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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 31 January 2020 08:15  
**To:** \_WEB\_Local Plan  
**Subject:** Response to Stroud District Local Plan Review

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Dear Planning Strategy Team – Stroud District Council

I write further to your letter of 8 January 2020 and your request for comments on the Draft Local Plan.

I am writing in relation to the Gloucester fringe site proposals and as a resident in Hardwicke. Whilst I understand and appreciate the drivers and objectives of the plan, I am strongly opposed to the proposals set out within the Plan relating to Hardwicke and in particular, those set out for area G1. I have set out a summary of my reasons below but in summary, the proposals fundamentally fail to align with the stated draft 2040 ‘vision’ to preserve Gloucester’s rural hinterland and preserve Hardwicke’s own village character and sense of community as distinct.

### **Road Infrastructure**

Although new access points and roads are proposed under the plan, the existing A roads already struggle at peak times to cope with traffic volume, as demonstrated by long daily tailbacks around junctions 12 and 13 of the M5 and the McDonalds roundabout (despite being modernised recently – such attempted modernisation being an acknowledgement in itself of the very significant traffic flow issues). Such traffic issues are not helped of course by the growing business and employment opportunities around Javelin Park and elsewhere that are acknowledged within the Plan. Ultimately, no matter how many lanes you put on a roundabout all that traffic still must converge into 2 and then 1 lane at some point!

Areas of Kingsway continue to be built apace placing even more traffic on a road system that cannot cope so it is not sensible to build any more houses in this area. The roads in and around Hardwicke which are already used as a way to reach the M5 cannot cope with traffic volume with unsafe potholes and people’s grass verges being obliterated due to current traffic levels trying to make single track parts of lanes passable for 2 cars at a time. Even with newly created entry points into estate complexes, this is not going to ease the traffic flow on Church Lane and/or Green Land if, for example, the proposed development closest to the canal were to ultimately proceed. These roads have traditionally been used to walk and cycle on by many local residents and visitors. Such users have already decreased significantly over recent years with many thinking that it is unsafe given increased traffic levels. Any proposed new development can only compound this problem further.

At a conservative estimate, 1,200 homes is likely to result in at least a further 1,200 cars (if not considerably more). Whilst I note that a detailed plan would be created setting out specific mitigation measures and infrastructure requirements, it is clear to anyone who resides in this area that no amount of mitigation measures would be sufficient to alleviate these obvious road infrastructure issues to a manageable and sustainable level.

### **Hardwicke’s identity**

As set out above, I am relieved that the Plan’s vision sets out to preserve Hardwicke’s unique village identity. However, unfortunately the proposed developments would ultimately fail in this regard. The village has already had to accept and absorb significant amounts of development over the past few decades including very recently. Although the plan states it won’t become an urban sprawl I strongly disagree with

this – a main A road between developments is not an effective barrier to urban sprawl! Residents of Hardwicke and surrounding areas live here because of the village identity and that it isn't just a massive housing estate. The green spaces for existing residents are so important for healthy lifestyle choices. Green spaces improve the living environment and air quality yet building on these sites would mean removing green areas and trees.

Equally, the proposals set out in G1 would have the effect of splitting key historic parts of the village in two. At one edge of the development you'd have the school, post office and village hall and at the other you'd have the beautiful and popular church. Putting another huge development bang in the middle of these key village components does little in my mind to preserve Hardwicke's identity – quite the opposite. As far as I can see, even with any new roads built, the only real access (in whole or at least in part) to these respective parts of the village would be via Church Lane and Green Lane – as set out above, these small village roads are already overrun with traffic and simply could not absorb anymore (including any additional public transport given their size). Previous developments have already put a significant strain on Hardwicke's village community. If the Plan's vision is really to retain Hardwicke's village identity, then the housing and community plans outlined need to be completely overhauled and/or withdrawn.

### **Strain on existing facilities**

I think it is beyond dispute that local schools are at breaking point. Although, under the proposals, a new school would be built, what happens to the children living in the houses that will be built before the long-awaited new school. This is a genuine concern borne out of past experience. For example Huntsgrove school had to be housed in Waterwells School for years and is now only just open on its own site this academic year. Local schools such as Hardwicke have had to take children from surrounding Kingsway and Huntsgrove because schools were not built in a timely fashion and it is likely this will happen again because unfortunately building a school doesn't make anyone any money! Further, given the size of the proposed development I would question whether one school would be enough.

### **Wildlife and habitat**

The stream which runs from Church Lane to the canal is the habitat of various wildlife, plants, etc. and possibly some endangered species. The foliage to the banks of this stream is part of the Environment Agency's maintenance programme. A representative from the Environment Agency even suggested that a lake should be built on the field to help preserve this wildlife. Building houses and developing this area would have a hugely negative impact on this wildlife. Again, this simply does not accord or align with the Plan's stated vision.

### **Spreading the load and geographical fairness**

It could be argued that Hardwicke/Quedgeley/Kingsway/Huntsgrove areas have had their fair share of development over recent years– why should the Stroud locality (Hardwicke area) be used to help meet Gloucester's needs when Gloucester has already built up this area so much in Quedgeley and Kingsway?

In addition, the area has recently already had to put up with the awful incinerator being built despite almost universal vehement objection. It was some small comfort to read the acknowledgement in the stated vision that the incinerator has 'marked' the landscape even if this is somewhat of an understatement! Further developments as suggested in the Hardwicke area would only do more to erode and remove Gloucester's rural hinterland and cannot therefore be in keeping with the Draft Local Plan's vision and overall objectives.

In summary, I do not agree that the Hardwicke proposals 'may have potential to contribute' to the area's housing needs and I sincerely hope that my stated concerns and issues above will be given the due consideration I think they deserve.

Kind regards