



17 January 2019

Dear 

Further to your publication of the local plan we would like to provide our feedback as residents. In summary, whilst I appreciate some development is required in all areas of the district, the proposed plan for the area around Sharpness, Newtown, Wanswell, Brookend and Hinton is disproportionate to the current housing and significantly impacts on the local infrastructure. And not least, it contravenes Stroud District Council's (SDC) own guidelines in relation to development.

1. SDC has said it will concentrate housing development at locations where there is currently the best access to services, facilities, jobs and infrastructure. This is at conflict with the proposed development for the following reasons:
 - Services in the area are poor and proposed developers have not accounted in their plans to improve this.
 - The local secondary school has closed and is currently used as a Plymouth Brethren school which does not serve the community. The two nearby state schools (Rednock and Katharine Lady Berkeley) are already at capacity.
 - Berkeley Hospital has closed, and the GP surgery is working with minimal staff.
 - There is very little employment in the area.
 - A critical issue is the need for transport. Most people commute to work by car, as the local transport links are very poor; Berkeley Train Station is closed and the train line south to Bristol has been dismantled; the "tram" service to Cam and Dursley Station as proposed by the developer is not possible as it would need to travel back and forth on the busy main line; bus services are poor. In addition, SDC are not progressing a new motorway junction, a new bridge over the Severn or extension of the Berkeley bypass to the A38.
 - The proposal of 5,000 homes, or even half this number, would likely result in thousands of cars heading north and south daily with the main areas of employment being Bristol and Gloucester.
 - Motorway junction 14 is already at capacity, and the additional homes being built in Thornbury and Charfield will result in further traffic congestion.
 - In addition to the local traffic impact, the scrapping of the M4 bridge tolls is likely to increase commuting from South Wales, which has an impact on the wider area, including the heavily congested M4 and M32, which has led to opposition to this plan from the Mayor of Bristol.
 - In the current plan, roads are described as "good". However, in the last survey when the previous development was turned down, roads were described as "poor". It would be appreciated if an explanation could be given as to this apparent volte-face when no road improvements have taken place since the last review, except some resurfacing work.

2. SDC has said that the target is to create new sustainable communities at locations where development can transform existing access to services and infrastructure.
 - Development in this area will not be sustainable due to the increase in commuting by car. Even if the development was carbon neutral, this would be completely outweighed by the increase in car commuting.
3. SDC has said that they are identifying opportunities through careful development to achieve net gains to the natural environment.
 - The vast majority of this development will be on green fields, except the potential development at Sharpness Docks and Wanswell Focus School which we believe is proportional and are in favour of if required.
 - Building on this scale will have a devastating impact on the local environment within the Severn Vale which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
4. SDC has said that they are managing growth to secure mitigation and measurable net gains for biodiversity.
 - As per the comments on the previous point, biodiversity will be greatly affected due to concreting fields and the destruction of habitats. There is a wide range of plants and animals in this area; Peregrine falcons, badgers, great crested newts, deer and otters to name but a few.

In addition to the points raised above we would like to highlight the following issues which we believe should be considered:

- Some of the area proposed for development is within a blast area caused by nitrate storage at the Docks.
- Some of the proposal covers a known area of flooding. Current opinion is that sea levels will rise further in future and I have personally seen the River Severn come within a foot of breaching the flood defences at the end of Sanigar Lane.
- Nuclear waste is being held in a new concrete warehouse at the de-commissioned power station, close to the new proposed development sites.
- Well-established communities will be overwhelmed if a housing estate is created away from facilities, jobs and infrastructure. This approach has been attempted before, for example in Penrhys estate in Wales, resulting in chronic problems for the community.
- We would ask that the potential to build on brownfield sites close to Gloucester and at the derelict Newport towers Hotel on the A38 are further explored, in favour of building on green field sites.
- There is potential to build at Cam, Stonehouse and Gloucester, all of which have much better road links and established rail links.
- Why should we bear the brunt of the development targets? There is a disproportionate number of houses being proposed for the South Cotswolds, with no houses for areas such as Painswick.
- Berkeley features in the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 41, and features the Greener Greenways, which is a biodiversity conservation project that focuses on 66 traffic-free walking and cycling routes owned or managed by Sustrans across Wales, England and Scotland. The enormous increase in traffic on the roads will negatively impact this route and likely result in more injuries and potential deaths to the cycling community.

- There will be an increased risk to the equestrian community who regularly use the area in large numbers. We also have Europe's most advanced diagnostic and surgical equine centre with stabling for 30 horses, which will be adversely impacted by the proposed development.
- The claim that the development will help members of the local community who are seeking housing is again, disproportionate. We do not have 5,000 families requiring houses in the community, and houses for first-time buyers are still beyond reach with properties currently being built at Canon's Rise starting at £250,000.
- The local area is already bearing the brunt of development as planning permission has been granted to the properties at Canon's Rise and to a new warehouse at the end of the bypass close to Sharpness Docks, which will further increase traffic heading to the motorway network.

I hope that SDC is willing to listen to the residents impacted by these plans, take the above points into consideration and stop large developments in this area.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.