Stroud District Local Plan Early Engagement

Workshop 1 report: SDC Officer workshop (internal)

The Sub Rooms, Stroud, 9th July 2026

Introduction to the 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 **"SDC Officer Workshop"** – the first 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 vital 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.

Note: This officer workshop was held in advance of the four other workshops, in order to test the process and gauge initial views and interests across council service areas. The overall results for the workshop programme, as set out in the Main Report, do not incorporate the results from this workshop (although individual comments or findings of note may be referenced separately within it).

Transcript report

Activity 1: Taking the temperature

To test the "temperature in the room", participants were asked to think about three things:

- *what do you like and value about Stroud 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 on three post-it notes, which facilitators grouped thematically on a display board.

These were personal and individual responses, not shaped by group discussion.

Q: What do you like & value about the District of Stroud?

- green space
- uniqueness / identity / community
- landscape
- views
- the communities across the district.
- different towns
- vibrant / unique
- good biodiversity
- footpaths
- diverse / characters
- landscape
- individualism / quirky
- beauty
- all the greenspace
- small communities / civic spirit
- landscapes & green & blue spaces (protect)
- arts & culture
- community & landscape
- landscape
- vibrant market town / good schools / safe communities
- diversity of district / villages all with character / not all merging into one
- variety of buildings.
- high quality landscape and character of areas
- diversity of district / culture - creative, relaxed, inclusive / green spaces / access to
- heritage / history
- good schools / spaces for kids
- the arts / culture and landscapes

Q: What would you like to see change?

Housing & Community

- more acceptance of affordable housing development particularly in rural parishes
- green bolder housing solutions - mixed developments young + old
- more social/ affordable housing

Traffic, Transport & General Infrastructure

- the traffic
- infrastructure (traffic)
- road / rail infrastructure
- consider health infrastructure first
- better public transport - buses - more routes / regularity / frequency
- needs better public transport system
- more affordable housing / improve public transport / improve infrastructure (physical & social) in new developments / investment (lack of) in rural communities & infrastructure
- better active travel (cyclepaths) / net zero buildings
- better active travel connections
- better rail connections
- public transport / - more routes / - more reliable / - better times / - more affordable / - better connection

Town Centres & Developer Contributions

- financial developer contributions not always best - assumption that works is wrong. land provision for all types of infrastructure
- 1. better infrastructure / 2. less Tescos greater variety / 3. roads
- better vitality and quality of town centre(s)
- road system

Youth & Sports Facilities

- more sports & youth facilities built before the houses
- more youth facilities - community groups / sports / housing

Environment & Green Spaces

- more green / blue spaces in towns - esp. stroud + dursley
- increased green equity across district
- bringing more nature into urban environments

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

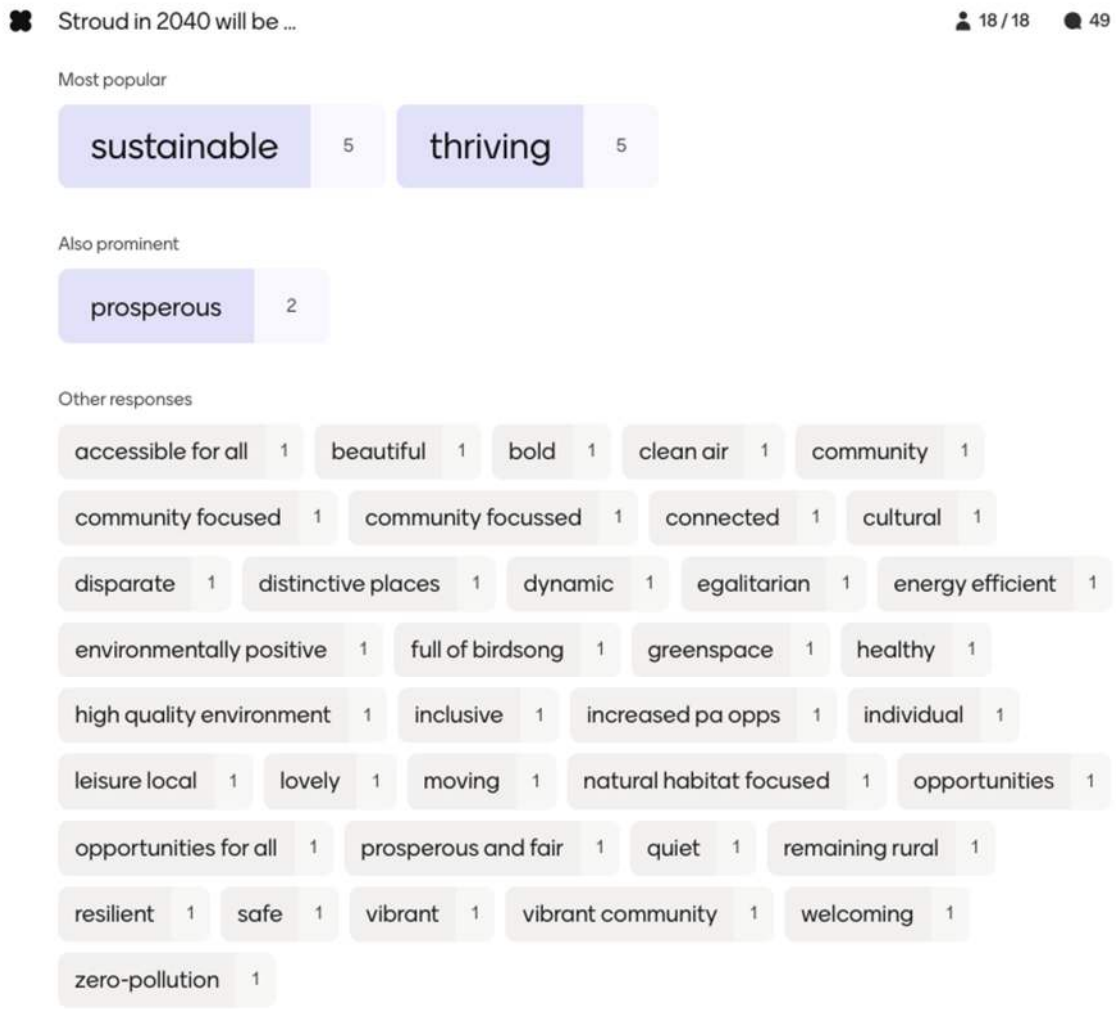
- keep / the commons / green spaces
- the commons (greenspace)
- playing fields removed for housing
- playing space removed for housing
- one change is inevitable but no to hiding behind it
- landscapes, green & blue spaces (protect)
- opportunities for businesses to start & grow / protect stroud district
- footpath networks / independent shops
- our young population (having to leave because of work/housing)

- keep / local identity
- stroud / vitality of every local identity / character of landscapes
- being the best district to live / our sense of place.
- safety
- feel of town / market
- keep as a / open local forum / guided / by the dist/the council
- what shall stay / shaping the district as we know / decision making at local level

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). The larger the words appear in the "word cloud" the more frequently they were written.

Here are the Mentimeter results for the officer workshop:



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

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to Options:

A. Proportionally dispersed growth
B. Main settlement focus
C. Infrastructure led growth
D. Strategic growth locations

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.

Scenario A: Proportionally dispersed growth

(Spreading development equitably between all towns & villages across the district)

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Equity (perceived) • Builds on existing infrastructure & spreads load on this • Keeps people in settlements • More opportunities for people to stay in communities • Smaller communities could benefit e.g. extra classroom, local economy - more sustainable. • Helps address rural deprivation - double edged sword? (Note: An arrow connects this to the Weakness stretch public sector...) • Parish Council finances improve (precept) • Settlements are established & popular - more resilient to climate change? • Infrastructure impact shared - Is this +ve/-ve?	• Does[n't] deliver at scale. • Not all settlements have infrastructure / facilities travel OR need new infrastructure. • Impact on capacity. • Some settlements want to stay the same • Could impact on vulnerable habitats (LNRS) • Could contribute to urban sprawl. • Not enough small builders. • Stretch public sector service further. • Stretch funding opportunities too widely investment. • Funding for infra investment may not be triggered • services • More impact on Planner/Dev. team • Broadband coverage not good enough.
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• National Landscape growth - small scale improvements / affordability • Affordable housing dispersed sustainability • Broadband improvements across the District. • Smaller builders / developers / Start ups • Community owned housing Land Trust • self build. • For some smaller	• No focused economic growth sites • Limited regional/national infrastructure may not hit triggers for new infrastructure. - eg Green infrastructure. • Environmental threat transport • NIMBYISM - varied - linked to wealth • Threatens strategic master-planning - needed for

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
comms to be more viable eg schools / shop. • Council Housing opportunities. • Making villages more viable as living entities • District-wide improvements + investment Broadband How many new homes would sustain schools / comm shops. • Demographics needed to contribute as volunteers. • broadband.	landscape imp. + green + blue • Not viable for developers • Land availability • Design could impact local distinct. • Less likely to use Brownfield sites. • Smaller schemes are less viable / more expensive. - Dev. is less keen. • Smaller developers more vulnerable to economic cycles. - discourages investment. • Broadband. accessibility costs. • Onsite improvements are not sufficient to offset biodiversity / environ impacts.

Scenario B: Main Settlements focus

(focussing development in and around towns & the larger villages)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Fit in with statutory services, existing plans • No one place being targeted • Access to facilities, more sustainably located • Settlement gets more infrastructure • Main settlements more popular / in demand for affordable housing • Higher level of brownfield • Chance to enhance rather than dilute • Existing facilities - scaling up • More likely to be delivered • Easier to manage (land delivery) • Consistent with national policy • More likely to deliver affordable housing	• Brownfield - more costly • Schools up to capacity, not enough yet • Limited space around some settlements • Constraints e.g. listed buildings, density, AONB • Urban benefits • Change of identity / lose identity • Joining up some • Most of infrastructure already @ capacity with limited ability to expand • Doesn't address needs of other communities • Rural communities become even more isolated • Smaller primary schools struggle when rural villages become gentrified
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Bring in retail park • Invest in community development • If sited larger, easier to deliver affordable housing • Building where existing settlements might be more acceptable	• Struggling to deliver infrastructure • Change character completely • Coalesce settlements, eat into more green space • Lose connectivity between green space • Community

• Already existing facilities would be used and supported • Designate places that are harder to develop for housing as business • When settlements join together you create new identities • Urban regeneration of brownfield sites and greater investment in these areas • Helping to revitalise our Town Centres • Could trigger extra external funding • Supporting + sustaining infrastructure	conflict - challenging integration • Lack of space • Nimbyism • Not meeting communities expectation • Overloading infrastructure

Scenario C: Infrastructure-led growth

(linking development to where infrastructure providers consider most sustainable and can be improved)

STRENGTHS	**WEAKNESSES**
• Practical & possible — deliverable • Existing road (motorway) and rail links (London/Birmingham/Bristol) • Sense of place, builds on existing communities • New housing will have access to services & facilities • Happier people	• Infrastructure already limited • Not always 'the fix' • Still relies on capacity of community facilities — infrastructure may not meet growth • Capacity likely to be in areas where growth limited • Topography / steepness does limit the growth, National landscape too • Lack of infrastructure — sewage & water • Stroud not connected directly to Bristol • Imbalance in provision of infrastructure types (Com vs all the growth focused on here + not being planned for) • Statutory authorities say 'yes there is capacity' — are they realistic/listening? • Existing infrastructure already at the red • Very hard to say no to hospital etc., Employment sites become housing • Need to think about all the infrastructure — play, education; Trains + buses aren't joined up

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Utilising capacity in education facilities • Re-use under used for economic and community growth/benefit • Improvements to infrastructure, e.g. more buses/trains etc. • Provides for BRT community / transit sites • Affordable housing close to infrastructure • Rural exception site policy • Building in existing brownfield sites achieves better betterment • Employment types + needs are changing • Look at the Transport Plan + respond to that (Whitminster, Stonehouse, Stroud... New station - transport nodes, Public transport) • New leisure provision (strategy) • Spatial development strategy	• Lack of dentists/NHS + leisure facilities • Compromise as not a clean slate • Competing priorities of infrastructure providers • Long-term viability / management beyond LA control • Local resistance • Improvements may not come forward in a timely manner • Will we listen to the evidence/data • Doesn't allow for growth necessary in other areas • Putting people near motorway puts them close to pollution including noise • Cam is in a flood risk area • Is the vision just houses (e.g., dormitory for Glos + Bristol)? • Having a target for housing is what will happen

• Is this a sustainable transport led growth strategy?

Scenario D: Strategic growth locations

(planning larger new developments or extensions such as garden villages)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Fresh Start • correct infrastructure • mix of housing types + sizes • active travel • new design standards • facilities planned • phased approach • Flood/hi protection • Stops development elsewhere • not building in existing towns • limited opposition NIMBY • More infrastructure/leisure/youth/health • libraries - coffee shops • 15 min town - design - bold approach sustainable • new local schools - Access to community facilities • healthier people / less driving / Community feel • easy option - can solve all needs with some £ - population • new schools • solves	• Greenfield • near existing communities • local opposition • Isolated to begin • infrastructure cost + speed • Sterile • Sense of place not organic • anti-social behaviour • lessons from 1960's & must not work • developers don’t always deliver • AH pockets? Ghettos • no fill elsewhere • reduced facilities, no funding / no infrastructure for other places • big loss of landscape • long time to develop • early adopters isolated infrastructure • what is facilities are not delivered on time • no new AH in local area • Green • takes choice away from smaller areas • not connected to other settlements •

the problem • we have a site - availability	could be isolated • do not suit for all needs • less green space • density can go up • be compact / less space
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• district less impacted • less opposition • new facility - nuclear • employment • high skilled job creation • new infrastructure • more money for infrastructure • Bristol hub • bold housing design - sustainable • communities safety blank sheet design to healthiness • mix of communities house types • services to support communities • More money or options for infrastructure • new public transport / Rail/trams • build around high quality green space with biodiversity • landscape led • for new business • could be an exemplar development • new country park • new approach to dentists & high rise • new approach to design / new self build area / rooftop design vs roads	• landscape loss potential • green shield loss • vision not being delivered • developers not delivering on requirements • frustration than objection • LGR could threaten delivery • local opposition • can it be delivered in the plan period • phasing • must deliver what we want • finding developers to commit to work with • housing market changes • delivery impacted by national events • poorly developed • no green • can be bad exemplar Kingsway • new Ghetto • would investment come • location would have to be assessed

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 their area and place "issues" and "ideas" flags on maps. Each flag was recorded by frequency and location.

Master Results Recording Sheet (Corrected Locations)

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
G (Environment)	Berkeley	flooding	1
R (Community facilities)	Berkeley	New sports / leisure provision / new parish	1
R (Community facilities)	Sharpness	New Landmark Guiding	1
R (Community facilities)	Sharpness	More water sports	1
G (Environment)	Sharpness	Protect unique historic character	1
G (Environment)	Frampton	Imp. nature conservation site	1
R (Community facilities)	Kingswood / Wotton / Cam	New sports leisure / Greater police presence / strategic greenspace / play facilities for young people / sports/park	1
R (Community facilities)	Cam	Good location Medical services	2

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
R (Community facilities)	Cam	Need new leisure provision	1
R (Community facilities)	Cam	More sports pitches	1
R (Community facilities)	Cam	New SP facility	1
R (Community facilities)	Cam	New community hub	1
R (Community facilities)	Cam	Integrated medical centre	1
R (Community facilities)	Dursley	Public art	1
G (Environment)	Stonehouse	flooding an issue here	1
R (Community facilities)	Frampton on Severn / Whitminster	Communities festival event / Better links with river	1
G (Environment)	Ebley	flooding an issue here	1
G (Environment)	Near Hardwicke	Open land safeguarded - stop towns merging	1
G (Environment)	Hardwicke	stop towns merging	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
R (Community facilities)	Hardwicke	More sports pitches	1
G (Environment)	Hardwicke	Community orchard	1
R (Community facilities)	Hunts Grove	Skate park	1
G (Environment)	A38	Employment site / More public art / Need to improve public access to open land	1
G (Environment)	Junction 12 M5	waste + recycling centre	1
G (Environment)	Javelin Park	Employment site / More public art / Need to improve public access to open land	1
G (Environment)	Hunts Grove	Employment site / More public art / Need to improve public access to open land	1
G (Environment)	Haresfield	Employment site / More public art / Need to improve public access to open land	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	More council housing	1
Y (Housing)	Minchinhampton	potential for self build	1
P (Transport)	France Lynch	New bypass	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
B (Education & Employment)	Minchinhampton	small scale ind. units	1
Y (Housing)	Nailsworth	More affordable housing	1
P (Transport)	Tiltups End	Create start-up space	1
B (Education & Employment)	Dursley	more creative inds.	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Junction needs improving	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Congestion issue	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Park + ride	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	HGV movements an issue	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Car free development	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	New train station	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	Higher density housing	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	More council housing	1
Y (Housing)	France Lynch	More affordable housing	1
Y (Housing)	France Lynch	Self / custom build	1
B (Education & Employment)	Wotton under Edge	Creative industries	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
P (Transport)	Wotton under Edge	Improve bus routes to location	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	New live/work units	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	Creative industries here	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	Empty shops	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	Secondary schools extended	1
P (Transport)	Stonehouse	Car free development	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	New retail / town centre	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	More early years places	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	New primary school	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stonehouse	Primary schools extended	1
P (Transport)	Stonehouse	Electric cycle hire facility	1
P (Transport)	Stonehouse	Improve train station	1
P (Transport)	Stonehouse	Roads dangerous + unsafe	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
G (Environment)	Minchinhampton	create Community orchard	1
G (Environment)	Brimscombe	Important site nature conservation	1
R (Community facilities)	France Lynch	Facilities for older people	1
R (Community facilities)	Nailsworth	integrated medical centre	1
G (Environment)	Nailsworth	play facilities older children	1
G (Environment)	Painswick	protect historic unique character	1
R (Community facilities)	Stroud Town Centre	ASB issue here	1
G (Environment)	Stroud Town Centre	more play facilities older children	1
G (Environment)	Rodborough	air quality issue	1
R (Community facilities)	Stroud TC	greater need police presence	1
R (Community facilities)	Cainscross	more facilities Y.P. (Young People)	1
R (Community facilities)	Stroud Ebley	location for community hub / library	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
G (Environment)	Cashes Green	new strategic green space / park	1
G (Environment)	between Ryeford	open land safeguarded to stop merging	1
R (Community facilities)	Stonehouse	Community cohesion is an issue here	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	improve cycle links	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	More charging facilities	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	More affordable housing	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	higher density housing	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stroud	more early years places	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	lack of multiple occupancy / variety	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stroud	Need to encourage more variety of retail uses	1
Y (Housing)	Stroud	Rough sleeping an issue	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Congestion an issue	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Roads are dangerous	1
P (Transport)	Stroud	Improve bus routes	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
B (Education & Employment)	Stroud	empty shops an issue	1
B (Education & Employment)	Stroud	Primary school need to be extended	1
Y (Housing)	Lorridge Brake	Site for gypsy + traveller pitches	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
P (Transport)	Wotton	Improve bus routes	1
B (Education & Employment)	Nailsworth	Create Start up	1
P (Transport)	Minchinhampton	Need for... *(incomplete in original)*	1
B (Education & Employment)	Hardwicke	Leisure / entertainment	1
P (Transport)	Hardwicke	Improve bus service	1
Y (Housing)	Hardwicke	New garden village	1
B (Education & Employment)	Hardwicke *(indicated by text — 1 —)*	New secondary school	1
B (Education & Employment)	Hardwicke *(indicated by ditto mark)*	New further education	1
P (Transport)	Longney	river taxis	1

Theme	Location	Issue / Idea (Summarised)	Frequency
B (Education & Employment)	Berkeley	More leisure	1
P (Transport)	Cam	Improve bus routes	1
B (Education & Employment)	Cam	new hotel	1
B (Education & Employment)	Cam	Unemployment	1
B (Education & Employment)	Cam	New sec School	1

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 whole-district maps and involved participants discussing and placing purple tokens (representing 1000 homes) or yellow/red tokens (representing 50 homes) in locations where they felt there was potential for growth and development. Tokens could be stacked to create larger developments.

Using 50-dwellings tokens

Location	Housing number
Berkeley	50 × 44 = 2,200
Wotton Under Edge	50 × 35 = 1,750
Dursley	50 × 11 = 550
Crawley[1]	50 × 18 = 900
Eastington	50 × 7 = 350
Whitminster	50 × 13 = 650
Nympsfield	50 × 20 = 1,000
Nailsworth	50 × 12 = 600
Standish	50 × 24 = 1,200
High Field	50 × 7 = 350
Painswick	50 × 7 = 350
Upton St Leonards	50 × 42 = 2,100
TOTAL	12,000

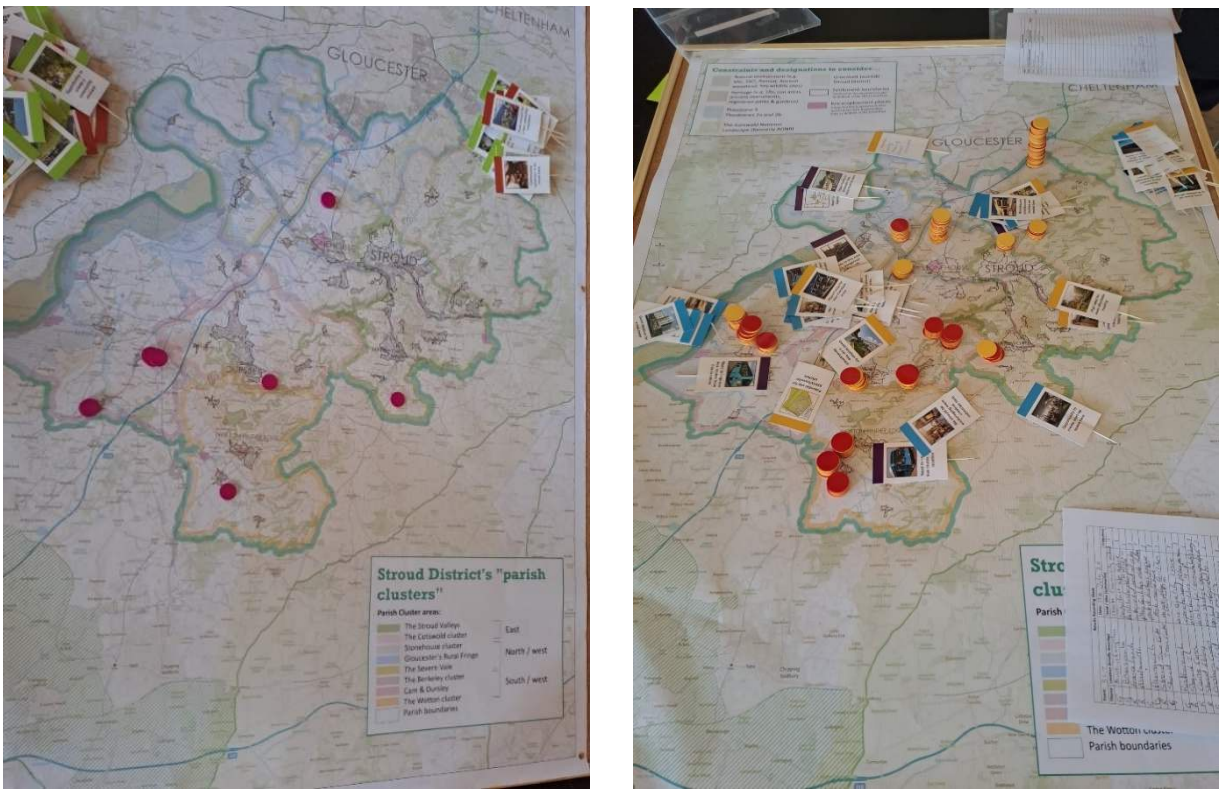
Note: the aim of this first exercise was to consider distributing 240 tokens (each representing 50-dwellings) across the district, thus achieving a total of 12,000. The task allowed for a variety of development scales, ranging from small and 'local' to potentially

[1] Locations were noted down by hand at the end of the exercise; it's unclear where this location is. Likely transcription error.

large scale. However, by stacking the tokens, the officers may have pre-empted the following exercise, which was designed (by contrast) to get participants to think more strategically about large-scale development locations:

Using 1000-dwelling tokens:

Location	Housing number
Outside Stonehouse	2,000 dwellings
Newport	5,000 dwellings
Outside Kingswood	1,000 dwellings
North of Dursley	1,000 dwellings
Wisloe End *(written as Bison End)*	1,000 dwellings
Standish	2,000 dwellings
TOTAL	12,000



The activity in progress: Using 1000-dwelling tokens (Left) and 50-dwelling tokens (Right)

Graffiti Wall

Here is the transcription of the notes written on the graffiti wall:

Please give us any additional ideas you feel need to be included:

- We need more social/council housing, of all sizes, everywhere across district
- To consider how training opportunities can be supported through this process - giving real world practical experience to young people. Can links be made with colleges / universities? Happy to support this - Rebecca Cleaver.
- Idea for someone speaking and stating this at the start to put people at ease (using Powerpoint subtitles).
- Being mindful when working with communities to use plain language and explain concepts clearly.
- Don't we just need more acceptable houses for everyone who needs them?

Appendix: Who attended

The Council's Strategic Leadership Team was invited, plus key internal stakeholders from a range of council services and departments.

Role:	**Directorate / Service:**
Strategic Director of Place	Place
Chief Planning Officer	Place / Planning
Planning Strategy Team Manager (Local Plan)	Place / Planning
Senior Planning Strategy Officer (Local Plan)	Place / Planning
Senior Planning Strategy Officer (Local Plan)	Place / Planning
Senior Planning Strategy Officer (Local Plan)	Place / Planning
Development Management Team Manager	Place / Planning
Senior Community Infrastructure Officer	Place / Planning
Climate Change and Sustainability Manager	Place / Climate & Economic Development
Economic Development Officer	Place / Climate & Economic Development
Strategic Lead for Nature Recovery and Biodiversity	Place / Climate & Economic Development
Commercial Services Manager	Communities / Environmental Health
Environmental Protection Manager	Communities / Environmental Health
Communities Development Manager	Communities / Community Services
Communities Health and Wellbeing Manager	Communities / Community Services
Leisure Services Manager	Communities / Community Services
Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer	Communities / Housing
New Homes and Regeneration Manager	Resources / Property Services
Cllr Katy Hoffman	Stroud District Council for Rodborough Ward
Plus three R4C facilitators	