

Cam developments PS24 and PS25 - Statement

Can SDC please clarify if Cam is a) a village, b) a town or c) a district centre? It is described as all three in the draft plan and begs the question do they actually know or care? Have they ever been here or have any idea what it's like to live here? When are the views of Cam Parish Council (CPC), our NDP, and therefore, residents, actually going to be listened to and taken into account? PS25 consultation was woefully inadequate, slipped in during the pandemic, under the radar. SDCs own experts, and independent consultants appointed by CPC, clearly state that PS25 is NOT suitable land for development. Building on this land will have devastating consequences for nature, biodiversity and the dark corridor of the river and will render our much prized Rackleaze nature reserve pointless, cut off from the wildlife corridor by concrete and tarmac. The fields along the river have a myriad of linked ancient footpaths running through them where local residents are able to enjoy fresh air and peace and quiet. The character of our village is being blatantly ignored and destroyed.

There is much talk of a greenway being constructed along the river Cam from the station all the way to Uley but in reality it's impossible due to the number of landowners who need to agree, much if it has to be along busy, dangerous minor roads such as Everlands. The owner of the land at PS25 is holding that land as ransom - give planning permission on PS25 and you can have your few metres of greenway - the price we are being asked to pay is too high for any benefit a manmade tarmac path will bring. Developers have already made their intentions clear in a recent EIAS screening application, increasing the size of PS25 by 75% from 180 to 315 units to make it viable for them to build yet more houses on land that should never have been considered suitable in the first place. SDC took the odd decision not to require the EIAS, ignoring the criteria set out for qualification and paying no regard to the cumulative effect of all this development on an already overburdened area.

The river Cam is already acknowledged as being over capacity from run off from the newly created Littlecombe estate domestic appliances - this was highlighted to SDC at least two years ago before that estate had even been completed and yet PS25 is still being considered! New data is needed urgently. The Coaley sewage works is at capacity and I note Bristol Water do not appear to have been a consultee, why? The only option for run off for PS25 is the creation of massive, sterile balancing ponds all along the river bank, making the manufactured so-called greenway unpleasant and even dangerous. It also, to the advantage of the developers, as it has the effect of pushing the housing further up the hillside and encroaches into Uptonthorpe with its open landscape and back drop to the AONB making it even more visible. Rowley, which has some of the oldest cottages in our village, will be a goldfish bowl, and this will have a very negative effect on existing residents but we really don't seem to matter.

PS24 density was increased from 700 to 900 in April 2021 by SDC councillors in a highly politically charged meeting by individuals who had no intention of standing again and did not have to face the consequences, with zero public consultation, its against our NDP but we have had an outline application sat waiting for approval of c1100 since July 2021. If this is permitted, it completely negates the need for PS25.

The draft local plan states that Cam is an important area for jobs - how so? where exactly are these jobs? We have no real major employers here above 60 employees and you rarely see a job advertised in Cam, and when a job is available it will be minimum wage in care or for a supermarket and part time. The employment land at Box Road has still not been started with very little marketing of the site evident, no doubt a change of use to housing will shortly be submitted. Cam does not attract sizeable employers because we do not have the infrastructure to support employees, just empty promises.

Cam is highlighted as an area in the district with resident deprivation. We have seen a population explosion with no matching infrastructure improvements - oversubscribed schools, doctors, dentists, insufficient retail outlets, none of the promised road improvements made, diminishing public transport - basically an IDP that has NO funding and absolutely no recognisable trigger points. There is no mention of education provision for PS25 with Cam Hopton and Everlands primary schools both year on year c100 applications oversubscribed, let alone Rednock senior school which again is full now without allowing for new housing at Box Road and Draycott not having yet been constructed, let alone PS24 and PS25. A fingers crossed approach is simply not good enough but that's what we've got!

We have well below average green spaces for recreation in Cam as made clear in the Stroud Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study of June 2019. A better use for PS25 would be a recreation area, linking into Rackleaze nature reserve and the adjoining fields for the benefit of the c 8,500 existing and c 4,500 new residents we can expect. Thousands of new residents in the area with only a few clinical children's playgrounds provided (some ludicrously erected next to sub stations) is not acceptable. Offsetting biodiversity out of Cam will leave us with a dead, urban sprawl. We are fast becoming an overspill dormitory for Bristol with 80% of new residents coming from there, but they commute back to Bristol for their work - how is this encouraging people to walk or cycle?, it also does nothing for the local economy, merely swamping existing struggling resources. Cam station has no plans for improvement until 2035 and is at capacity now. Other mass housing planned - Wisloe and Berkeley/Sharpness - constantly refer to the Cam station, where is the evidence this is can accommodate more people? Where in the plan does it mention managing the effects on Cam when these other developments are taking place at the same time? Where are those infrastructure trigger points?

In conclusion, PS25 should never have been considered as a suitable development site with its capacity to be much better suited for recreational use and help solve our issue of lack of natural green spaces in Cam. We must maintain the character of Cam as laid out in our NDP, nothing else is acceptable.