

## Core Strategy Topic Paper: Alternative Strategies consultation: how we developed the seven Strategy Options

February 2010



## Background

The Council has published a series of background papers to accompany the Core Strategy – Alternative Strategies consultation (February 2010). These cover a range of issues and provide more technical or detailed information than is contained in the consultation document itself. They also provide links to the various published sources of evidence on which the development of the housing and employment options has been based.

The background papers are:

1. District Profile: a Portrait of Stroud District
2. Stroud District and Climate change
3. Housing land availability
4. Employment and economic growth in Stroud District
5. Alternative Strategies Consultation: how we developed the seven strategy options
6. Summary guide to our evidence base
7. A summary of townscape analysis and urban design strategies
8. Rural settlement classification
9. Infrastructure position statement
10. Preliminary habitat regulations screening work
11. Summary of responses to the Issues consultation
12. Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Alternative Strategies Consultation

These background papers can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available from the Council in hard copy at a charge to cover photo copying and postage/packing.

Should you wish to make comments on the contents of this document, please write to

Planning Strategy Team,  
Stroud District Council,  
Council Offices,  
Ebley Mill,  
Westward Road,  
Stroud,  
GL5 4UB

or email [ldf@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@stroud.gov.uk)



## 1. Introduction

1.1 This background paper accompanies the Core Strategy – Alternative Strategies/Spatial Options consultation. Whilst the consultation document provides details of the potential spatial options, this sets the methodology used to construct the seven spatial development options.

1.2 The structure of a Core Strategy is set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 “Creating strong and safe and prosperous communities through local spatial planning” (2008). Paragraph 4.1 states that a Core Strategy should include:

- (1) an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop;
- (2) strategic objectives for the area focussing on the key issues to be addressed;
- (3) a delivery strategy for achieving these objectives. This should set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered. Locations for strategic development should be indicated on a key diagram; and
- (4) clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

1.3 This indicates that the delivery strategy is central. It needs to show how the objectives will be delivered. To be “sound” a core strategy should be **Justified, Effective** and consistent with **National Policy**.

“**Justified**” means that the document must be:

- *founded on a robust and credible evidence base*
- *the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives*

“**Effective**” means that the document must be:

- *deliverable*
- *flexible*
- *able to be monitored.*

1.4 In order to achieve a sound Core Strategy, it is necessary to achieve reasonable alternatives. The Planning Inspectorate Guidance on Soundness (August 2009) lists key questions which an Inspector will consider as part of the examination including:

- Can it be shown that the LPA’s chosen approach is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives?
- Have the reasonable alternatives been considered and is there a clear audit trail showing how and why the preferred strategy/approach was arrived at?
- Where a balance had to be struck in taking decisions between competing alternatives, is it clear how and why these decisions were taken?

1.5 The sustainability appraisal process is also required to consider reasonable alternatives. The same guidance as in the preceding paragraph states:

- Does the sustainability appraisal show how the different options perform and is it clear that sustainability considerations informed the content of the DPD from the start?

1.6 The Planning Advisory Service development planning manual makes it clear that, to help establish soundness, a clear audit trail should be shown for:

- Options generation



- Appraisal
- Selection or rejection, and
- The role that sustainability appraisal and community engagement have played in the process.

1.7 Stroud District Council has followed this advice. Stroud has a wide geographical area with many landscape characteristics with two principle towns of Stroud and Cam/Dursley, a SSCT fringe around Gloucester and a range of market towns and villages. With the range of issues and comments which arose from our initial engagement, options were devised that describe the broad future levels of growth at Parish or Town level. Communities will have the opportunity to select from a range of options from a specific locality and concentration through to dispersal. It is anticipated that our stakeholders will be able to select a preferred strategy which can then be refined.

## 2.0 Stages of Option Development

2.1 The following key sources were used as an initial contribution to the strategy options process:

- National PPS's
- Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West
- Key Evidence Studies
- Core Strategy Issues Consultation Response (Spring 2009)
- Parish Plans
- Stroud Interim Sustainable Communities Strategy

2.2 From these sources the following spatial factors were identified:

**Retain Settlement Hierarchy** – *The District Council had feedback from a series of Issues Parish Meetings in April/May 2008 that the settlement hierarchy set out in the Adopted Local Plan should be retained. This approach has been supported by PSAP in early drafts as it allowed some potential housing growth to the settlements being considered within our preliminary options. Even the concentration options may not affect this established settlement hierarchy.*

**Gloucester Fringe** – *The Regional Spatial Strategy at present envisages growth here of some 3,500 dwellings) under Policy HMA3. Part of this will be accounted for by the SDLP Hunts Grove allocation (1750). The remainder of HMA3 could be at their identified site at Brookthorpe with Whaddon (1750). If this policy stance changes prior to RSS adoption, the Council will review its spatial options in light of any revisions. It should be noted that a number of the options proposed could incorporate a range of SHLAA sites on the Gloucester Fringe, if necessary to achieve the total housing figure.*

**Affordable Housing** – *The provision of affordable housing is a corporate key priority and contained within the Council's Corporate Plan. Currently the RSS Policy H1 steers local authorities to deliver a substantial increase in the amount of affordable housing in the region including rural locations and communities.*

**Infrastructure** – *The work of the Districts and County in Gloucestershire has emphasised the importance of this issue to support future growth. The Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SIDP) should support district's emerging Core Strategies. It will focus primarily on the needs associated with new development, but with contextual consideration of broader infrastructure needs. Progress on the SIDP is contained in another background paper.*



**Conserving the built and natural environment** – Responses from the 2009 issues consultation showed countryside, landscape and biodiversity as a key issue and the historic environment as being another lead issue. The spatial options proposed have taken account of the scale of development and any potential significant impacts upon these areas of special interest.

**Results of Technical Studies** – Several evidence studies have been completed which provided background information. This includes the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Level 2 River Frome Flood Risk Assessment amongst others.

**Settlement** – The consultation in Spring 2008 saw as lead issues maintaining and improving the sustainability of our villages and improving the vitality and viability of our town centres. A new settlement was not promoted as a possible alternative to town and village extensions. The seven options range from concentration to dispersal as extensions to existing settlements.

**Climate Change** – The impact of and the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change is intrinsic to national and regional policy. The consultation in Spring 2008 provided a useful steer for the Core Strategy to place climate change, the “green agenda” and care for our high quality natural and built environment as priorities to any strategy choice.

### *Initial Options*

2.4 The preliminary options were drawn from the key influencing factors. They were reported to Planning Strategy Advisory Panel (which has members from the key political groups in the Council). Their role was advisory.

**Option A – Growth Point Strategy** with around 2000 dwellings. A growth point option could deliver a wider range of services and infrastructure to support a community. However the potential benefits to the whole District spatially would be more limited. At any growth point there could be significant change.

**Option B - Concentrated Development Strategy** with around 1000 dwellings at two sites. A concentration option could deliver a wider range of services and infrastructure to support that community but had an advantage in spreading benefit either to north and south or to east and west of the District for example.

**Option C - Cluster Strategy** with 200 to 250 dwellings at 8 Settlements, serving a rural hinterland in each cluster. The clusters had been identified for the issues consultation. They were based on a town or larger village serving a rural hinterland. However the analysis took into account commonality of issues raised in Parish Plans, as well as population numbers, built and landscape character were taken into account in drafting the clusters using Parish boundaries.

These could be located at:

- Gloucester Fringe Cluster
- Stonehouse Cluster
- Cotswold Cluster
- Stroud Valleys Cluster
- Cam/Dursley Cluster
- Wotton Cluster
- Berkeley Cluster
- Severn Voice Cluster



The consultation in Spring 2008 saw as lead issues maintaining and improving the sustainability of our villages and improving the vitality and viability of our town centres.

**Option D - Stroud Valleys Strategy** with three 200 dwelling sites and the remaining 1400 to be found through a variety of smaller sites within the Stroud valleys. This was taken as the Cotswold Canals Project was part funded by the South West Regional Development Agency whom anticipated economic benefits associated with the canal corridor regeneration. Gillespies preliminary work with the RDA and British Waterways identified four potential regeneration areas including Brimscombe Port, Ham Mills, Wallbridge/ Cheapside and Dudbridge/ Fromehall that could accommodate mixed use developments. The GVA Employment Study recognised a number of employment sites were under utilised within the Stroud Valleys. Development may contribute to the restoration of the Canal and secure multiple use of the towpath as part of green infrastructure to serve the developments. The option can also take into account the potential of sites in the wider Stroud Urban Area.

**Option E – Town & Country Combination Strategy** with one site of 1000 dwellings and at least 10 sites of 100 dwellings or less, dispersed across the District. The combination strategy was seen as a half way house between supporting rural communities and yet having sufficient capacity to secure additional services and infrastructure. If not considered here, community engagement would have suggested the in-combination strategy as it had in our abortive Cotswold Canals Brimscombe Area Action Plan in 2007. The consultation in Spring 2008 saw as lead issues maintaining and improving the sustainability of our villages and improving the vitality and viability of our town centres. This could contribute to more self contained communities. Development of this scale may conflict with AONB designation.

**Option F – Rural Communities Strategy** with at least 25 sites spread across the District's parishes. The consultation in Spring 2008 saw as lead issues maintaining and improving the sustainability of our villages and improving the vitality and viability of our town centres. With potential sites up to 100 dwellings there is a greater likelihood of supporting existing services and securing infrastructure to support development of that size. Spatially this could distribute benefits across the whole District. . Development of this scale may conflict with AONB designation. Employment may be an issue in that will companies want to be located in a potentially isolated location and will it adequately serve the communities skills available.

**Option G – Dispersed Rural Strategy** focussing on a wide range of small sites of at least 40 sites distributed across the District's parishes. The consultation in Spring 2008 saw as lead issues maintaining and improving the sustainability of our villages and improving the vitality and viability of our town centres. Smaller sites could be readily integrated into the village or town built form and should avoid harm to the natural environment. Spatially this could distribute benefits across the whole District, but probably will not secure additional services such as public transport. It may support some existing services. Employment may be an issue in that will companies want to be located in a potentially isolated location and will it serve the skills available locally. Development of this scale is less likely to conflict with AONB designation.

- 2.5 These preliminary options were then developed, tested and refined. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides information on opportunities that exist to meet the housing needs within the District. It will be a key component of the evidence base that supports the delivery of sufficient housing land to meet the community's need for more homes. As part of the SHLAA process there had been two stakeholder workshops held for



District Councillors and Developers, agents, landowners in July 2009. This followed the earlier work on the Methodology scoping report in September 2007 and the Methodology publication in February 2008.

- 2.6 The housing options were tested against the SHLAA sites submitted in June 2009 to assess the options spatially. Deliverability and constraints were not considered in detail at this early stage. It was whether there was a potential to achieve the options initially drafted. At this early stage it was assumed each site could deliver 35 dwellings per hectare. This can be considered a low density, but allowed for potential planning constraints reducing what would otherwise be a higher density development. It was recognised that although the SHLAA is an important evidence source to inform plan-making it does not, in itself, determine whether a site should be allocated for housing development. As the Core Strategy progresses, all potential housing sites would be assessed by Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of the Council in accordance with the SHLAA Practice Guidance.
- 2.7 Working with Planning Strategy Advisory Panel the options were further refined. The outcomes were as follows:

**Option A – Growth Point Strategy**

*with 2000 dwellings concentrated at either Cam, Eastington, or west of Stonehouse.*

**Option B - Concentrated Development Strategy**

*with 1000 dwellings concentrated at two of the following settlements: Cam, Eastington, west of Stonehouse, Brimscombe or Whitminster.*

**Option C - Cluster Strategy**

*with 200 to 250 dwellings at 8 Settlements each serving a rural hinterland in each cluster. These could be located at:*

- Gloucester Cotswold Fringe (either Haresfield or Upton St Leonards)
- Stonehouse Cluster (either at Stonehouse, Eastington, Kings Stanley or Leonard Stanley)
- Cotswold Cluster (at Painswick)
- Stroud Valleys (either at Stroud, Randwick, Cainscross, Brimscombe & Thrupp or Minchinhampton)
- Cam/Dursley Cluster (either at Cam, Dursley or Stinchcombe)
- Wotton Cluster (at Wotton-under-Edge)
- Berkeley Cluster (either at Berkeley or Newtown/Sharpness)
- Severn Voice (either at Frampton-on-Severn or Whitminster)

**Option D - Stroud Valleys Strategy**

*with three 200 dwelling sites and the remaining 1400 to be found through a variety of smaller sites within the Stroud valleys (with a degree of focus upon canal corridor regeneration sites).*

**Option E – Town & Country Combination Strategy**

*with one site of 1000 dwellings at either Cam, Eastington, Stroud, West of Stonehouse or Whitminster; and at least 10 sites of 100 dwellings or less, dispersed across the District to support small towns and villages.*

*These could be at: Berkeley, Bisley, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Eastington, Hardwicke, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Minchinhampton, Painswick, Rodborough, Stonehouse, Stroud, Brimscombe & Thrupp, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester and Wotton-under-Edge.*



**Option F – Rural Communities Strategy**

with at least 25 sites spread across a wide range the District's parishes, each site accommodating between 50 to 100 dwellings to support our small towns and villages. These could be at: Berkeley, Bisley, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Ham & Stone, Hardwicke, Harescombe, Haresfield, Hinton, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Minchinhampton, Moreton Valence, North Nibley, Painswick, Rodborough, Standish, Stonehouse, Slimbridge, Stroud, Brimscombe & Thrupp, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester and Wotton-under-Edge.

**Option G – Dispersal Strategy**

Focussing on a wide range of smaller sites in our towns, villages and other settlements. At least 40 sites of 10 to 50 dwellings, distributed amongst the District's parishes. These could be at: Alkington, Berkeley, Bisley, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Fretherne, Hamfallow, Ham & Stone, Hardwicke, Harescombe, Haresfield, Hillesley and Tresham, Hinton, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Longney, Minchinhampton, Moreton Valence, North Nibley, Nailsworth, Nymphsfield, Painswick, Pitchcombe, Rodborough, Slimbridge, Standish, Stinchcombe, Stonehouse, Stroud, Thrupp, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester and Wotton-under-Edge.

- 2.8 Work at this time was done on employment aspects to give a flavour of how a land-use strategy within the District could be employment led with the housing options shown. This used English Partnerships employment data for Floorspace figures and applied future supply percentages to Floorspace and uses set out overleaf:

Future Supply: Proposed Percentage Total Floorspace & Use	
Class	Stroud
<b>Retail</b>	15%
<b>Offices</b>	25%
<b>Factories</b>	35%
<b>Warehouse</b>	25%

The above table takes account of the Stroud Floorspace Requirement 2004 – 2026 sourced from LEFM data and the GVA Grimley analysis of trends (2007).

- 2.9 If further releases of housing are not coupled with the delivery of significant employment developments, it will only serve to further exacerbate the current out-commuting situation it was considered. The appropriate uses and availability of a skilled workforce will be refined and other factors such as access and physical constraints are taken into account. The preferred option stage will also need to take account of energy demand and supply.



This resulted in the following floorspace figures and commentary being added to each option:

### Option A

*With 2000 dwellings concentrated at either Cam, Eastington, or west of Stonehouse.*

This strategy option would consist of a single mixed-use development, where new employment and business premises would be integrated, as well as the 2000 new homes. This large-scale mixed-use approach offers an opportunity to grow a self-sustaining community as far as possible, although clearly the need for people to commute to work elsewhere can never be eliminated.

Indicative floorspace that would be required on a mixed use development, in order to meet an employment density of two jobs per new household, is as follows:

■ General industrial:	46,240 sq.m
■ General office:	19,000 sq.m
■ Warehousing & distribution:	50,000 sq.m
■ Retail & leisure:	12,000 sq.m

### Option B

*With 1000 dwellings concentrated at two of the following settlements: Cam, Eastington, west of Stonehouse, Brimscombe or Whitminster.*

This strategy option would consist of two large mixed-use developments, where new employment and business premises would be integrated, as well as new housing. This kind of scale and mixed-use approach offers potential benefits in terms of creating sustainable communities, though perhaps less comprehensively than Option A.

In order to meet an employment density of two jobs per new household, these areas of floorspace would be needed at both development locations:

■ General industrial:	23,800 sq.m
■ General office:	9,050 sq.m
■ Warehousing & distribution:	25,000 sq.m
■ Retail & leisure:	12,000 sq.m

### Option C

*With 200 to 250 dwellings at 8 Settlements, to boost their role as local service centres for the 'cluster' of parishes that make up their rural hinterland.*

This strategy means focussing new development at local service centres, where some facilities already exist to serve the surrounding rural area.

It offers the potential to boost the district's market towns and larger villages, to help sustain their existing facilities, as well as bringing infrastructure and amenity improvements and more local employment opportunities.

At each of the eight locations, the amount of new employment floorspace that would be required, in order to meet an employment density of two jobs per new household, is indicated as follows:

■ General industrial:	2,975 sq.m
■ General office:	1,187.5 sq.m
■ Warehousing & distribution:	3,125 sq.m
■ Retail & leisure:	750 sq.m



## Option D

*With three 200 dwelling sites and the remaining 1400 to be found through a variety of smaller sites within the Stroud valleys (with particular focus upon canal corridor regeneration sites).*

This strategy offers an exciting opportunity to create a distinctive living and working environment, making the most of the Stroud Valleys' rich legacy of historic mills and industrial heritage. Regeneration-focussed development could help to draw more creative and knowledge-based industries to the area, building on our District's existing skills base and cultural and artistic assets.

This strategy option would consist of three mixed-use developments, where new employment and business premises would be integrated alongside new homes; achieving balanced mixed developments on the smaller sites would probably be more difficult, but the following floorspaces are indicated:

	<b>At each large site:</b>	<b>At the smaller sites:</b>
■ General industrial:	4,760 sq.m at each.	23.8 sq.m per dwelling.
■ General office:	1,900 sq.m at each.	9.5 sq.m per dwelling.
■ Warehousing & distribution:	5,000 sq.m at each.	25 sq.m per dwelling.
■ Retail & leisure:	1,200 sq.m at each.	6 sq.m per dwelling.

## Option E

*With one site of 1000 dwellings at either Cam, Eastington, Brimscombe, West of Stonehouse or Whitminster; and at least 10 sites of 100 dwellings or less, dispersed across the District to support small towns and villages*

Strategy Option E would consist of one large mixed-use development, where new employment and business premises would be integrated with new housing; plus a series of smaller sites (for the purposes of illustration, these figures assume 10 such sites), where a straight forward ratio of 2 new jobs per new household may prove more difficult to achieve:

	<b>At each large site:</b>	<b>At the 10 smaller sites:</b>
■ General industrial:	23,800 sq.m at each.	1,190 sq.m per dwelling.
■ General office:	9,050 sq.m at each.	475 sq.m per dwelling.
■ Warehousing & distribution:	25,000 sq.m at each.	1,250 sq.m per dwelling.
■ Retail & leisure:	6,000 sq.m at each.	500 sq.m per dwelling.

## Option F

*With at least twenty five sites spread across a wide range the District's parishes, each site accommodating between 50 to 100 dwellings to support our small towns and villages.*

This Strategy would see new development split across 25 or more locations, so it is likely to be more difficult to plan for balanced mixed-use developments at each place: some locations will be entirely unsuited to certain forms of employment use. Theoretically, the following floor-spaces would be needed at each location in order to build sustainable communities:

■ General industrial:	2,380 sq.m
■ General office:	550 sq.m
■ Warehousing & distribution:	2,500 sq.m
■ Retail & leisure:	600 sq.m



## Option G

*With a wide range of smaller sites in our towns, villages and other settlements with at least 40 sites of 10 to 50 dwellings, distributed amongst the District's parishes.*

It is likely to be difficult to plan for balanced mixed-use developments at each place: some locations may be entirely unsuited to certain forms of employment use. Theoretically, the following floorspaces would be needed at each location if the strategy is to build sustainable communities. In reality, though, achieving an overall balance of two new jobs per new household might require a separate strategy for employment distribution at other locations.

■ General industrial:	1,156 sq.m
■ General office:	475 sq.m
■ Warehousing & distribution:	1,250 sq.m
■ Retail & leisure:	300 sq.m

The figures quoted above are likely to change as the options are refined through the planning process.

2.10 Further work was done on accessibility to services and rural settlement classification. This is published as a separate background topic paper. There is a requirement in PPS3 to give appropriate consideration to functional relationships between settlements in rural areas in determining the distribution of development and growth. In order to differentiate between different types of rural settlements, and therefore the type of development which may be appropriate in the future depending on the final choice of spatial strategy to be adopted, the settlements have been classified into five different types/tiers:

- **Accessible local service centre:** a settlement with primary services and accessible to a main line railway station and a secondary school by means of public / sustainable transport;
- **Local service centre:** a settlement with a number of primary services and therefore self contained for everyday requirements;
- **Accessible settlement with limited facilities:** a settlement with limited facilities but accessible to a main line railway station and a secondary school by means of public / sustainable transport;
- **Accessible settlement:** a settlement lacking in facilities, which has access to a railway station and a secondary school by means of public /sustainable transport; and
- **Unclassified:** A settlement which is not fully accessible and does not provide the facilities to meet the day to day needs of residents. this further refined the range of Parish options within each alternative strategy:

2.11 The accessibility work had the following implications on the strategy choices:

### **Option A – Growth Point Strategy**

*with 2000 dwellings concentrated at either Cam, Eastington, or west of Stonehouse. Whilst Eastington is currently a third tier settlement, growth of this level could secure GP services and greater employment to secure a higher status settlement accessibility classification.*



### **Option B - Concentrated Development Strategy**

with 1000 dwellings concentrated at two of the following settlements: Cam, Eastington, west of Stonehouse, Brimscombe or Whitminster. Whilst Eastington, Brimscombe and Whitminster are currently third tier settlements, growth of this level could secure GP services and greater employment to secure a higher status settlement accessibility classification.

### **Option C - Cluster Strategy**

with 200 to 250 dwellings at 8 Settlements each serving a rural hinterland in each cluster. These could be located at:

- Gloucester Cotswold Fringe (Upton St Leonards)
- Stonehouse Cluster (either at Stonehouse, Eastington, Kings Stanley or Leonard Stanley)
- Cotswold Cluster (at Painswick)
- Stroud Valleys (either at Stroud, Randwick, Gainscross, Brimscombe & Thrupp or Minchinhampton)
- Cam/Dursley Cluster (either at Cam or Dursley)
- Wotton Cluster (at Wotton-under-Edge)
- Berkeley Cluster (either at Berkeley or Newtown/Sharpness)
- Severn Voice (either at Frampton-on-Severn or Whitminster)

### **Option D - Stroud Valleys Strategy**

with three 200 dwelling sites and the remaining 1400 to be found through a variety of smaller sites within the Stroud valleys (with particular focus upon canal corridor regeneration sites). This strategy uses the Stroud Urban Area with its functional links to its core area for accessibility considerations.

### **Option E – Town & Country Combination Strategy**

with one site of 1000 dwellings at either Cam, Eastington, Brimscombe, West of Stonehouse or Whitminster; and at least 10 sites of 100 dwellings or less, dispersed across the District to support small towns and villages in the following Towns or Parishes. The towns and villages should have 3<sup>rd</sup> tier status or above, or be capable of this with development proposed in this strategy in terms of accessibility. These could be at: Berkeley, Bisley, Brimscombe & Thrupp, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Eastington, Hardwicke, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Minchinhampton, Painswick, Rodborough, Slimbridge, Stonehouse, Stroud, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester (North & South) and Wotton-under-Edge.

### **Option F – Rural Communities Strategy**

with at least twenty five sites spread across a wide range the District's parishes, each site accommodating between 50 to 100 dwellings to support our small towns and villages. The towns and villages should have 4<sup>th</sup> tier status or above, or be capable of this with development proposed in this strategy in terms of accessibility. These could be at: Berkeley, Bisley, Cam, Cambridge, Chalford, Dursley, Eastcombe, Eastington, Frampton, Stone, Hardwicke, Hinton, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Middleyard, Minchinhampton, Newport, Nymphsfield, Painswick, Randwick, Rodborough, Selsley, Standish, Stonehouse, Slimbridge, Stroud, Brimscombe & Thrupp, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester (North & South) and Wotton-under-Edge.

### **Option G – Dispersal Strategy**

with a wide range of smaller sites in our towns, villages and other settlements with at least 40 sites of 10 to 50 dwellings, distributed amongst the District's parishes. The towns and



*villages should have 5<sup>th</sup> tier status or above, or be capable of this with development proposed in this strategy in terms of accessibility. These could be at: Arlingham, Berkeley, Bisley, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Hamfallow, Stone, Hardwicke, Haresfield, Hillesley and Tresham, Hinton, King's Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Longney, Minchinhampton, Middleyard, Moreton Valence, Newport, North Nibley, Nailsworth, Nymphsfield, Painswick, Pitchcombe, Randwick, Rodborough, Saul, Selsley, Slimbridge, Standish, Stonehouse, Stroud, Thrupp, Upton St Leonards, Whiteshill & Ruscombe, Whitminster, Woodchester (North & South) and Wotton-under-Edge.*

## Affordable Housing

- 2.12 Meetings with the Affordable Housing Team took place on 27.11.09 and 04.12.09 to look at how these options could deliver affordable housing. The Stroud Housing Needs Assessment carried out in 2009 uses data from the Housing Survey carried out across Gloucestershire in that year, alongside a variety of data and information from other sources.
- 2.13 Where relevant the report follows Government advice given in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing (Nov 2006) and its Practice Guidance (published in March and August 2007). The former provides the formal requirements for assessment, and the latter provides detailed suggestions as to how to produce the requirements. The report therefore provides policy relevant outputs which can sensibly be translated into a range of strategies and will be an important input to both regional strategies and the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.
- 2.14 In particular the report concentrates on the need for affordable housing and the supply and demand for housing across all tenure groups. In addition to a wide range of background information, it provides the key requirements of PPS3 (para 22).
- 2.15 In summary, the Housing Needs Assessment shows a net need for 424 affordable homes per annum in the District; this figure rises to 570 if the Draft RSS showing that 17% of Gloucester City's requirement is to be met in Stroud District is taken into account. Both of these figures are net figures in that the affordable homes that would be freed up by those transferring within the tenure, and the committed supply of new affordable homes in development, are included in the calculation.



Annual gross housing need (based on 2009 figures)				
	Backlog need (Annual gross)	Total need (Annual gross)	% of total need in District	% of households in District
<b>City Fringe</b>	5	45	4.5%	7.2%
<b>Stroud</b>	92	413	40.7%	30.7%
<b>Stonehouse</b>	27	95	9.4%	11.6%
<b>Cam &amp; Dursley</b>	32	174	17.2%	12.7%
<b>Wotton under Edge</b>	16	43	4.3%	6.8%
<b>Nailsworth</b>	15	133	13.1%	12.7%
<b>Frampton</b>	0	29	2.9%	4.1%
<b>Berkeley</b>	15	62	6.1%	8.1%
<b>Painswick</b>	4	20	1.9%	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	205	1013	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Source:</b> Fordham Research Gloucestershire household survey (2009); various secondary data sources.				

- 2.16 However, while needs exists throughout the District, the Housing Needs Study identifies that the level of need does vary within the District.
- 2.17 The Stroud town area shows the highest need for affordable housing, followed by Cam & Dursley, Nailsworth and then Stonehouse. These considerations were then looked at in terms of the options developed to date.
- 2.18 **Option A – Growth Point Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
2000 dwellings should provide 600 affordable dwellings at current policy levels. As the growth point development is likely to be phased over several years this provision could contribute significantly to meeting housing need. However, the delivery of both affordable and market housing in one location will not contribute to meeting the need or aspirations of those who wish to live in those communities where they may have cultural links, formal or informal support networks or links to local schools and employment.
- 2.19 **Option B - Concentrated Development Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
Concentrated development at two settlements would, as above, contribute significant levels of new affordable housing. However, concerns would remain about meeting needs & aspirations of residents to live in their areas of choice as above.



- 2.20 **Option C - Cluster Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
The proposed Cluster Strategy could potentially provide affordable housing spatially more in line with the areas of identified highest need in the District. Sites of 200 – 250 dwellings should provide upwards of 60 new affordable homes each; potentially enough to provide a good range of size, type and tenure of affordable housing on each site. This performs well spatially but may not address the full need in key locations.
- 2.21 **Option D - Stroud Valleys Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
The 'Stroud Valleys Strategy' sites for 200 dwellings again should provide a good range of size, type and tenure of affordable housing. However, the smaller sites will need to be carefully implemented to ensure that an appropriate amount and variety of affordable housing is provided as a result of this strategy. It targets locations with the greatest need at Stroud, Nailsworth and Stonehouse. Need throughout the whole District would not be met spatially. The sites could be accessible and provide local employment.
- 2.22 **Option E – Town & Country Combination Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
1000 dwellings would provide 300 affordable units at current policy levels. This should be at an area of greatest need. The dispersal of the remainder amongst smaller settlements could contribute to meeting need in those areas, but careful implementation would be required to ensure appropriate and adequate delivery of affordable housing at each location. This could perform spatially but may not address the full need in certain key locations.
- 2.23 **Option F – Rural Communities Strategy- Affordable Housing comment:**  
Individual site size would be crucial here to meet affordable housing need, preferably with larger sites located where need is greatest. Again, this could work well in spatial terms. However the dispersal of the remainder would need to be carefully implemented using sites within areas where the highest need is identified. With smaller sites, viability can have an impact because economies of scale are less likely to apply and the risk of non-delivery of affordable housing due to viability problems increases.
- 2.24 **Option G – Dispersal Strategy - Affordable Housing comment:**  
While a wide distribution of new affordable homes throughout the District would be welcomed in spatial terms, with smaller sites, viability can have an impact because economies of scale are less likely to apply and the risk of non-delivery of affordable housing due to viability problems increases. There is also a concern that those living there may have to travel for either a basic range of services and/or employment opportunities, which may be problematic for both market and affordable housing. Adequate access to a public transport service or a dedicated cycle network is unlikely.
- 2.25 It was concluded that there were potential viability or spatial issues related to affordable housing needs with each option to a lesser or greater degree. However, none of the options A – G could easily be dismissed or amended based on the affordable housing need considerations. They appeared to be a comprehensive range of options to address spatial needs, social needs and/or to generate sustainable communities to differing degrees within Stroud District. It will be important to work with the affordable housing team in developing a preferred strategy post consultation.



## Policy Seminar Feedback

- 2.26 On 26<sup>th</sup> January, District Councillors attended a policy seminar on the Core Strategy. A number of comments were made at that meeting. The SWOT analysis was considered a good approach to informing the reader of the relative merits of each Strategy option. However Members observed that in addition there was a need to align these with the proposed Core Strategy objectives. As a consequence, commentary on performance with Core Strategy objectives was prepared and incorporated into the document, replacing the SWOT tables (although retaining most of the points contained in the original SWOT analysis). This modification would allow the reader to consider the relative performance of the options more fully.
- 2.27 There were mixed opinion expressed on the relative strengths and weaknesses of each of the seven options presented. The debate was on specific aspects within each option, such as the potential to include employment or retail on dispersal options. This then widened to the need to have sustainable and living rural communities and how were these to be secured otherwise. The implementation or delivery of specific social, economic or environmental matters will need to be considered in deliverability terms. Data and evidence will be gathered to inform both the alternatives and decisions. The range of options will reduce as the Council progresses through the Core Strategy process. Clearly, at this early stage, the options had initiated debate on their relative performance, without the need to exclude any one option now.
- 2.28 The questions used with the Core Strategy Options section of the document were explored using a workshop exercise. This was to investigate whether the questions and their format were intelligible, user friendly and secured answers which could be analysed to inform our Core Strategy process.

## Core Strategy Consultation:

### Alternative Strategies for shaping the future of Stroud District 8<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY – 22<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2010

This background paper has been published to support the main 'Alternative Strategies' consultation document: a discussion paper, which looks at seven alternative spatial strategies and proposed policies. You can see this online at [www.stroud.gov.uk/core](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/core) and at the following locations during their normal opening hours:



- Town and parish council offices that open to the public: Berkeley, Cainscross, Cam, Chalford, Dursley, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Painswick, Rodborough, Stonehouse, Stroud, Wotton-under-Edge



- Public libraries at Berkeley, Brockworth, Dursley, Nailsworth, Minchinhampton, Painswick, Quedgeley, Stonehouse, Stroud, Wotton-under-Edge

- The customer service centre at Stroud District Council offices, Ebley Mill. There are computers for public internet access here as well.



- The Tourist Information Centre at the Subscription Rooms, Stroud

You can print out **consultation response forms** from our website or take a photocopy from APPENDIX 1 of this document. Please return your completed form to the address given on the back of this document by Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010.

The Planning Strategy Team  
Development Services  
Stroud District Council  
Ebley Mill  
Stroud  
Gloucestershire  
GL5 4UB

01453 766321  
core@stroud.gov.uk

visit [www.stroud.gov.uk/core](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/core)