

Upton St Leonards Parish Council

Response to Consultation on Stroud District Local Plan Review

1.0 Specific Upton Policies

1.1 The Parish Council expresses general support for the specific policies relating to Upton St Leonards (page 109) with the following minor addition suggested, to the supporting text:

1.2 Planning Constraints

The Cotswold AONB adjacent to the settlement, includes the Scarp Edge which constitutes a strong physical constraint restricting development to the South West.(p.109)

2.0 General Environmental Issues

2.1 In considering the overall Report, the Parish Council has an ongoing concern about environmental issues relating to noise and air pollution arising from the proximity of the heavily used M5 Motorway to existing and proposed housing. The Parish Council believes that, as currently written, the Report does not adequately identify these issues, does not give adequate weight to the consequences arising and does not propose policies to deal with this matter. The Parish Council asks that, in considering the Plan Review, the District Council addresses these issues and gives priority to their resolution as an essential part of the drive towards Carbon Neutrality by 2030 (p.14) and to ensure that future housing is 'located in the right place' (p.14)

2.2 The PC believes that this issue is a strategic concern, affecting not just the Parish of Upton but adjacent communities in the Gloucester/Cheltenham Motorway corridor. In tackling this, SDC may wish to work with these adjacent authorities in order to achieve an effective countywide strategy

2.3 In active support of this proposed approach, the Parish Council is already involved with adjacent PCs, District Councils and local MPs. To further the effectiveness of this joint approach, Upton Parish Council now seeks strong support from Stroud District Council in requiring Government action (Highways England and Defra) to mitigate existing problems.

2.4. In this context, the Local Plan is viewed by the Parish Council as a key document, in which to identify these environmental concerns and to propose actions to resolve existing problems together with policy guidance to ensure that past mistakes are not repeated when future development is being considered..

3.0 Evidence supporting the problem

3.1 The evidence to support these concerns is already generally available from a variety of sources:

(a) Following a Government sponsored survey in 2001 (W.S. Atkins) , noise barriers were erected alongside parts (but not all) of the M5 carriageway in the

Upton / Hucclecote vicinity, to combat identified high levels of noise pollution.. These 'barriers' are low tech (garden style,) wooden fences, and do not represent what is currently available to resolve these problems.. In part, badly located and with diminished effectiveness, due to age and general condition, this 'mitigation' now needs replacing with an upgraded specification, together with an extension to include other noise affected areas never covered by this initial scheme.

(b) A Channel 5 TV series, entitled ' Britain's Horror Homes and focussing on national environmental issues' high- lighted, on prime time TV, properties in Upton, adjacent to the motorway, suffering from severe noise and air pollution issues. The inadequacy of acoustic barriers was raised as a contributing issue.

(c) In 2016, lobbying via local MP's directly to the Sec. of State resulted in Highways England being instructed to install a 'low noise surface' through the Upton/ Hucclecote corridor. The resulting works brought about a reduction in road-roar but over a relatively short period of time this effect has diminished considerably (A 'low specification' scheme, with limited durability is a possible reason for the short duration of the initial improvement)

(d) The most recent (2019) Defra organised national survey continues to identify the Upton /Hucclecote corridor as a 'Noise Important Area' requiring mitigation. This is despite the 'low noise surface' referred to above. Maps of the extent of the problem are available This nationwide, Government produced survey highlights the seriousness of the local problem but does not deal with how the matter might be rectified

(e) The Cotswold AONB is located immediately adjacent to the M5 in Upton St Leonards. Very recently (2019) the Board has produced a 'Tranquility Position Statement' drawing attention to the problems arising in the AONB from high levels of noise emanating from the M5. The Board recommends that the relevant authorities should be required to:

- . -- avoid significant adverse noise effects,
- . - improve the noise environment where possible
- . -- mitigate and minimize adverse noise effects

4.0 Possible Policies and Proposals

4.1 In dealing with these issues, the Parish Council and local community are anticipating clear policies and proposals in the forthcoming Local Plan Review. The following suggestions are made, based on discussions with the local community, meetings with Highways England and research into proposals being introduced and considered elsewhere in the UK.

4.2 With regard to existing housing close to the Motorway, the Parish Council requests that the Plan Review should::

(a) Require that in Government identified 'Noise Important Areas' the relevant Agency (HE and /or Defra) provide an upgrade to existing poor quality acoustic

barriers and erect additional barriers to ensure that effective mitigation is applied in all stretches of motorway where a problem has been identified

(b) Require that as soon as possible, an upgraded high specification low noise surface be laid throughout the identified 'Noise Important Area' with a commitment to replace at regular intervals.

(c) Require that consideration be given to the introduction of a speed restricted zone (60mph?) within the Gloucester / Cheltenham M5 corridor (including the defined Noise Important Area), in order to achieve a substantial reduction both in noise and air pollution

4.3 With regard to proposed new housing areas, located within the M5 corridor, (Hardwick, Brookthorpe, Hunts Grove, Whaddon etc), the Parish Council requests that the Plan Review should:

(a) Require that a full assessment of potential for noise and air pollution from the M5 be undertaken before sites are selected and the precise boundaries of development are determined

(b) Require that where new sites in the vicinity of the motorway are selected a clear indication of appropriate measures required to mitigate noise and air pollution should be set out.

5.0 General Policy references

5.1 In addition to the above ,the Parish Council believes that references to these important issues should be made in the Report's general introduction (page 114 onwards) and in the Core Policies (page 178 onwards)

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 In conclusion living with motorway generated pollution (both noise and air quality) presents a most significant environmental concern that the community ranks high on the local and national agenda. The review of the Local Plan appears to be an excellent opportunity to clearly identify these issues and to press for policies and actions to improve the outcome. Upton Parish Council looks forward to working with the District Council to achieve this end.


Clerk to the Parish Council

16th January 2020