From:

Sent: 22 January 2020 19:15

To: _WEB_Local Plan

Cc: Info

Subject: Response to Stroud District Council's Draft Local Plan Consultation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up

Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Stroud District Council

I am a resident of the Slimbridge Parish and I write in response to Stroud District Council's Draft Local Plan Consultation.

I do not support Stroud District Council's preferred strategy for meeting their future growth and development needs.

The proposed Slimbridge Parish site, which the developers named Wisloe Green (which is not a place) has major issues in terms of selection criteria and constraints which cannot be mitigated against. The points outlined below are raised in relation to this site.

- Purpose & Outcome of Consultation Process Consultations to date have not reflected residents preferred option of sustainable dispersal. Stroud District Councils' (SDC) planning department do not appear to have listened to resident's feedback throughout the phases of the consultation process as the plan does not reflect this. The planners work for us and they should publicly explain why it is acceptable to ignore residents view in pursuit of their favoured outcome. Otherwise what is the purpose of consultations? Why are the planners not held to account over this matter?
- Site Assessment Criteria & Policies The proposed site was submitted (appearing to be slotted in late in the process) and does not meet the assessment criteria and policies set out, such as SDC's Sustainability Appraisal Report 2019, SDC's commitment to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). If these are not met, I am concerned that SDC's plan will be rejected by the Inspector (as has happened to many other councils) and that as a consequence; opportunistic developers will take the reins and be able to build in the district without assessment and indeed scrutiny of residents!
- **Agricultural Land** The proposed site is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land and should be preserved as this quality of land is rare in this area. This supports the requirements of various policies and SDC commitment to be CN2030.
- Coalescence The proposed development will join the Slimbridge Parish into one large housing estate. I understand coalescence goes against National planning guidance. There should be a large clear break between communities. This is not the case with these proposals and cannot be rectified due to the scale of the proposal. With the proposed expansion of Cam (another site in the local plan), there will be housing from Dursley through the Severn Vale to the estuary & will also impact the views from AONB's. For some reason the Stroud District Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in 2016 only assessed one half of the Parish and therefore by assumptions planners have decided that as its not been assessed it can be included as a site, and not assessed on evidence.
- Natural and Built Environment Protection Stroud District Council (SDC's) Core Strategy states that "aims to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the district". Slimbridge Parish will lose its own identity, and individuality of the villages and hamlets. The development on the proposed site will impact the landscape, ecology and communities in which this is proposed and where residents and wildlife have chosen this as their home.
- Noise & Air Pollution The M5, A38, A4135 & railway noise and pollution levels are currently exceeded and would only become worse with increased car commuting and trains. It is not possible to mitigate the impact to meet legal standards for housing and schools. This also contradicts the CN2030 commitment.
- Conservation There are records and sighting of Protected mammals, birds and reptiles. The site and the surrounding land is extremely important for certain waders which feed, roost and breed on open farmland. This site is so close to the WWT and the Severn Estuary which has numerous legal national and international protections. No consideration has been taken for the whole area, just up to the boundary of the proposed site.

• **Heritage** – It is well recognised there was occupation by the Romans in the Slimbridge Parish. It is mentioned in Slimbridge Village Design Statement (December 2016). There have been recent discoveries which provides even more evidence that from an archaeological point of view, development should not go ahead. A full geophysical survey of the site and surrounding land should take place to understand exactly what is there and preserve this for many thousands of years!

The majority of the proposed housing developments are in the South of the Stroud district which is disproportionate. Most employment is to the north of the Stroud district or in Bristol. Sustainable dispersal will share the impact on infrastructure and will be easier to manage by smaller upgrades. SDC's own recommendations are to prioritise sites at existing larger communities and those that are brownfield. The proposed site is Greenfield with the exception of a riding arena and stables which is a very small part of the whole site. Therefore, I would like to propose that planners revisit the assessment of alternative sites (based on evidence) as many have been rejected without cause. Perhaps due to the time that has passed there may also be new smaller sites that may now become available that have not yet been considered that could be included to ensure housing is sustainably dispersed. Sustainable does not just mean large dormant housing estates!

It has been amazing to see how the Slimbridge parish has come together to ensure this site is not included in the local plan. I support the view of local people which is reflected in the Wisloe Action Group's response.

Regards