

WISLOE GREEN

With reference to your consultation process currently under way, I should like to comment on the above proposal.

I attended your display session at Slimbridge Village Hall. I found it to be a waste of time as nothing that was not contained on your website was available.

Accepting that our increasing population demands that more and more housing is made available, it also demands that more and more food is produced to satisfy that increase. Much of the land offered at Wisloe Green is Grade 2 Agricultural Land, a rarity in this part of the County where most is Grade 3 or below. Grade 2 is the most productive available hereabouts and as such should be retained for food production rather than for housing development.

Other considerations concerning this location are Pollution, Accessibility, Services and Impact.

Pollution. The site (approximately triangular) is bounded on its hypotenuse by the M.5 Motorway to the North-East as well as the Gloucester to Bristol main railway line. The prevailing wind is South-South West and as such pollutants normally blow across at least part of the land. Being flat, on quiet days noise pollution can and is considerable, especially if the wind is from the East. Engine pollutants, both chemical and particulates also invade the land and in spite of Government initiatives to encourage electric vehicles, these are a long way in the distance especially where heavy vehicles are concerned. In fact recent research shows that over 80% of electric vehicles are run on their inefficient back-up petrol engine and that most of that 80% have never been plugged into an electric point since purchase, reported as being due to a lack of accessible plug in points. The railway uses diesel traction and there are no plans at present to electrify this line. Both noise and vehicle pollutants would invariably increase as, with say 1500 houses on the site, (planned) there would undoubtedly be 3000 new vehicles (2 per house).

Accessibility. Bounded by the M.5 Motorway, Railway Line and A.38 Road, access to and from the site is already constrained by the roads around it and would become a great deal more so with an additional 3000 cars. Even improved access to the A.38 Road would not solve any of the problems as there are already bottle-necks at Gossington Bridge, Leathern Bottle and Stone if travelling South and at Cambridge if travelling North. A suggestion that a new Motorway access would be constructed seems to be a non-starter: it would take up a large amount of land (reducing house capacity) and would need access from both sides of the Motorway some of which is outside the site plan. As Junctions 12, 13 and 14 of the Motorway already suffer large hold-ups at peak times and as many, probably 50% of residents would still use local roads, this would seem to be something of a white elephant.

Services. As there is nothing on the plan to indicate what is proposed, I can only comment on what is available currently. Slimbridge School is currently over-subscribed and has no room to enlarge. Nor does it have any parking available. Recreational facilities offer one Public House within walking distance but on the "Wrong" side of the A.38. Local shops are few and far between and Supermarkets at Cam and Dursley are 'small' supermarkets. People would need to travel to shop unless a shopping centre was developed on site. This seems unlikely as 1500 houses would not justify it. With nothing more, residents would be forced to travel.

Impact. It was suggested that because the land is flat and well drained it would be easy to build houses quickly. The land is flat and does drain well which is one of the main reasons for it reaching Grade 2 status. That drainage is achieved due to the land being on a gravel seam which takes water away from the site to the lower end of the seam, around Catscastle and Double Bridges (West of Slimbridge) which regularly flood in winter. Currently water permeates into the aquifer steadily and evenly but, once 1500 houses were built with their attendant hard roads and surfaced parking areas (driveways etc), this steady permeation would cease, to be replaced by cascades of piped water. The drainage through Slimbridge was recently improved in an attempt to avoid flooding in and around the village but the main culverts were not improved in size or location and there is little doubt that water draining from Wisloe Green would have a massive effect 'downstream' (West) to lower lying land at and below Slimbridge. Flooding would increase, but not necessarily where it was caused. Gloucestershire and certainly Stroud District, offers much to those who visit the County (tourists). Many visit because of the Cotswolds and of course the view of

the Cotswold Escarpment is a popular one. But so is the view across the Severn Vale from various viewpoints and this site is directly below and in full view of the popular Frocester Hill Picnic Site, the Cam Long Down and Selsley Common. The small solar panel site between this site and the Railway Station and the larger solar farm at Cambridge both stick out like sore thumbs from these viewpoints and 1500 houses here would be much worse. There could be no hiding the site from view.

For these reasons I believe that this site should not, in the foreseeable future anyway, be proceeded with.

Throughout Stroud District there are a number of 'brownfield' sites so far apparently not considered. Certainly the land may be difficult and may contain contaminants but available modern methods can assist in overcoming these. Former Airfields at Aston Down and Knockdown (Tetbury) would seem better options than green field sites, as would that at Kemble (this may be in Cotswold District of course). However, co-operation between neighbouring Councils could produce the required amount of housing demanded by current Government.

And that is where some difficulty may stem from. Current thinking may well change at short notice with a change of Government (whatever colour) or even just with Government thinking. And there are currently many 'building sites' where permission is available but not started (many and varied reasons are given – I believe the main one being that 'buyers would be unable to afford them if we built them').

I throw this suggestion into the arena. Most of the land between A.38 Road and the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal is Graded 3 or below. A development has been agreed at Sharpness and (smaller) at Berkeley. There is a proposal for a third Severn Bridge across the Severn near Sharpness. This will need link roads. I suggest a link road to connect to Junction 13 M.5. this to run towards, say, the A.38 junction with The Perryway. The current link to A.38 could be utilised for this which has room to become a dual carriageway. A roundabout at the Perryway would allow a new dual carriageway to be developed approximately West where housing could be developed, initially hidden by the hill at Claypits, either as ribbon development or as larger conurbations. The road could be developed as needed and housing could be developed in a similar manner. This could be at the whim of Government demands and would provide first class access to all developments along it. Once close to the Canal, any possible flooding could be catered for by small pumps pumping directly into the canal (a bonus for Bristol Water). On reaching the western side of Slimbridge village, a slip road, raised over the canal so that bridge swings could be eliminated, could be included to offer the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) a much improved access compared with the very restricted roads through Slimbridge Village. With a £5million development at WWT already under way, this would provide a bonus for both the now very commercial WWT and Slimbridge Village itself. The new road could continue towards Sharpness where it could pick up the development there, provide access from the North to any 'new' Severn Crossing and could then swing to the South of Berkeley and connect, after some distance, to an end on meeting at A.38 with the connection to Junction 14 M.5., providing a South connection to all aspects above. I believe that everyone knows that Junction 14 needs improvement anyway!

My Suggestion causes little disruption to the area as a whole, provides a solution to demands from Government whatever they may be as development could be ribbon, estate, village or town; would provide a dedicated access to both new development and some existing restricted access sites and could be developed as and when. It would utilise poorer agricultural land and, if properly configured and drained, could prove invaluable to both improving adjacent land and increasing water supplies towards Bristol Water. If seen to its conclusion it would also provide access from both North and South to developments and the 'new bridge' or at least provide another route between M.5. junctions 13 and 14 whenever a diversion became necessary and avoid the turmoil which now occurs on the A.38 Road. And all development along this route would be at a greater distance from Cotswold Escarpment viewpoints to have far less effect than any other currently under review. A tourism bonus.

