



Rodborough Parish Council

Stroud Plan: report from today's conference and recommendations for RPC input to current draft Plan

Background

Several of us at RPC have looked over the draft SDC Plan and our thinking was that given there seemed to be no housing or development suggested for Rodborough, our focus should be to draw attention to concerns about the increased level of traffic that we anticipated would be generated by the housing developments proposed at Minchinhampton and which would then funnel down at the Butts and Butterrow Hill. There are two sites; one on Cirencester Road on the left immediately east of Minchinhampton and a second larger one that seems to replicate an earlier planning application (that was withdrawn) on Tobacconist Farm.

The Plan talks a lot and in great detail about housing supply and suitable sites. Now central Government dictates housing numbers, based on semi-transparent formulae, SDC is required to provide 12,800 new houses over the next 20 years; this is a 40% increase from the old 456 houses pa to 638pa. To its credit, SDC estimates it has an 8.5 year land supply (the minimum requirement is 5 years). About half the 12,800 would typically be generated as a result of 'normal' housing development, so an extra 6,000 now have to be identified. Some of the sites identified on the draft may well not be included in the next version and it is at this point that some of the reserve 'alternative sites' may come into play. Rodborough has six of these.

At today's conference several issues emerged to which I feel we should draw attention; I've divided these into 'General' and 'Specific to Rodborough'.

General issues

- The Plan seems to put the cart before the horse in the sense that it identifies housing development sites by parish but makes no mention of infrastructure (roads, new rail links and stations, dedicated cycle paths, schools, surgeries, etc.). This is especially critical when it comes to the merits (or otherwise) of large proposed developments at Sharpness and at various sites on the A38 corridor, but it is also important for many of the 100+ house sites where inadequate access or a feeling of sticking housing where it can be built rather than where it's wanted. Upgrades to the M5 junctions 12, 13 and 14 or a new Stonehouse station or the possibility of a road/rail bridge across the Severn at Sharpness would make otherwise deeply unattractive sites extremely popular, not least for those commuting out of the area to work (e.g. in Bristol or Cardiff).
- Too little (or no) mention is made of building high quality, attractive, carbon neutral housing with adjacent separated cycle paths that would enhance rather than despoil the environment.

Clerk:, Rodborough Community Hall, Butterrow West, Rodborough Stroud GL5 3TZ





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Specific to Rodborough

- Worryingly, six sites seem to have been suggested as 'alternative sites' within our parish. The first three are adjacent to the AONB, the other three are all within the AONB:
 1. STR011: Rodborough Fields (as previously rejected at an Appeal)
 2. STR008: Wallbridge Fields
 3. STR022: Land to the east of Coronation Road, including the existing allotments
 4. STR057: An enormous parcel of land below and above Rodborough Lane from the Butterrow West playing field all the way east to Butterrow Hill
 5. STR043: Land to the north west of Rooksmoor Hill, bounded by the A46, including the existing Kingscourt playground
 6. NWO003: Land to the south east of Rooksmoor Hill, bounded by the A46, below the Kingscourt pub (The King's Head) on The Street

None of these sites is appropriate for development. All are on steep (or very steep) hills and are either within the setting of the AONB or actually within it. All play a crucial role in preserving, in the case of the first four sites, the views out from central Stroud and in the last two, out from North Woodchester.

- The increased traffic flow across the Commons from the two proposed Minchinhampton developments (150 houses in total) and, less directly, from major developments elsewhere in the district. There are currently some 60,000 vehicle movements a day (as measured at The Bear between Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons). All this traffic then passes up or down one of Rodborough's three hills (Bear, Rodborough and Butterrow) and in the case of the last two hills, has to pass through single track sections; Butterrow has no pavement at all at this pinch point and Rodborough (at The Butts) has a pavement on one side only that is little over a metre wide. Every effort should be made to encourage traffic to use the A419 rather than the Commons roads; this could include reduced speed limits, traffic calming and the provision of a dedicated (separate) cycle path across the top of the Commons which would have the effect of narrowing what are otherwise open roads.

Agreed Full Council 21/1/19