

Find below the reasons why the proposed Wisloe Green development in the parish of Slimbridge should not be adopted within the Local Plan, **I do not support the Council's preferred strategy**, plus some proposals for addressing the issue.

- The proposed site is located outside of the settlement limits for Cam and Slimbridge and therefore development of this land is contrary to policy CP2 of the Local Plan. It is also beyond the adopted settlement development limits and does not satisfy any of the principles of Core Policy CP15.
- The proposal would clearly involve the further unplanned extension of Cam into adjoining greenfield land and will lead to the coalescence of Dursley/Cam with the villages of Slimbridge, Cambridge and Gossington creating an urban sprawl. This will completely remove any meaningful physical separation of these villages, this is contrary to CP15 which was specified to avoid this type of coalescence. The character and appearance of the surrounding landscape will be irrevocably changed for these villages.
- Natural England classifies the land at Wisloe Green to be Grade 2 and development of this land is contrary to Local Plan guidelines. These requirements are currently being strengthened to reflect the hardening of Government policy to fight the factors causing climate change, good quality farm land should not be used for development.
- The current Local Plan has designated Cam and Dursley as Tier 1 settlements, up to their parish boundaries. Slimbridge and Cambridge have been designated Tier 3 and 4 settlements respectively. A development of this scale would effectively merge these villages with Cam and Dursley into one urban sprawl making these villages Tier 1 settlements also, which is contrary to the Local Plan assigned tiering levels.
- The proposed development would utilise green field agricultural land rather than brown fields which is contrary to the populous view expressed in the Local Plan feedback and commitments made by SDC in the Local Plan. There are significant alternative brown field sites in the district which should be developed before pristine farmland is destroyed.
- The 450-dwelling development at Draycott (off Box Road) recognised the significant impact this level of increased housing would impart onto the existing road network. Additional traffic lights are required to comply with the National Planning Framework and the adopted Stroud District Plan, yet it is recognised by the local councils that these additional traffic lights will cause increased congestion. The addition of a further 1500 dwellings (3-times the Draycott settlement) will only lead to a further degradation in road traffic flow capacity, which cannot be improved by the addition of more lights. This is additional to the north Cam extension of potentially up to 2000 new dwellings! A Dursley bypass road is required, as was originally planned as part of the Littlecombe development. The Cam and Dursley railway station has a very infrequent service to Bristol and Gloucester and it's most likely the vast majority of commute journeys will be by car, not by rail. Furthermore, it must be recognised that most of the newly created jobs at Wisloe Green will result in workers coming into the area and not from Wisloe Green itself. Therefore, centralising settlement growth into major hubs will lead to significant traffic congestion deterioration in those areas, it would be far better to distribute the growth across a wider area within the district. This would also alleviate areas of high pollution resulting from these transport issues.

- There will also be increases in infrastructure demands on; secondary schools, Dr surgeries, sport centres, car-parking etc which are already full to capacity with no known additional funding or space planned to match the significant increase in resident numbers.
- The 'Garden Village' name is clearly nothing more than a PR marketing stunt to get a housing estate cleared, it is not separate from the planned north Cam housing extension, most of the infrastructure and employment will be accessed outside of the estate and it does not adhere to the published principles derived from Garden Cities and Towns.
- The Wisloe proposal was included part way through the Local Plan cycle (two years in) by which time many alternative sites had already been assessed and discounted by SDC. Increasing the requirement by 40% has increased the pressure for new sites, therefore the previously rejected sites should be re-assessed. It is not appropriate to expect proposals of the size of Wisloe (1500) to identify alternative sites of the same size when none will exist within the district. A more dispersed approach to share the development load more equitably around the district to much smaller sites would help satisfy this need to identify alternative sites and help comply with Government guidelines.
- Finally, the proposed development would materially adversely impact the countryside and setting for the villages, which coupled with the Draycott development would be visually noticeable from elevated AONB areas. Keeping villages separated from large sprawling conurbations will also assist these villages to maintain their rural aesthetic which also assists with the attractiveness to tourism, another objective of the Local Plan.
- In summary, the proposed development does not comply with many of the planning guidelines which are fundamentally there to avoid this type of urban sprawl of towns into the surrounding countryside beyond their parish boundaries. The proposed development would not have a coherent relationship with the existing village settlements. It is naïve in the extreme to believe that the 'Garden Village' development will not significantly increase the demands on the surrounding infrastructure and the level of road traffic to a point of log jam at busy periods e.g. rush hours and school run to Dursley.

Proposal

- The whole proposal for Wisloe Green (1500 dwellings) and the 700 dwellings proposal west of Draycott should be held in abeyance/postponed (not adopted within the Local Plan) until the 450-dwelling development at Millfields has been 75% populated to enable a realistic assessment to be made against all the planning criteria. Specifically, with respect to road traffic congestion, a Dursley bypass road should be completed via Littlecombe.
- The strategy developed recently for the Local Plan to flood the A38 and M5 corridor with houses should be changed to adopt a more dispersive option which would enable villages to retain their open spaces and identities and to grow in a more coherent fashion. This means a continuation of the existing policy where small developments of circa 30 to 50 dwellings are incrementally released over time for small villages like Slimbridge. This was the preferred option of the majority of respondents to the Local Plan survey. Distributing housing more equitably across the district will avoid bottleneck areas and the need for major investment in additional infrastructure (secondary schools, larger/additional rail station, bypass roads etc), maintain village identity and avoid coalescence.

Yours sincerely

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