

Stroud Local Plan Review: Matters, Questions and Issues Arising: Matters 6b points 19 & 20 and Matter 11b

Additional Statement Ref Minchinhampton's Traffic and Transport issues – general and sites PS05 and PS05a

Access, Traffic and Transport issues for Minchinhampton have been identified as MIQs by the Inspectors, and were not directly addressed by SDC in their Regulation 20 responses. The Local Plan Response Group therefore wish to provide an additional statement on these issues prior to the hearings.

Matter 11b Transport

With regard to their policy CP6 SDC's generic response to many questions on it is

“Ahead of the EIP, the Council is updating its Infrastructure Delivery Plan evidence base and documentation. This will be published in due course.”

which is ‘kicking the can down the road’. Surely their final and completed IDP should be an integral part of the Local Plan examination and subject to public consultation - not a later (unexamined) afterthought. Certain potentially allocated development sites might not be viable in the light of comprehensive infrastructure considerations.

The frequent use by SDC (in their response to the many concerns expressed over policy CP13 and the particular issue of Sustainable Transport)

“On-site specifics, including site access and highway safety, to be agreed at the planning application stage with Gloucestershire Highways”

certainly does not accord with the requirements of paragraph 104 of the NPPF, which states that transport issues should be considered at the earliest stages of plan-making. SDC seem to be again “kicking this can down the road” rather than dealing with it, now, at the earliest stages of plan-making, as required.

Once a development site with difficult access or location issues in terms of sustainable transport, has been adopted the reality is that the development will be allowed without these matters being satisfactorily resolved - to the detriment of the local area and population.

Matter 6b Stroud Valley site allocations

Local Sites Allocation Policy PS05 East of Tobaccoist Road

The issues highlighted in the Inspectors' question 19h were not specifically addressed by SDC in their Regulation 20 responses to the many local comments and objections to this site allocation.

With regard to the access and transport issues raised surely a site with such difficult access, both vehicular and pedestrian, and very poor public transport, should have been properly and fully assessed in line with paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

In an email to Minchinhampton's MP on 15.06.21, SDC accepted that there is congestion in the town centre due to traffic volumes and that any routing of additional traffic from a development on PS05 and PS05a would have to be to the north and not onto Tetbury Street.

"The site is well located relative to the centre of Minchinhampton and vehicular access will now be solely from the north, ensuring no impact on town centre congestion. Safe, convenient walking and cycling access to the centre will be from the west and south of the development."

The significant additional vehicular movements that would be generated will put an intolerable strain on the already inadequate existing narrow Glebe Estate roads, to the severe detriment of existing residents. It is most unlikely that any public transport, that might be available, would be able to service the new development because of the roads layout. Much of this additional traffic will want to access the centre of Minchinhampton or through it to Nailsworth, so SDC's statement that there would be no impact on the town centre congestion is clearly flawed.

The inevitable extra private vehicular traffic generated by such a development, due to the lack of nearby employment opportunities, primary school places, effective public transport and significant retail outlets, will lead to further degradation of the nearby and surrounding nationally important ecological and heritage sites – effectively condoning 'death by a thousand cuts' to these special areas.

In addition the proposed pedestrian route into the centre of Minchinhampton is frankly dangerous, having acute blind bends and almost no footways - except for a length of very narrow pavement at the bottom end of Friday Street. This is not "safe, convenient walking and cycling access". Such potential difficulty/danger for pedestrians and cyclists would lead to yet more use of cars – not a sustainable outcome.

Surely other ways of achieving the limited number of affordable houses needed, as identified by the local parish population, could be found, not using this green-field site, which would not then generate access, traffic and transport problems.

Safeguarded Land: PS05a East of Tobacconist Road

All the points made above in relation to PS05 apply equally to this 'safeguarded' site which, if developed, will make matters even worse with regard to traffic and transport issues

Also the additional traffic inevitably generated will add yet 'another cut' towards the degradation of the nearby and surrounding heritage and biodiversity areas, as raised in the inspectors' Matter 6b, question 20c

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