

Bisley with Lypiatt Parish Council

Comments and Responses to the Stroud District Local Plan Emerging Strategy Paper

Introduction.

The SDLP Emerging Strategy Paper has been extensively reviewed by members of the Bisley with Lypiatt Parish Council. Whilst the whole document has been reviewed, we have concentrated on the aspects that apply to a large rural parish which is part of the Cotswold Cluster. Where relevant our comments and suggestions are referenced against the questions posed within the plan. However, it should be noted that a direct correlation between the questions posed and the statements contained within this response is not possible in all instances.

Parish Background Statements

Invigorating The Rural Community For Future Generations

Bisley with Lypiatt parish is a rural parish. H M Government has stated its intention to "re-invigorate the high street" and "rebuild community". There is a parallel hope for rural communities, albeit with close attention to the meaning of sustainability in a rural setting and the particular ways in which specifically rural development can create a better future. Rather than building for growth as such, the inherited natural and built environment must be improved incrementally and organically, thus both preserving and extending into the future for generations to follow. Sustainability in this context is a synergy addressing housing, land use, economic activity, energy, climate change, food and the natural world. In particular it will be the local interconnection and interaction between these factors which will vitalise the rural community.

Rural Building (SDLP Questions 2.3a and 2.3b)

The NPPF clearly mandates recognition of the rural nature of many local communities and the special considerations which apply to them. For example, this explicitly embraces the possibility in principle of a good case for new building adjacent to or even outside settlement boundaries subject to efficient use of previously developed land and taking all possible sustainability measures with regard to access.

The following policy proposals are compliant with this guidance.

Policy – Rural Exception Sites

In line with the Cotswold Local Plan, and consistent with organic development in a rural setting, single self-build plots may be brought forward as Rural Exception Sites within, adjoining, or closely related to the village envelope where the applicant meets all the following criteria:

- The applicant is in demonstrable housing need.
- The applicant is unable to access a suitable home currently available on the open market at a similar cost in the parish (or within 5km of the site).
- The applicant has a demonstrable need to live locally.
- The applicant has strong local connections with the Parish.

- Proposals for community driven low impact affordable projects outside the Settlement Boundary may be regarded sympathetically, subject to AONB sustainable guidelines and capacity for a space to absorb change.

Policy – Dwellings for Rural Workers

New dwellings for rural/local workers outside settlement boundaries will be favourably considered to the degree they satisfy the following criteria. A planning application which satisfies a relatively small subset of conditions will be unlikely to succeed.

- It is demonstrated that there is an essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of occupation in the countryside.
- A financial test is submitted to demonstrate the viability of the business proposed or as proposed to be expanded.
- A new dwelling cannot be provided by adapting an existing building on the holding.
- A suitable alternative dwelling to meet the essential need is not available on a defined development site within the community or within a village or hamlet at a comparative cost.
- The proposed dwelling is located within or adjacent to the existing enterprise or other buildings on the holding.
- The size of the proposed dwelling is proportionate to its essential need.
- Occupancy is limited by way of a planning condition or obligation.

Policy – Rural Infrastructure.

When assessing infrastructure planning applications the Council will place due emphasis on the degree to which an affected village or other rural community is dependent on the safe use of minor roads, lanes, footpaths, and other rights of way.

The Rural Environment (SDLP Questions 2.4a and 2.4b)

Background Statements

Climate Change

In accordance with the NPPF Ch. 14, the Climate Change Act 2008 and H.M. Government Clean Growth Strategy, the Council is committed to countering the negative impact of development on Climate Change, particularly when increased car emissions are anticipated.

The NPPF gives clear and extensive guidance on pro-active planning to prepare for climate change. It lists the types of impact to be expected and the kinds of amelioration and mitigation which can be included in development design for the future resilience of communities. These include adaptation measures, risk management, location orientation and design to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the innovative use and supply of low carbon and renewable energy.

Policy – Environment Management (Climate Change) (SDLP Question 3.2a)

All planning applications which involve construction or material changes to buildings must include an Environment Management Plan including:

- Provisions for managing and benefiting the flora and fauna both within the curtilage and passing naturally through it, linking wildlife corridors.
- An appraisal of scope for using renewable energy, mitigating global warming and using low carbon solutions, together with proposals for incorporation into the build design.
- Design provisions for reducing energy requirements.

Policy – Percentage Energy Contribution

Planning applications will be regarded as stronger if proposals include energy generation which is a substantial percentage of need (Minimum 50%).

Policy -- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Listed Buildings.

Proposals for renewable energy installations and energy efficiency measures will be favourably considered in a Listed Building providing the following conditions are strictly met:

- No major structural change to the building is planned which is in conflict with the Listing Schedule or which destroys historic fabric.
- Replacement windows and doors for greater thermal efficiency will be accepted if the installation is reversible and avoids associated destruction of historic fabric. Article 4 is in place for Bisley regarding UPVC and this should be extended to cover the Eastcombe Conservation Area and other listed buildings within the parish.

- Renewable energy installations can be installed provided the main vista of the building is not harmed, nor views from public footpaths. The number and impact of solar panels on roofs would require a visual appraisal.
- Wall insulation can be installed provided it does not conflict with the listing schedule or cause harm to the vista of the building or integrity of the structure.
- All such alterations must be sympathetic to the style and situation of the parent structure.

Policy – Judicious Energy Solutions in Listed Buildings.

Where an impact on building fabric is anticipated, planning applications in respect of listed and historic buildings must show how the need for energy efficiency is balanced against any threat to the fabric of the historic build. They must also show that energy efficiency options have been carefully considered. Judicious solutions harmonising the protection of historic fabric with energy efficiency measures will increase the strength of the planning proposal.

The Vision of a Connected Natural Environment.

Background Statements

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan calls for a Nature Recovery Network that restores 500,000 hectares of connected wildlife habitat across the UK. Generally the aim must be to bring together landowners and local residents to uplift a degraded ecosystem and help restore habitat and invertebrate prey. Action must be at a local level where small initiatives reap significant rewards. Individual householders have a part to play, as well as the owners of verges, farms, owners of roadside verges, estates with woodlands, hedges and fields and owners of outside recreation. All must consider the part they can play in making a connected and robust ecological network.

In a rural area, the natural environment will be expected to be addressed in every proposed development however small. Each Parish will have a key role to play in helping achieve the vision of a Connected Natural Environment. For example a Parish Council can provide a map and guide for local wildlife 'corridor' protection.

The NPPF makes clear H M Government's renewed commitment to protection and improvement of the natural environment. The following proposed policies are in accordance with that guidance.

Policy: Protect Landscape Character.

The Cotswold AONB Management Plan includes protection of densely wooded tree scape, geology-water courses, steep valleys, hidden valleys, together with their remoteness and tranquillity, and expansive long distant views, from development. This includes service installations such as telecommunication masts, electricity generating substations, waste disposal facilities, and long term storage of construction materials.

Policy -- Responsibility for Flora and Fauna

The Environment Management Plan which accompanies planning applications involving construction or material changes to buildings must include provisions for managing and benefiting the flora and fauna both already within the curtilage and also passing naturally through it.

Policy – Biodiversity

A guiding principle of this Council will be to protect, manage and enhance biodiversity through the development of a strategic network of wildlife areas and connecting green corridors. This will include green open spaces such as allotments, verges, recreation areas and private gardens. Planning applications should make clear how they contribute to this vision.

Tree Loss

With extreme Ash Dieback forecast, our landscape, its woodlands and hedgerows will change radically. This Council will support local communities in planning for the replacement of all lost trees with appropriate alternative species.

Within the parish there were many orchards on plots of older cottages. Many of these trees still stand although in poor condition due to age or have now been removed. There is an opportunity to encourage the planting of further fruit trees, ideally in a small groups.

Policy – Tree and Hedgerows

Where the loss of trees is considered unavoidable in planning application proposals, proposals must be made for adequate tree replacement using suitable and resilient species, as part of the development. The council would support a Village envelope Rural Tree and Hedge preservation and replacement Policy. All planning applications must include a description of existing hedgerows and trees both within the site and in close proximity and describe how these will be encouraged, enhanced and improved in order to contribute to a Parish Strategy for wildlife corridors.

Policy: -Open and Green Spaces

As public realm for recreation, the parish will continue to care for the Village Greens, recreation grounds and allotments and the network of narrow alleyways. Organic principles and wild flora enhanced, to promote sustainability, will be considered. Public open spaces with a specific identity and special cultural value shall be listed, mapped and protected.

Policy – Allotments

The availability of allotments shall be protected and existing allotments and recreation grounds developed as key links for wildlife corridors in parallel with their primary purpose.

Policy- Protect Grade 3 Agricultural Land.

Grade 3 Agricultural land as identified in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Figure 3.8 should be protected from development.

Preserve, Protect and Maintain Our Heritage.

Our Rural Settlements have narrow roads, lanes and footpaths flanked with drystone walling which adds to the appeal of Hillside Settlements following the contours the contours of the hills and valleys in an area of natural beauty.

Landmark historic cottages and Lypiatt Park should retain their distinctiveness and remoteness set in woodland or enclosed valley, by avoiding development within their curtilage, with the exception only of essential upgrade of facilities appropriate for historic buildings and their grounds.

Policy - Roads.

Having narrow roads and lanes means we cannot have on-road parking and still allow emergency and service vehicles to pass. Therefore adequate off-road free draining parking is required.[Suggest 2 car spaces maximum per dwelling adding potential one for working from home]. Should this space not be available then expansion schemes should be refused.

The number of car and van spaces for places of employment or depot, should be considered under a separate policy, ensuring that access is addressed in steep lanes and permission refused for development that does not adhere.

Large lorries and delivery vans can prevent access in narrow lanes and they are unable to turn round. Conditions should be imposed to address these particularly whilst buildings are in construction.

Policy - Drystone Walling.

Existing walls should be replaced on a like for like basis and preserved. With Land Ownership comes certain responsibilities.

New Farm and Equine developments should have as a pre-condition of consent a requirement to rebuild and maintain the existing drystone walling to at least 1 metre in height surrounding that development.

New development should provide stone walling to a roadside boundary to maintain the local character.

Policy – Shared Beauty.

Development should not obstruct the vista of existing dwellings but share it. This also protects the view of others from opposite valley sides.

Policy: Distinctiveness and Design.

The cottages and the settlement pattern of the Conservation Area with its narrow lanes and alleyways that cut through from lane to lane as one descends the hill, form a unique example of a Cotswold village with distinct features. Standardised designs of a ‘cut and paste template’ style houses would be inappropriate. Proposed development outside the Conservation Area should retain creativity and high quality design, providing new layering upon former ingenuity of former historic builders. Cotswold stone is fundamental along with advised tones of paintwork detailed in The Cotswold Design Guide which should be used by designers. The use of natural materials should be encouraged together with contemporary and/or innovative design thus adding to the local heritage.

Policy – Light Pollution.

The rural un-polluted night sky is for all to share. Rural policy is required for this ie No rural Street-Lighting and Minimal external lighting [no uplighters].

Policy – Flooding and Foul Water.

Flooding - Minimize surfaces that increase surface-water run off.

Foul Water - Up-date old septic tank or cesspits on proposed extension developments.

The Cotswold Cluster – Potential Sites and Alternatives.....Bisley

(SDLP Question 5.0b, p92)

Settlement role and function

The current SDLP wording is: *Bisley has no significant employment role: its principal role is as a 'dormitory' settlement.*

This is considered to be incorrect and it is proposed this passage is replaced:

Bisley has a role as a dormitory settlement. Nevertheless there are rural businesses including farms, farm enterprises and units, self employed, garage and service station, local shops and pubs providing employment for approximately 20% of the population. Recognition of these activities as typical of a rural economy will assist appropriate rural development and resolution of local issues.

(SDLP Questions 4.4b and 4.4f – Settlement Limits.)

Notwithstanding the results of recent appeal, the Bisley with Lypiatt Parish Council considers this to be a vital opportunity for reviewing the proposed extension of Bisley Village boundary to include Mugswell Nursery, with a focus on the clear rationale for this beneficial amendment.

(SDLP Question 5.0d)

Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council would also like to see Eastcombe included in this section and offer the following paragraphs for consideration.

The Cotswold Cluster – Potential Sites and Alternatives.....Eastcombe

Planning Constraints and designations

The Eastcombe Conservation Area covers the southern half of the village and extends further to the south, into countryside. There are numerous listed buildings, concentrated within central and southern parts of the settlement, the largest of which is the Baptist Chapel. There are a few new houses built in the old part of the village, but otherwise all new development has been at the top end of the village bounded by the main road to Bisley.

Eastcombe is entirely within the Cotswolds AONB.

The main open spaces are the recreation ground (football/cricket pitches and children's playground) and the village green.

The village is identified in the Local Plan as a Fourth Tier settlement and has settlement development limits.

Landscape Sensitivity

Eastcombe lies within the Cotswolds AONB and hence is protected by guidelines that are material considerations in Planning Applications. There is very limited capacity for the landscape of the Eastcombe Conservation Area and Toadsmoor valley to absorb change

created by new development and this Landscape sensitivity indicates a very restricted opportunity for small scale employment use.

Settlement role and function

Eastcombe is a small and diverse rural community sitting adjacent to the relatively large Manor Fam Estate (see page 55). The village is well served in terms of amenities, social facilities and leisure opportunities. The village offers a good range of local services:

- a thriving village shop including a post office.
- Primary School.
- Thomas Keeble Secondary School.
- places of worship (Anglican and Baptist).
- Local pub.
- Village hall.
- Sports field/pitch and playground.
- Local Allotments.

The largest employer within the ward manufactures leading-edge coordinate measuring machines (CMM) together with 3D measurement software and other metrology solutions. There are numerous small businesses run by Eastcombe residents some of which are home based.

Conclusion.

Bisley-with-Lypyitt Parish Council have compiled these comments and policy suggestions in good faith. Feedback from SDC would be greatly appreciated.

Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council.