

Stroud District Local Plan Early Engagement



Workshop report: Infrastructure Stakeholders

The Sub Rooms, Stroud, 22nd July 2026

Introduction

Workshop programme

Stroud District Council commenced work on its new Local Plan in June 2026 and is aiming to meet the Government's 'Gateway 1' target by 31st October. At the very beginning of the plan-making process, the Government asks local authorities to carry out some **early scoping consultation**. This is a first step which gives residents, businesses, community groups, landowners, and statutory bodies an opportunity to shape the priorities, issues and vision for the plan, before any strategy options or sites are looked at. Feedback from this stage is used to build a community engagement strategy and to inform subsequent drafts, visions, and spatial strategies.

This report presents the findings of the **"Infrastructure Workshop"** - one of a series of area-based and thematic early engagement workshops, convened by Stroud District Council's Local Plans team and led by Resources for Change (R4C), to support the Council's new Local Plan Review. The workshops sought to gather local knowledge and insights from community leaders and stakeholders, with a view to identifying at an early stage the key issues and opportunities for future development in Stroud District. A central objective for the workshop programme was to build relationships between council officers, elected members, communities and other stakeholders at the outset of the plan-making process.

The workshops were targeted to key stakeholders and elected representatives; they were not open to the general public. These workshops formed one part of a wider public engagement and Early Scoping Consultation period during summer 2026.

Important note:

It was made clear to all workshop attendees that participants would not be held to any of the views they might express on the day. All exercises and activities were designed to encourage critical thought and two-way open discussion. Participants were invited to take time to reflect on any insights gained or concerns raised through the workshop process and were encouraged to also provide a separate formal response to the Early Scoping Consultation. Council officers were comfortable that formal responses submitted either

before or after the workshops might differ from outputs generated during the workshop itself.

About the Infrastructure Workshop

A broad range of key infrastructure stakeholders and local service providers were invited to participate in this workshop. This session looked at some of the key issues, future opportunities and particular development aspirations for the coming years, both across the Stroud district and, where relevant, beyond its boundaries. This workshop provided an opportunity for participants to share their views, identify requirements, and raise concerns regarding infrastructure needs.

An attendance list for this session is included at the end of this report (and appended to the main Summary Report).

Purpose and content of this report

There are three main audiences for this report:

1. The participants who attended the Infrastructure Workshop, providing them with a record of the outputs and to support their ongoing engagement with the development of the Stroud District Local Plan.
2. Officers and members of Stroud District Council, principally the Local Plans Team, providing them with a summary of key outputs to help steer their future work in developing a vision, objectives and strategy options for the emerging Local Plan.
3. The wider public, stakeholders, partners and the Planning Inspectorate. This report will be published at Gateway 1, to help evidence that the council has undertaken early engagement activities and scoping consultation, in accordance with Government guidance.

Report content and workshop structure

This report provides a summary of the participative sessions that produced:

- Activity 1: Taking the temperature – participants completed post it notes with:
 - What do you like and value about the District of Stroud?
 - What would you like to see change?
 - What would you not like to see change / lose?
- Activity 2: A visioning word cloud exercise (online and on paper)
- Activity 3: A series of SWOT analyses for four growth scenarios
 - Proportionally dispersed growth (spreading development equitably between all towns and villages across the district)

- Main settlements focus (focussing development in and around towns and the larger villages)
- Infrastructure-led growth (linking development to where infrastructure providers consider most sustainable to can be improved)
- Strategic growth locations (planning larger new developments or extensions such as garden villages)
- Activity 4: Spatial / geographical overview activity – taking a birds eye view of the district and your area to identify opportunities to tackle “issues” and capture “ideas” for the future under five categories:
 - Housing (yellow)
 - Environment (green)
 - Transport (purple)
 - Community and well-being (red)
 - Employment and education (blue)
- Activity 5: Locations for new homes – group activity to identify where new homes could be best situated to meet the district’s projected new housing target of 12,000 homes over a 15 year period (based on a current requirement of 846 dwellings per year).
- Next steps – how to stay involved

Transcript report

Activity 1: Taking the temperature

A post-it note activity. Participants asked to think about three things: what do you like and value about Stroud district (and particularly this part of the district)? what would you like to see change over the next 10-15 years? and what would you like to keep the same / not change? They were then invited to write their initial ideas down to test the “temperature in the room” or what is hot or not in Stroud District in the present. These were personal and individual responses, not shaped by group discussion. Facilitators grouped the post-it comments thematically on a display board.

Q: What do you like and value about the district of Stroud?

Theme	Comments
Community, Culture & Identity	Diverse / inclusive culture. Diversity of thought. Spirit and uniqueness of the district. Passion and value the community has for protecting / enhancing the natural environment. Well established networks.
Town & Village Character	Local character of settlements. Town village character / distinctive design. Relatively clean + safe. Individual character across places. Lovely towns + their character e.g. Nailsworth, Painswick. Commons. The personality of every little village across Stroud.
Landscape, Nature & Environment	Nature. Landscape & diversity. The green spaces.
Local Economy, Creativity & Governance	The creative, very independent nature of area. Great local council - but I guess it's too late for that.

Table 1: Liked & Valued Features Sorted by Theme

Q: What would you like to see change?

Theme	Comments
Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity	The ability to move across the district without such reliance on the private car. Better public transport and sustainable travel options to travel within and outside the district. Continue to improve connectivity: walking / cycling / canal. Connections with other regions e.g. South Gloucestershire. Connectivity / interaction with other districts.

Housing & Development	Attitudes to social housing so welcoming across the district. Developers passing on 'issues' for others to address — payments aren't always the solution. More affordable housing - SGS being more utilised.
Economy, Services & Local Opportunities	More affordable, healthy and locally available food for all. More opportunity across the smaller villages for local business, e.g. physical spaces for growth.
Community, Faith & Inclusion	Positive community engagement. Have places of worship for those who don't have one. The poverty gap.

Table 2: Table 2: Requested Changes Sorted by Theme

Q: What would you not like to see change / lose?

Theme	Comments
Local Identity & Character	The identity of the area. Stroud independent character. Lovely towns character e.g. Nailsworth, Painswick. Always think that Stroud district has a 'green' reputation.
Environment, Landscape & Green Spaces	Nature. Green space! Formal / informal / biodiversity / environmental. Green spaces. Beautiful countryside - commons, beacon. Beauty of the different landscapes.
Community & Services	Community engagement / activity. Not lose sense of community (hippy!). How we can come together as a community. Maternity hospital.

Table 3: Items Not to Lose/Change Sorted by Theme

Activity 2: Visioning word cloud exercise (online and on paper)

Participants were invited to write key words or short phrases to describe Stroud District in 2040 (the approximate life of the new plan).



Figure1: 'Mentimeter' word-cloud generated at the Infrastructure Stakeholders workshop.

The larger the words appear in the “word cloud” the more frequently they were written. A combined word cloud has been created from all of the workshops, which is included in the Main workshops report.

Activity 3: A series of SWOT analyses for four growth scenarios

At their tables, each group was asked to contribute their ideas or concerns to a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis written onto a flip chart sheet which were recorded by a facilitator at each table.

Note that bold text denotes what the groups felt were the most important considerations.

Scenario A: Proportionally dispersed growth

Spreading development equitably between all towns and villages across the district.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Shuts up NIMBYs *	How would we get affordable housing?
Shares impact equally	No economy of scale – no funding available to build additional infrastructure
Joining existing community	Some impact not equal as it doesn't bring additional infrastructure
Encourage and support smaller house builders but it is more costly	Doesn't bring cohesion or mix of house types
Wouldn't put adverse effects on infrastructure	End up having NIMBYs all over the district
Spreads the pain	Doesn't necessarily reflect local need – we assume that need is dispersed across the district and it may not be
The right housing for local people in the national landscape	Will struggle with infrastructure
	Assumes every area has available and appropriate land

Table 4: Proportionally dispersed growth – strengths and weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats
Protect landscape – developing little chunks	If commuted sum brought in difficult achieving affordable housing or anything (no contribution / no ability)
Could offer downsizing opportunities	So need to use planning legislation to meet local need
Could provide rural housing for rural people	Will put more stress on infrastructure

Could support village school + existing infrastructure	End up putting housing in unsustainable locations
Community engagement to help promote the idea	
Local plan policies could be tailor made to meet local housing need	
Might be easier to take – would be CIL approach less money in here as well	
Opportunity for local builders	
Covenants to safeguard local population	
Opportunity for communities to shape their village/town for the future	
New houses can help to support existing services (shops, school etc)	
Could have more connectivity for public transport if interest/demand	
More support for improving public transport	
Comparing model with simple strategic model	

Table 5: Proportionally dispersed growth - opportunities and threats

Scenario B: Main settlements focus

Focussing development in and around towns and the larger villages. They identified these as: Nailsworth, Stroud, Minch, Wotton, Cam + Dursley, Berkeley, Stonehouse

Strengths	Weaknesses
Infrastructure already there	Pressure on existing infrastructure - already at capacity
Build out rate quicker	Land availability
Employment / commercial opportunities more attractive	Sewage / water at capacity
Keeps development away from Strategic Road Network (SRN)	Pressure on GPs
More organic	Smaller communities not developing

Table 6: Main settlements focus - strengths and weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats
Improve existing infrastructure	New infrastructure not added – growing pressure
Add new infrastructure for existing communities including green infrastructure	Taking productive farmland on town outskirts
Improve existing public transport	
Development diversity options convert offices / above shops	
More vibrant high streets	
Core community facilities improved / supported / sustainable	
Construction opportunities	
Training opportunities	

Table 7: Main settlements focus - opportunities and threats

Scenario C: Infrastructure-led growth

Linking development to where infrastructure providers consider most sustainable to can be improved

Strengths	Weaknesses
Ease / viable	Lack of existing infrastructure / conflicting infrastructure available.
Positive from climate action link to existing infrastructure	Need to further develop existing infrastructure
Some infrastructure available	Bundling concept of infrastructure
Less expensive to extend infrastructure	Pressure on existing infrastructure
Better for affordable housing options / services available	Is existing infrastructure in correct place
Ease of deliverability	Eroding biodiversity
	2nd homes
	Potential over saturate[d] industries

Table 8: Infrastructure-led growth - strengths and weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats
Inclusive + healthier communities	Increased pressure on communities *
Quality of life improve existing infrastructure	Hostility of existing communities
Improve balance of infrastructure	Lack of additional infrastructure / conflicting priorities
Improving climate resilience in communities	Pressure on roads
Be more imaginative with infrastructure	GPs + green spaces
Links to sustainable transport / active travel	
More impactful for SMEs	
Maintaining character of area	
Adding additional faith based services	
Placing industry which relies on strategic road network (SRN) close to SRN	

Table 9: Infrastructure-led growth - opportunities and threats

Scenario D: Strategic growth locations

Planning larger new developments or extensions such as garden villages

Strengths	Weaknesses
Can go on brownfield sites eg Aston Down Airfield	CIL / Flood constraints where these can go
Can lead to improved transport between existing settlements	Impact on landscape, in whatever location
Economies of scale – new infrastructure = 'proper' infrastructure enabled eg GPs, community facilities including for faith *	No current infrastructure / public transport
Can engineer housing linked to need – eg 1 bed flats + employment – mixed sector high street	Does not contribute to existing settlements / pockets of need – supporting local services
Business case – agreed once, rather than lots of arguments. May be easier to win the argument?	New facilities may be more expensive than extending existing
Can put restrictions on new homes to forbid renting / Airbnb	Rural communities continue to become more isolated

Larger settlements – larger but better for food sustainability than losing fields from smaller family farms	Young people forced to move to new settlements
Good for long-term planning – more clarity	Does not solve affordable housing for agricultural workers *
Keep people local by supplying local services	Less affordable housing in existing settlements
	Do engineered communities work?
	There is fear around this option
	Will still need to commute / need to understand this.
	Increasing climate risk – flooding + heat
	Timing issue re rate of new house buildup / service provision

Table 10: Strategic growth locations – strengths and weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats
Inclusive + healthier communities	Increased pressure on communities *
Quality of life improve existing infrastructure	Hostility of existing communities
Improve balance of infrastructure	Lack of additional infrastructure / conflicting priorities
Improving climate resilience in communities	Pressure on roads
Be more imaginative with infrastructure	GPs + green spaces
Links to sustainable transport / active travel	
More impactful for SMEs	
Maintaining character of area	
Adding additional faith based services	
Placing industry which relies on SRN close to SRN	

Table 11: Strategic growth locations - opportunities and threats

Activity 4: Issues and ideas (map based)

A spatial / geographical overview activity.

Participants were invited to take a birds eye view of the district and your area and place “issues” and “ideas” flags on maps. Each flag was recorded by frequency and location. The full set of results from this workshop are in the annexe. They have been sorted by theme in alphabetical order. These are the most frequently recurring issues and ideas.

Top Recurring Issues & Ideas

The recurring issues and ideas (frequency of 2 or more) are summarised below:

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea	Frequency
Community	Edge	More facilities for young people needed	2
Community	Hunts Grove	Need more spaces / centres for community use	2
Community	Stroud	Opportunity to create new GP facility here	2
Environment	Dursley	Opp to create new sports / leisure facility	2
Housing	Minchinhampton	Second homes big issue here	2
Housing	Rodborough	Need for social housing here	2
Transport	Junction 13 M5	This junction needs improving	2

Table 12: Top Recurring Issues & Ideas

Note: While not identical, GP/medical facility extensions or additions are also heavily repeated across multiple single locations such as Dursley, Cam, Wotton-under-Edge, Berkeley, Selsley, Box, Minchinhampton, Frampton on Severn, Stonehouse, and East of Brookthorpe.

Location-Specific Entries with Higher Frequency Counts

The entries tied to specific geographic locations (excluding general county-wide categories) that have a frequency count of 2 are listed below:

Location	Theme	Issue / Idea	Frequency
Dursley	Environment	Opp to create new sports / leisure facility	2
Edge	Community	More facilities for young people needed	2
Hunts Grove	Community	Need more spaces / centres for community use	2

Junction 13 M5	Transport	This junction needs improving	2
Minchinhampton	Housing	Second homes big issue here	2
Rodborough	Housing	Need for social housing here	2
Stroud	Community	Opportunity to create new GP facility here	2

Table 13: Location-Specific Entries with Higher Frequency Counts

Activity 5: Locations for new homes

Group activity encouraged participants to consider the challenge of delivering 12,000 homes in a district that is constrained by both geographical factors and national policy requirements. This exercise was carried out using large maps and involved participants discussing and placing counters in locations of potential growth. Participants could use purple tiddly-wink counters (each representing 1000 homes) to build new settlements or urban extensions, or yellow/red counters (each representing 50 homes) to signify more dispersed growth. Tokens could be stacked to create larger developments.

Unlike the three 'cluster' groups, who focused on their own neighbourhoods for parts of this exercise, the participants at this workshop used whole-district maps and the whole activity was conducted as a single district-wide exercise.

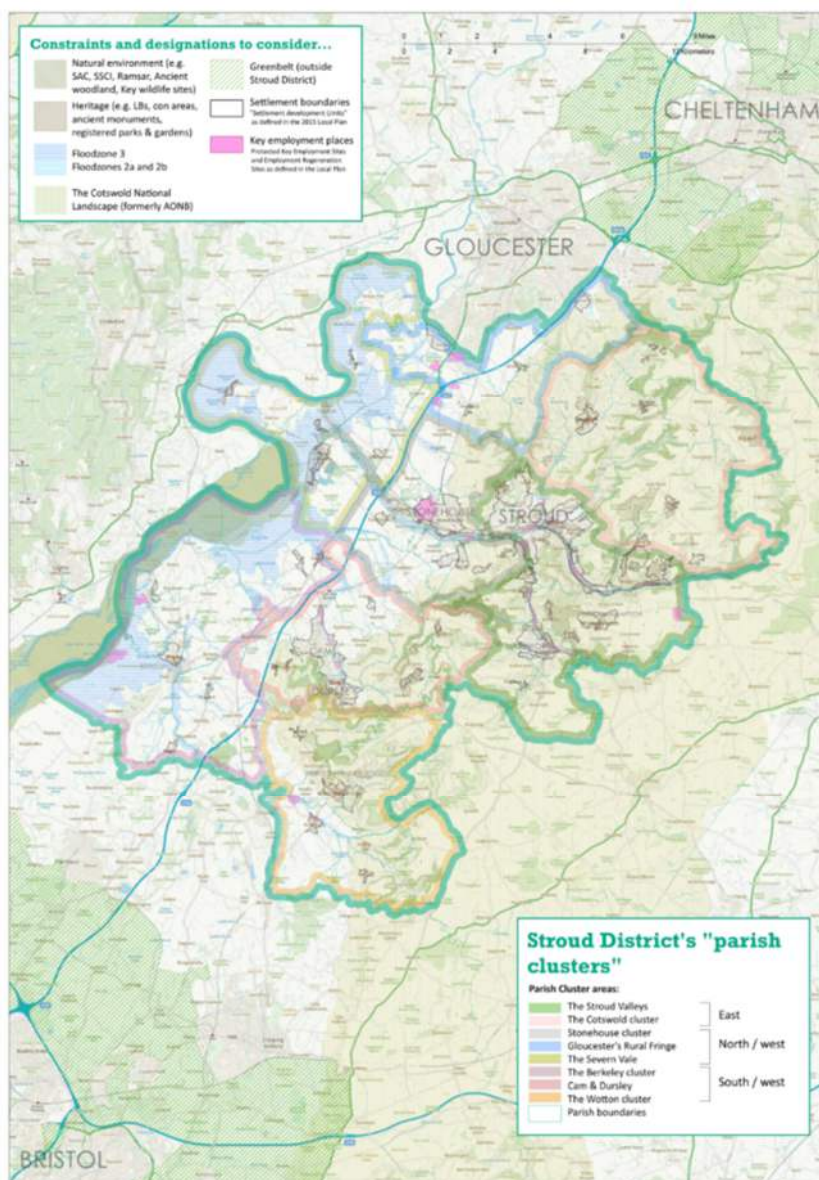


Figure 2: The A0 map used for this activity focused on the whole district.

This activity was not designed to be 'easy' or even 'achievable'. The purpose of the exercise was to get participants thinking and talking about factors that shape a development strategy, to listen to other participants' perspectives and consider broad impacts, not just local issues.

So while the numerical and locational data is interesting, the most significant outputs were the discussion points that cropped up.

District wide: thinking strategically

Participants were presented with a map of the whole district and a variety tiddly-wink tokens, each of which represented either 1,000 homes or 50 homes. They were asked to consider how they might distribute 12,000 homes across the whole district:

Location	Numbers	Parish cluster	
Wotton-under-Edge	2000	Wotton	South cluster
Sharpness	3000	Berkeley	South cluster
Cam + Dursley	1450	Cam & Dursley	South cluster
Uley	50	Cam & Dursley	South cluster
Nailsworth	150	Stroud valleys	East cluster
Minchinhampton	500	Stroud valleys	East cluster
Stroud	350	Stroud valleys	East cluster
Painswick	150	Cotswold	East cluster
Stonehouse	2000	Stonehouse	North cluster
Whaddon	4000	Gloucester's fringe	North cluster
District wide total	13,650		

Table 14: Potential locations discussed with suggested housing numbers

Participants at the infrastructure workshop found locations for up to 13,650 homes, spread across the whole district – in excess of the nominal 12,000 target for this exercise.

Five locations for very large strategic levels of growth were identified: at Whaddon, Sharpness, Wotton Under Edge, and Stonehouse, and a significant concentration around Cam and Dursley.

This workshop also identified a number of locations at some of the larger settlements in the east / northeast of the district, which is largely constrained by the Cotswold National Landscape designation.

Participants explored different growth scenarios, considering the advantages and challenges of concentrating development in larger strategic locations compared with distributing growth across smaller settlements throughout the district:

Whaddon (Gloucester Fringe): A major focus area emerged on the Gloucester fringe, with participants identifying Whaddon as a strong location for growth. The groups explored development scenarios ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 homes, highlighting the potential to create a robust business case for new and enhanced local infrastructure. Discussion focused on the opportunity to expand healthcare capacity, not only to serve new residents but also to help address existing access issues in surrounding communities.

Sharpness: Discussed as a potential strategic site for 3,000 homes, building on brownfield land around the old power station as an innovation hub. However, Network Rail's reluctance to add train capacity presented a key obstacle.

Stonehouse: Participants identified land to the north of Stonehouse as a potential location for approximately 2,000 homes, recognising the opportunity to build on existing transport infrastructure and strengthen rail connectivity to Bristol, Gloucester, and Cheltenham.

Wotton-under-Edge: Participants identified Wotton-under-Edge as a potential location for around 2,000 homes. While acknowledging existing constraints, including limited public transport provision and a lack of larger retail facilities, participants suggested that a higher level of housing growth could help support the delivery of new infrastructure and services, including enhanced retail provision, improving the town's long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Cam & Dursley: Participants identified land in the vicinity of Cam and Dursley railway station as a potential location for approximately 1,450 homes. A representative from the health sector indicated that planned healthcare provision could accommodate this level of growth. However, participants highlighted concerns regarding the capacity of local schools and the sewer network, noting that additional infrastructure investment may be required to support development.

Minchinhampton: Participants identified Minchinhampton as a potential location for approximately 500 homes, noting that existing healthcare provision could help accommodate additional growth. However, discussions recognised that the area is subject to environmental and landscape constraints, and any future development would need to carefully balance housing delivery with the protection of its valued natural and historic characteristics.

Stroud & Surrounding Settlements: Participants identified land in and around the Stroud area, particularly towards Pitchcombe and Uplands, as a potential location for approximately 350 homes, reflecting suggestions put forward by parish and town councils. Smaller-scale

growth was also proposed in a number of other settlements, including around 150 homes in Painswick, 150 homes in Nailsworth, and 50 homes in Uley. Participants noted that these smaller allocations could help meet local housing needs while maintaining the distinct character of individual communities.

Infrastructure & Policy Constraints

A substantial portion of the discussion addressed severe external constraints that complicate the delivery of the 12,000-home target:

Highways & Motorway Junctions: A critical bottleneck involves Junction 13 and Junction 14 on the M5. National Highways issued formal objections to developments in key areas due to peak-time capacity limits. Upgrading these junctions requires hundreds of millions of pounds.

Funding Catch-22: The council faces a deadlock where planning inspectors require guaranteed government infrastructure funding to approve the plan, but government funding programs require an approved Local Plan before awarding grants. Furthermore, developer contributions (covering roughly 30%) are insufficient to meet the total infrastructure cost.

Policy Limits: Participants explored alternative solutions—such as constructing a new motorway junction—but facilitators noted National Highways' strict policy against building new interchanges.

The session highlighted the complex balancing act between utilizing existing infrastructure, addressing local housing demand, and navigating national highways and railway constraints.

During this discussion, participants put counters representing 1000 homes or 50 homes on the map of the district.

Appendix

Spatial / geographical overview activity

Participants were invited to take a birds eye view of the district and your area and place “issues” and “ideas” flags on maps. Each flag was recorded by frequency and location.

Community	Dursley	Need to extend existing GP facilities	1
Community	Cam	Opp create new GP facility	1
Community	Cam	More facilities for young people	1
Community	Wotton-under-Edge	Opp to create new GP facilities here possible	1
Community	Junction 14 (M5)	Junction improvements needed	1
Community	Berkeley	Need to extend existing GP facilities	1
Community	Stroud	Opportunity to create new GP facility here	2
Community	Selsley	Good location for medical services	1
Community	Box	Good location for medical services	1
Community	Minchinhampton	Good location for medical services - extend empty buildings	1
Community	Edge	More facilities for young people needed	2
Community	Frampton on Severn	Extend existing GP facilities here	1
Community	Stonehouse	Extend existing GP facilities	1
Community	Stonehouse	Good location for medical services	1
Community	Hunts Grove	Need more spaces / centres for community use	2
Community	Hunts Grove	More facilities for young people needed here	1
Community	East of Brookthorpe	Good location for integrated medical centre if new housing here	1
Education & employment	Ashmead Green (Cam)	Need for new supermarket here	1
Education & employment	Dursley	More variety of retail usage needed here	1
Education & employment	Dursley	Opportunity to create start up spaces	1
Education & employment	Wotton-under-Edge	Need to encourage more variety retail uses here	1

Education & employment	Rodborough	Further education facilities need to be extended	1
Education & employment	Brimscombe	Young people need more employment here	1
Education & employment	Nailsworth	Need for affordable workspace	1
Environment	General	Need location for solar energy generation	1
Environment	General	Need location for wind energy generation	1
Environment	Nymphsfield	Good location wind energy generation	1
Environment	Dursley	Opp to create new sports / leisure facility	2
Environment	West Cam	More play facilities older children / young adults	1
Environment	Uley	Play facilities needed for older children / young adults	1
Environment	Arlingham	Location for new green space / path	1
Environment	Church End (Frampton-on-Severn)	Need for more allotments	1
Environment	North of Edge	Good location for wind energy generation	1
Environment	Land between Stonehouse and Stroud	Land safeguarded to stop towns merging	1
Housing	General	Need potential site for gypsies + travellers	1
Housing	West of Nailsworth	Need for social housing here	1
Housing	West of Nailsworth	2nd homes big issue here	1
Housing	West Cam	Need for more starter homes	1
Housing	Wotton-under-Edge	Extras if new housing	1
Housing	Bradley Green (Wotton-under-Edge)	Location for self build / custom build housing	1
Housing	Sharpness	Potential regeneration area	1
Housing	Highfield	Housing + work opp for young people with SEND	1
Housing	Rodborough	Need for social housing here	2
Housing	Minchinhampton	Second homes big issue here	2
Housing	Minchinhampton Common	Good location for custom and self build housing	1
Housing	SW of Horsley	Location for self build / custom build housing	1

Housing	Stonehouse	Need for more starter homes	1
Housing	North of Stonehouse	Potential for high density housing	1
Housing	North of Stonehouse	Good location for car free development	1
Housing	Between Whaddon + Brookthorpe	Potential site for gypsy / traveller pitches	1
Housing	Painswick	Need for social housing here	1
Housing	Painswick	Need for more starter homes	1
Theme	Location (briefly describe)	Issue / idea (summarise)	Frequency
Transport	Cainscross	Need to improve bus routes	1
Transport	Top of Town Stroud	Need to improve cycle links	1
Transport	Nailsworth	HGV movement issue here	1
Transport	Junction 13 M5	This junction needs improving	2
Transport	Stonehouse train line	Opp for new train station here	1
Transport	Junction 12 M5	Needs improving	1

Table 15: All issues and ideas flags recorded by location and frequency

Attendees at this workshop

22nd July: Infrastructure workshop

Name	Organisation
24. Ben Dent	Gloucestershire Food and Farming Partnership
25. Sally Parish	National Highways
26. Laura Stephen	Stroud District Council
27. Ellie Winning	Climate Leadership Gloucestershire
28. Penny Chislett	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (Stroud)
29. Steve Hall	South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
30. Andrew Hughes	NHS Gloucestershire
31. Krista Harris	Stroud District Council
32. Jacob Reid-Thomas	The Growth Hub
33. Adeel Irfan	Stroud District Islamic Centre
34. Rosie Kenyon	Gloucestershire County Council
35. John Chaplin	Stroud District Council
36. Sarah Walker	Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

Table 16: Attendees at this workshop

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