

**REPRESENTATION TO
STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL
PLAN REVIEW 2019 ON
BEHALF OF LAND
DEVELOPMENT AND
ESTATES LTD.**



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Site: Land at New Road, North Nibley

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is a representation to the Stroud District Local Plan Review, which is subject to consultation until 22 January 2020. It is made on behalf of Land Development and Estates Ltd.
- 1.2 This representation sets out to address the following questions as outlined by Stroud District Council in respect of the draft local plan:
- *Do you support the Council's preferred strategy for meeting Stroud District's future growth and development needs?*
 - *Are there any additional issues or constraints relating to the proposed sites? And how should specific constraints, needs and opportunities be reflected in the final site allocation policies?*
 - *Are any further changes to the proposed policies necessary? Are there specific things that should be included in supporting text?*
- 1.3 We have considered the document as it now stands and have also considered the policies being proposed. These views are without prejudice to future submissions or hearing statements, which may be made in advance of the Examination stages.

Structure

- 1.4 The remainder of this representation sets out to address the questions detailed above, the suggested amendments to policies are set out in the order that the policies appear within the Draft Local Plan along with a justification for the inclusion of the site: land at New Road, North Nibley. We have used the Draft Plan numbering system for policies and paragraphs, as relevant, in order to assist officers. In summary, the following policies/paragraphs are subject to our comments:

Table 1 Policies and Paragraphs

Paragraph	Policy	Page
2.18		26
2.19		26
	CP2	48
	CP3	50
	HC4	111
	CP9	151
	DHC2	153
	DHC5	159
	CP15	179

2 REPRESENTATION

- 2.1 The remainder of this representation provides our comments on the questions set out by Stroud District Council as outlined in section one, along with comments on supporting text or proposed policy wording, as follows:

Do you support the Council's preferred strategy for meeting Stroud District's future growth and development needs?

- 2.2 We consider that further allocations should be made in sustainable locations in order to maintain a flexible supply of housing land.
- 2.3 In particular, we consider that the imminent failure of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) is likely to have an impact on neighbouring authorities including Stroud, because of significant delays in housing delivery within the region that are likely to ensue. We would therefore urge the Council to take some account of this through the provision of additional allocations, together with potential reserve sites. We consider the Council's Duty to Cooperate would not be discharged simply because they are not directly involved in the JSP.

Paragraph 2.18

- 2.4 We broadly support paragraph 2.18 which states 'Some limited development at small and medium sized sites immediately adjoining settlement development limits at Tier 1-3 settlements will be allowed, to meet specific identified local development needs (i.e. exception sites for first time buyers, self build and custom build housing, rural exception sites), subject to being able to overcome environmental constraints.'

Paragraph 2.19

- 2.5 Although it is noted that the site we are addressing is within a tier 3b settlement, in aim of making the plan more substantial in achieving its aim of delivering at least 12,800 homes, we would like to comment on paragraph 2.19 as part of the draft strategy's headlines which reads as follows 'At Tier 4a and 4b settlements, in addition to rural exception sites, the development of small sites of up to 9 dwellings outside settlement development limits will be supported in the interests of maintaining social sustainability, provided that the policy is supported by the local community.' Although we are broadly in support of the policy, we would question the need (and justification) for a cap of 9 dwellings. This appears to be arbitrary, and simply following the definition of what makes a minor development, in development management terms. We therefore consider that this should be described as

'small sites' and that they would be considered on their own merits, and relative to the size of the settlement to which they relate.

- 2.6 We would therefore suggest that the wording be changed to 'development of small sites outside development limits will be supported in the interest of maintaining sustainability and would be considered favourably if supported by an identified need of housing to which figure may exceed 9 dwellings if an identified need is proven'.

Core Policy CP2 – Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.7 We consider that the cumulative totals, reflecting allocations to the higher order tier of settlements should be more flexibly-worded, to reflect the 'at least' OAN figure of 12,800 dwellings to meet the needs of the district from 2020 to 2040. This figure would of course exclude the 2,500 proposed to meet the needs of adjoining Gloucester City (land at Whaddon) as it would contribute to their housing land supply calculation. We would therefore question the total allocation figure on identified sites within the plan period of 8,725 as being too low. This is because we consider the overly-positive assumptions on 'commitments' leave the council at risk of some sites not coming forward. The council rely on a number of major sites with outline planning permission or are 'firm commitments' without any obvious justification. We would also question the reliance on brownfield sites which are unlikely to deliver affordable housing or other planning gain and should therefore site outside of the supply. The council also appears to be fairly reliant on windfalls – which run to a total of around 1,350 new homes over the plan period and commitments run to well over 5,000 homes. The council assume that all of the 5,000 dwelling 'commitments' will deliver within the first 5 years of the plan (including 749 in 2019).
- 2.8 We would dispute this, as it is clear the council rely on a number of sites that do not have detailed planning permission (or indeed any planning permission) and there is no evidence within the draft plan that clearly demonstrates that all such sites will deliver within the short term. Linked to this, there does not appear to be a lapse rate applied to this so-called supply. This clearly points to a clear opportunity to allocate more sites, which would address some of this potential risk and would also reinforce the plan-led approach.
- 2.9 The projected delivery Table 6 and associated graph on Page 193 show the council's assumptions on delivery rates. The assumptions on delivery are, in our view, highly aspirational and are heavily geared towards the early stages of the plan period. They would require a considerable step-change in delivery rates including both existing commitments and proposed allocations without any obvious justification or specific strategy setting out how this could be achieved.

- 2.10 The Annual Monitoring Report (2019), at Page 13 (Net Completions by Parish) clearly demonstrates that the Council have only managed to achieve an annual delivery rate of 437 dwellings between 2006 and 2019. Whilst this may have been against a lower annual requirement, there is no evidence that the Council could genuinely deliver over 1,000 dwelling completions per annum, nor a rate in excess of 800 dwellings (where the assumption is that this would be the rate for 50% of the plan period). This reinforces the need to allocate more housing sites, particularly non-strategic sites with less reliance on infrastructure and a faster build out time.
- 2.11 We consider the planned trajectory should be more realistic, accommodating a reasonable lapse rate, lead-in times (particularly for strategic sites) and reflect genuine build-out rates, not necessarily what developers say may happen. We would encourage the council to verify their information on built out rates per sales outlets independently. We consider this alone would mean allocating more rather than fewer sites.

Core Policy CP3 Tier 3b – Settlements with Local Facilities

- 2.12 We note that proposed policy CP3 acknowledges that Tier 3b settlements (which includes North Nibley) provides some *'scope for some development to meet specific local housing, employment or community infrastructure needs, either within or (exceptionally) adjacent to the settlement development limit, subject to fulfilling the criteria set out in this Plan's Core and Delivery policies. Any such development will seek to sustain or enhance the settlement's existing role, function and accessibility.'* Whilst we are broadly supportive of this positive approach, and indeed the use of a minimum OAN figure of 12,800 dwellings for the plan period, we consider that there is scope to make allocations within Tier 3b settlements.
- 2.13 North Nibley itself is a sustainable settlement, where a number of day to day needs could be met within walking distance of the site. Not making an allocation to the village at this stage is a missed opportunity and would give local people greater certainty over future planned growth.

Delivery Policy HC4 – Local Housing Need (Rural Exception Sites)

- 2.14 We would encourage the council to consider delivery when it comes to such sites, adjacent to the SDLs, as they may require grant funding to ensure they are deliverable. Flexibility in the approach to securing the affordable housing may need to be discussed further, in light of the changing requirements set by Homes England.
- 2.15 We would also refer you to our comments earlier in relation to hurdles associated with proving local affordable housing need. Local need should be expanded and should not simply relate to the existing settlement – we would encourage the consideration of local need

including neighbouring parishes in order that those living outside of an area, but with a justification (i.e. local link) to live there could be accommodated more easily. This would then translate into parishes cooperating to ensure local people do not have to move significant distances from where they grew up, work or have family links.

Policy CP9 Affordable Housing

- 2.16 We consider that the target of 30% affordable housing within North Nibley as a designated rural parish, is acceptable in principle.

Delivery Policy DHC2

- 2.17 Again, we feel the need to argue the reasoning to include a cap of 9 dwellings supported on developments outside settlement development limits of category 4 settlements. We consider that if there is a proven need for more dwellings at a location, the development of more than 9 dwellings should be considered favourably to address the identified need for housing in that area.
- 2.18 The Framework does not encourage that a cap on such types of development is set, and indeed we consider the policy should be re-worded to focus more on small schemes that are 'suitably proportionate', relative to the site of the settlement to which they would relate.

Policy DHC5 Wellbeing and Healthy Communities

- 2.19 We consider that the wording of this policy is perhaps difficult to fully address. In relation to access to locally produced food, short of being close to a farmer's market, would this policy take account of food delivery services? It may be more appropriate to request a Health Impact Assessment to be produced to support planning applications, based on a framework that could be set out in a supplementary planning document.

Core Policy CP15 – A quality living and working countryside

- 2.20 We are in support that Core Policy CP15 has been enhanced to provide some flexibility for permitting development if there is a proven identified need in rural locations, we feel that this is exceptionally important, given the need to provide homes and aid the council in contributing towards meeting its housing supply. That said, we would draw your attention to our previous comments, where we consider there is scope for additional allocations to be made through the local plan review process. We consider that, ultimately, this would give greater certainty over delivery through a plan-led approach.

3 THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

3.1 This section sets out details of the site to which this representation relates and responds to the below question, as follows.

Are there any additional issues or constraints relating to the proposed sites? And how should specific constraints, needs and opportunities be reflected in the final site allocation policies?

3.2 For the purposes of this representation, we are not able to comment on the suitability of other proposed allocations – and in any case, it is noted that there are currently no sites allocated within the village of North Nibley. Our comments therefore relate solely to the site at New Road, North Nibley.

3.3 We have included a map of the site and surrounding area in context to the village of North Nibley below:



Figure 1 Site Outline

3.4 The site sits within an existing built-up frontage, forming part of the existing built up area of the village. It is suitably adjacent to the development boundary of the village and is visually

contained within the immediate landscape, because of the nature of the topography of the site and its surroundings. This is a point which has been raised within the Draft Local Plan, pg. 137 in its analysis of the physical constraints of the village.

- 3.5 The site is positioned immediately adjacent the village settlement boundary, as required by draft paragraph 2.18 (page 26) of the draft local plan. We consider that this site is a suitable location, immediately south of the village and all within easy walking distance to all of the services of North Nibley. The village has namely a local shop, a public house, primary school and village hall. The draft local plan describes the settlement as having 'a good level of community services and facilities'.
- 3.6 We firmly believe that the site would be a suitable allocation for a small development, proportionate to the overall size of the village. It would positively contribute towards the provision of market and affordable housing for the village, parish and wider district. It would offer economic impacts through the provision of construction jobs and spending locally by future occupiers. The environmental benefits of an allocation would also centre on the provision of a protected ecological route along the northern boundary of the site.
- 3.7 The proposals would deliver around 16 new homes which would be completed quickly without the need for major infrastructure investment and without the need to phase delivery.
- 3.8 Highways access has been designed to reflect the modest size of the proposed development, with a relatively narrow access for pedestrians and vehicles, having the effect of slowing traffic and minimising the impact of urbanising features to the edge of the village.
- 3.9 Land Development and Estates are currently in the process of working on a planning application for 16 homes on the proposed housing site, and plan to submit this in the near future. Furthermore, they have conducted a public consultation exercise, which took place at North Nibley village Hall on 29 October 2019. This process identified some need for new housing in the area, to include starter homes and bungalows. The feedback from this process is contained within the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which will accompany the planning application.
- 3.10 In Summary:
- The site presents an opportunity to deliver housing on the edge of North Nibley in a sustainable, developable location.
 - It is in an appropriate location for development, being within close walking distance of the services and facilities within the village itself.
 - The proposals would contribute towards meeting the district's minimum target of delivering 12,800 homes.

- 3.11 We urge you to consider allocating the site within the next iteration of the local plan.
- 3.12 A copy of the indicative site plan for the proposal is appended to the document in Appendix A, and gives indication to how the site could look, if developed.

APPENDIX A – INDICATIVE SITE PLAN

