

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 January 2020 13:32
To: _WEB_Local Plan
Subject: Comments on the local plan.
Attachments: Wisloe Green v2.docx

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I've included the same comments as an attachment.

Wisloe Green

These are my personal views on Wisloe Green. Hopefully, councillors may find some of it useful and perhaps support or reinforce their beliefs.

The development at Wisloe Green has its origin in government policy of ensuring adequate housing delivery for the entire country. With this in mind, Stroud District Council has to find sites for houses within its district. It has sought suitable sites and has asked landowners to put forward sites. Wisloe Green was one of those places.

It is not possible to seek to change either the government policy or suggest that Stroud District Council fight that policy. The council has decided for good or ill to concentrate their new housing sites in several significant developments. Due to the AONB status of a large part of the Stroud District, most of these developments will take place in the Vale of Berkeley. Again this is not possible to rail against

this.

Gloucestershire County Council and the Ernest Cook Trust are the landowners of the Wisloe Green site. It is a large site that will double the number of dwellings in the parish of Slimbridge.

Currently, the parish consists of three hamlets, Gossington, Cambridge and, the more substantial part Slimbridge itself. The new development will be a large concentration of houses and will dramatically alter the parish that has evolved organically over the last thousand years or more.

The addition of a large number of new dwellings will undoubtedly change the character of the parish. The integration of the latest and current parts of the parish will be no trivial task, and there is no plan to achieve this. There is undoubtedly a risk of developing a split community, particularly if the demography of the new properties does not match the current population. Community cohesion is an important thing, and there has been little work to show how to carry out this integration, and what resources will be needed for the integration to be successful.

Community integration will be made more difficult due to geographic and transport issues. The current scheme involves all road traffic leaving the site via either Slimbridge Roundabout or a second roundabout onto the A38 south of Cambridge. Thus most residents of Wisloe Green's only encounter with the current parish may be to drive through Cambridge. The provision of community facilities within Wisloe Green will discourage integration as there will be no need for either community to use each other facilities and meet.

Transport is a problematic issue at this site. There is no current bus service on the Dursley Road itself, and whether bus companies will choose to drive into the site to offer services is a moot point. Walking to Cam and Dursley Station is difficult due to the presence of the M5 and the narrowness and lack of pavement of the road bridge over the railway line. There is a suggestion of a pedestrian bridge over the motorway, but at the cost of at least three million pounds, it will not appear before residents move into Wisloe Green. The only practical means of transport open to most new residents will be by car. These vehicles will access the main transport network by Slimbridge Roundabout, which is already busy. Those wishing to use the motorway will proceed north to Junction 13, and getting to Junction 14 takes longer, and the junction itself is overloaded already with extensive queues at busy times. Furthermore, they

will also have to compete with the new traffic from the development at Berkeley Sharpness, who will be accessing the motorway by the same junctions.

Very few of the occupants of the site will be working close enough to walk or cycle to work. It should be born in mind that cycling provision on the A38 is patchy to non-existent. New industrial developments, close to the site, are unlikely to be ready before the first residents arrive, and even so, ensuring that the profile of people available at Wisloe Green matches the requirements of these new local industries will not be easy.

Residents at the furthest north end of the site will be about half a mile from even the community facilities that are mooted in the plan and so will probably be using their cars within the development. The design of the site with only one or two vehicular accesses for all the residents may well cause problems at busy times of the day, including school runs and commuting.

It should also be born in mind that in the event of closure of the motorway, the A38 is a relief road. The A38's use as a relief road will reduce the opportunities for traffic management on the A38, and if the closure coincides with commuting traffic coming to or from Wisloe Green, problems will arise.

The proximity of the motorway to the site will necessitate noise protection measures in the form of fences or mounds on the east of the site. However, this will not protect the residents against pollution from the motorway traffic, for example, nano-particulates, which would be a health issue.

The site to the east of the Dursley road is flat and has little environmental diversity. There are some large oak and ash trees to the North of the site. The flatness of the site presents problems when dealing with the removal of liquid waste and surface water. Severn Trent already knows the Dursley Road to the North of the site, adjacent to Sunnyside, floods in heavy rain. Remedial work diverts some excess water into my ditches, but water still carries on down the road up to the A38. Building on the site will increase the run-off, so a careful design will be needed to prevent this problem from reoccurring.

A far more significant problem is sewage.

The entire parish of Slimbridge has had problems with sewage for many years, and recently, Severn Trent Water has spent a large amount of money to ameliorate these problems. However, this has left two legacies. The current residents of the parish are susceptible to sewage issues as it brings back memories of sewage bubbling up in their gardens and homes. The current system works for now, but clearly, the addition of this number of residents will mean a whole new scheme to accommodate this. Current residents have grave concerns that they will suffer a return to the old problems or worse.

Regrettably, how these problems are to be solved is not clear to the residents, current or future. Consultation with Severn Trent does not appear in the plans so far. Because of the previous issues, it should be mandatory, even just for the current residents' peace of mind, that a definitive and costed sewage disposal scheme should be in place before any decision as to the suitability of the site. Sewage is not something that can be swept under the carpet.

The site is mostly on agricultural land, whilst that owned by the county council is grade three grassland; the land owned by Ernest Cook Trust is grade two arable land. Land of this quality has a presumption of conservation upon it due to its superior food production. It is against both planning and current conservation philosophy to destroy this irreplaceable national resource. The County Council's land is typical of the area and skylarks nest within it but is of little ecological value otherwise. However, there are badgers near the site on my land to the North, and bats are in the area.

The site is not close to the WWT or the Severn; however, it should be born in mind that lapwings and other birds currently use this land for feeding before returning to roost on the Severn.

The current development is a 'garden village.' However, its size means it is at best the very smallest a garden village can be. The concept of a garden village, of which a development at Cullompton is a good example, is meant to reproduce an existing community but build it all in one go rather than let it evolve over hundreds of years. While government subsidies are available for the Garden Village concept, the size of the development may well prevent it from reaping the full benefits for its residents.

It may seem slightly strange that the Ernest Cook Trust, which is an agricultural education charity, should seek to build on the very land that it holds dear. Undoubtedly the receipts from this venture will be of great use to them, which may well explain their enthusiasm. Gloucester County Council is clearly in need of money, and this is an

opportunity for them to transform a council farm into much-needed capital. The taxpayers own the land, albeit through the county council, and at least some of its use should be for the public good, for example, allotments, parks and amenity areas for the new development rather than just building over all of it.

If the garden village concept falls by the wayside, this will be a reasonably standard phased development probably built by two or three different building firms. This model has problems associated with it, particularly with the provision of community facilities and monies, which should appear as the development proceeds.

Building firms as part of their regular business practice will try and delay or avoid their responsibilities altogether in this regard, and despite the presence on the development plans of these facilities and monies, it is of grave concern there will be a large number of houses with no community facilities for a long time.

There is a plan for a new school on the site. Undoubtedly this will not be built for some time, necessitating the residents trying to get their children to the already oversubscribed Slimbridge School or other local schools. Furthermore, the provision of a second primary school in Slimbridge will actively detract from community cohesion in the parish.

It would be a better plan to compulsorily purchase the land between the school and the A38 and also, if necessary, expand the school land south into property already owned by Ernest Cook Trust. This expansion would then allow the development of the school to accommodate the pupils from Wisloe Green with the benefits of economies of scale and will enable a car park to be built, lancing the long-standing boil of parking outside the school.

In conclusion, this is a pretty poor site for development. It has a large number of issues associated with it, and I would be surprised if better sites were not available.

I live next to the site. I categorically promise that no houses will be built on my land while I'm still alive despite getting some offers!. My personal opinion is that this development will not be beneficial for the current residents of Slimbridge or the future residents of Wisloe Green. However, their well-being is apparently of minor importance compared to the benefits to all the other parties involved.

I would like to see this development, not going ahead, as happened in 1997 when this land was put forward and rejected.