

Response by Stroud Green Party to the Regulation 19 Consultation on the Stroud District Local Plan

Background

Stroud District Green Party is a legally constituted organisation with 400 members and elected representation at Parish, Town, District and County Council level within the Stroud District.

Legally Compliant

To the best of our knowledge the proposed local plan complies with the NPPF, has a Sustainability Appraisal, has been prepared in consultation with other local authorities and prescribed bodies, been prepared in-line with our Local Development Scheme and appropriate bodies have been consulted during the plan making process in line with SDC's Statement of Community Involvement.

Soundness

The plan has been prepared in line with the Council's adopted Carbon Neutral 2030 Policy and this has driven many of the important policies therein. This includes important policies on identifying appropriate sites for renewables, high energy efficiency for all new development, siting new development with access to services and reducing the need to rely on private car transport. We strongly support these policies. In many cases the sustainability policies should be strengthened over time when national policies permit this. There are also important policies in relation to planning with nature, enabling everyone to have access to Green space, creating wildlife corridors and natural flood management which are important and sound.

While individual major development sites will always be controversial locally, we support the process by which these sites were prioritised on the basis of sustainability. We believe this to be fundamentally sound.

We believe that the national process for determining numbers of homes required is not sound, but recognise that while this is an issue that adversely affects our plan, it is not a part we can directly influence in the plan making process. Our main problem locally is access to affordable houses, including rented houses. House prices are driven up beyond local wage/affordability rates by people moving out from the cities, wishing to live in a beautiful area. While the in-comers provide some positive benefits, the resulting property prices and numbers we are expected to accommodate are not sustainable. We need stronger national policies that enable us to mandate more affordable housing of the size and type in local demand, to force developers to develop land-banked brownfield sites and sufficient funds to invest in active-travel and public transport infrastructure.

Within the area of the Cotswolds AONB, which comprises some 50% of the District, we especially support the Plan to consider applications for turbines up to 60m in height. This is what the AONB Board defines as 'small scale'. We do not consider that the small number of anticipated applications will detract unacceptably from its landscape quality. Each individual application can then be rigorously assessed on its merits. Moreover it would comply with the legislative responsibility under

the CROW Act to foster the social and economic needs of the local communities since we want to promote their vitality.

Duty to Cooperate

To the best of our knowledge the Duty to Cooperate has been applied with.

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Stroud District Green Party Co-coordinators

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