 2018, FROM HAMFALLOW PARISH COUNCIL

1. Councillors from Hamfallow Parish Council have attended public exhibitions on the review of the Stroud District local plan at Sharpness and Slimbridge village halls; and public meetings on the proposed local developments held at the Prince of Wales and Berkeley Arms hotels and at Sharpness village hall. This consultation response is based on feedback we have received from parishioners at these events.
2. Our concern is with the developments within and adjoining Hamfallow Parish, as set out in the "Emerging Strategy 2018," specifically developments PS33, PS34, PS35 and PS36.
3. Firstly, we wish to make clear that we recognize the need for new housing and that Stroud District has been given an allocation of 5700 new dwellings by central government, which it needs to provide for in its Local Plan. Secondly, we accept that most communities within the District must accept some further development if the District is to achieve the above housing allocation. **However, we wish to strongly object to the proposals for our area.**
4. These proposals, if realized, would see the building of at least 3000 new dwellings within and in close proximity to Hamfallow Parish. This is completely disproportionate to the size of the existing communities of Berkeley and Sharpness/Newtown. It would change this area, between the A38 and the River Severn, from being predominantly rural with small settlements into an almost totally built-up area with at least three times as many dwellings as we have now.
5. The "Emerging Strategy 2018" document is positively misleading about these developments, describing them as: "Growing two new villages and boosting local vitality by making the most of our natural resources, leisure and tourism..." This statement is wrong in every respect. 3000 plus almost contiguous dwellings are not growing villages but building a new town, largely on greenfield land. Nor is it a "garden village community" as described elsewhere in the document. It will not boost local vitality in any meaningful way, as it will not contribute significantly to local employment and will positively discourage tourism. Who will want to visit what will essentially be a massive housing estate?
6. We also question the wisdom of a major development housing upwards of 10,000 people within 1-2 km of a major intermediate level nuclear waste store. Although the development is outside the detailed planning zone for a nuclear accident, this waste will remain on the Berkeley site for the foreseeable future and the perception of prospective purchasers on risk levels may be very different from the reality. A factor like this, that could reduce the selling price of these properties could adversely affect the solvency of the developer and their ability to deliver agreed infrastructure improvements.
7. We have also reviewed the Sustainability Report with regard to the Berkeley Cluster. We find it rather misleading, inconsistent within itself and the results are not, we feel, properly reflected in your Strategy. For example, the comments on Page 101 regarding Sustainability Attribute 10 (SA10), air quality, arising from development of the Berkeley cluster, states that there will be a minor positive effect on air quality. This is contradicted by the results in Table 6.8 for SA10, which shows minor detriments to air quality resulting from PS33 and PS35 and significant negative effects to be likely from PS34 and PS36. We agree with the results in Table 6.8. They support the comments we make below, that there will be far more car

journeys made as a result of this development, resulting in much poorer air quality in the area. On another matter, employment and economic growth (SA,16 and 17), we strongly disagree with the findings, which show both as significantly positive in Table 6.8. This appears to be for no other reason than that the Sustainability Appraisal authors (para 6.66, page 101) have accepted the District Council's "vision" that small scale local businesses and low-impact tourism related activities will be encouraged. No doubt the District will encourage them, but we see no evidence from the Sustainability Report, the Emerging Strategy or our long involvement in this area, that it will be significantly successful. Far more likely that existing employment hubs out of the District will continue to grow and attract commuters from this development. We see no evidence for growth of significant non-car transport within the Berkeley cluster, even with a few more footpaths and cycleways (of which there are plenty already).

8. Finally, our main objection to the totality of this proposed development is that it is in completely the wrong place with respect to the road infrastructure. Again, the Strategy and the "Sharpness Eco Village Vision Document" seek to minimise this issue by referring to local employment (which will always be minimal) and cycleways/footpaths. The reality will be that the vast majority of these new dwellings will house two or three people working outside the area, most likely in Bristol, Cheltenham, or Gloucester, generating roughly an extra 10,000 return journeys per day. Being next to the river, there is only one way out of this area and that is onto the A38. Even were a new access road to be built (Berkeley bypass completion), this traffic would meet the increasingly heavy traffic from proposed developments to the north (Wisloe) and south (Buckover). Then, the only access to the M5 is via the already, and increasingly, heavily congested junctions 13 and 14. Although improvements to these junctions are mentioned in the Strategy, in our view no realistic improvements to these junctions could cope with this extra traffic, again added to that from proposed developments to the north and south. No such housing developments should be proposed until all of the necessary road improvements have been delivered.
9. We also note that the District Council has chosen not to propose development at large potential sites much closer to good road infrastructure, such as Whaddon, even though there appears to be no substantive proposals from Gloucester City Council for developments in that area.
10. **In summary, it is our submission that the lack of local employment and inadequate highway access are fatal objections to this ill-considered proposal.** Notwithstanding those inescapable facts, Hamfallow PC would not necessarily object to more proportional and realistic development in this area. It is clearly not for us to make proposals, but the 400-500 dwellings represented by PS33, PS34 and PS35 might be more acceptable to the local community.