

STROUD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW INSPECTORS MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Matter 2 Statement
Ecotricity Group Ltd

Matter 2 Spatial Strategy and Site Selection Methodology

Issue 2 – Does the Plan set out an appropriate spatial strategy, taking into account reasonable alternatives? Has the site selection process used an appropriate methodology that is based on proportionate evidence?

(Please note that these questions relate to the overall spatial strategy and the site selection methodology. Further questions on unmet needs and specific site allocation are set out under later matters.)

Vision and objectives

1. Does the Plan set out a suitably positive and realistic vision for the future development of the District as a whole?

2.1 Yes, the vision sets out aspirations for the future development of the District. The vision is based on the previous vision as set out in the 2015 Local Plan, but this has been refined to take into account new evidence, consultation responses to the Plan throughout its preparation as well as national and local objectives, particularly in relation to the aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030.

3. Have the seven strategic objectives (S01, S01a and S02-S06), included in Chapter 2 of the Plan, been positively prepared, are they justified and are they consistent with the overall vision and the priority issues facing the District?

2.2 Yes, the strategic objectives have been informed and reflect the 40 Key Issues identified at Pages 11-16.

Spatial strategy

The Framework states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places (paragraph 20). Chapter 2 of the Plan sets out the Development Strategy and a number of 'development strategy headlines' are also set out in text (page 23).

The Plan identifies, in the supporting text for Core Policy CP2, that the objectively assessed needs of the District for the period 2020-2040 will be met through a strategy which concentrates most development at a series of strategic sites to be 'located at the principal settlements within the District, at new settlements and within the key employment property market areas...'. Smaller scale

development is expected to come forward in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. However, the policy mainly just lists the proposed strategic growth and development locations.

Core Policy CP4 is described as 'Making Places: a Spatial Vision for Stroud District'. It sets out a number of development principles which appear to be covered by other policies within the Plan.

4. Is the spatial strategy justified by robust evidence and does it promote a sustainable pattern of development within the District, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework? Is the Council decision as to why this development distribution option was selected, sufficiently clear?

2.3 Yes, the spatial strategy reflects and aims to respond the key issues identified in Chapter 2. The Overall Strategy Headlines set out the key aspirations of the plan and look to achieve sustainable development within the District. At 2.3 within Chapter 2, which relates to 'an introduction to the development strategy', it sets out the testing of options that has taken place throughout the consultation stages of the SDLPR to refine the strategy.

6. Is the strategy consistent with the settlement hierarchy and is the scale of development proposed at relevant settlements justified?

2.4 Policy CP3 looks for proposals to be located in accordance with the District's settlement hierarchy to ensure that that development reduces the need to travel and promotes sustainable communities based on the services and facilities that are available in each settlement. This is consistent with the overall strategy within the SDLPR as outlined at the Overall Strategy Headlines.

2.5 Ecotricity Group Ltd are the promoters of Site Allocation PS20 at Stonehouse, and PS06 at Nailsworth.

PS20

2.6 In relation to the proposed Eco-Park at PS20, Stonehouse is identified as a 'First Tier' Settlement and 'Accessible Local Service Centre' which will be '*the primary focus for growth and development to safeguard and enhance their strategic roles as employment and service centres. They will continue to provide significant levels of jobs and homes, together with supporting community facilities and infrastructure to meet their economic potential in the most sustainable way.*' The supporting text highlights that the purpose of the policy is to promote sustainable development and growth at sustainable locations, which is consistent with the overall strategy of the Plan.

2.7 In terms of the location of the site, it is noted that the site lies beyond the Settlement Development Limit of Stonehouse. However, the proposed development is well related to this settlement and its juxta position with emerging development to the north of the A419 (the new Great Oldbury residential development) will ensure that it enjoys a direct relationship with Stonehouse and will have the ability to exploit and utilise the existing services and facilities that are already associated with this settlement

and those that are proposed as part of the proposals; thereby creating a sustainable development that enables a more cohesive community.

- 2.8 The SDLPR at Page 95 recognises that as a “Tier 1” settlement, Stonehouse is one of Stroud District’s main towns, a provider of strategic services and facilities and an important employment hub. It highlights that Stonehouse is one of the District’s employment hotspots and, with its good rail and road links, it is well placed for future growth to meet the District’s strategic needs. It goes on to state that the growth of a new employment area close to the M5 Junction 13 will reinforce the town’s role as one of the District’s most important employment hubs. The allocation of the site is consistent with the settlement hierarchy and the overriding spatial strategy for development.
- 2.9 The Local Plan also supports the M5 Corridor as a key focus for growth. One of the Strategic Objectives (SO2) is for the development of employment sites in the M5/A38 corridor, which will mean that development can be located close to strategic road and rail networks and in places that business wants to be. It will create the opportunity to provide a range of units from large warehousing and distribution units down to offices and smaller industrial units, possibly as startup businesses. It notes that Planning for employment together with housing also provides the opportunity for residents to work locally and to reduce out-commuting levels. The provision of employment development within the M5 ‘Growth Zone’ is also supported by GFirst LEP within its Strategic Economic Plan and Draft Local Industrial Strategy, as set out in previous representations and within the SOCG for PS20.

PS06

- 2.10 Nailsworth is identified as a Tier 2 Settlement. Tier 2 Settlements are Market Towns and Large Villages that have the ability to support sustainable patterns of living in the District because of the facilities, services and employment opportunities they each offer. Policy CP3 notes that *‘they have the potential to provide for modest levels of jobs and homes, including through sites allocated in this Plan, in order to help sustain and, where necessary, enhance their services and facilities, promoting better levels of self containment and viable, sustainable communities. Further development will be achieved through strategic allocations, development within settlement development limits, town centres and employment sites and (exceptionally) adjacent to settlement development limits, subject to fulfilling the criteria set out in the Plan’s Core and Delivery policies.’*
- 2.11 Site PS06, which is allocated for 90 dwellings, is within the settlement development limit of Nailsworth and consistent with the overall strategy for sustainable development, as well as the development of brownfield sites. The scale of development is also consistent with the role of Nailsworth within the settlement hierarchy.

8. Does the spatial strategy make effective use of previously developed land and is this based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base?

2.12 One of the priority issues at Page 12 is to *'maximise the potential of brownfield and underused sites to contribute to housing supply'*. Throughout the SDLPR, a number of brownfield sites are allocated for development.

9. Do Core Strategy Policies CP2 and CP4 take a sufficiently strategic approach to clearly define the development strategy for the District as a whole? Should consideration be given to a new policy encompassing the elements of the District wide spatial strategy that are set out in chapter 2 of the Plan, such as the key development strategy headlines?

2.13 The development strategy headlines are set out within Chapter 2 and reflect the key issues outlined. Whilst the content of Policies CP2 and CP4, as well as the supporting text, are relatively light in terms of the overarching strategy, it clearly follows from Chapter 2 which sets this out in detail. Policy CP3 sets out the Settlement Hierarchy, which again reflects the key headlines.

14. Overall, will the spatial strategy meet the overarching strategic objectives and achieve the Council's vision?

2.14 One of the priority issues is to ensure new development is located in the right place, supported by the right services and infrastructure to create sustainable development, including by:

- concentrating housing development at locations where there is currently the best access to services, facilities, jobs and infrastructure;
- creating new sustainable communities at locations where development can transform existing access to services and infrastructure;
- concentrating employment growth within the A38/M5 corridor and at locations in tandem with housing growth

2.15 In terms of employment development, the development strategy headlines highlight at Paragraph 2.3.7 that, as well as the 2 new settlements, further strategic employment growth will be concentrated at accessible locations within the Rail/A38/M5 corridor. The allocation of 10ha of employment uses at PS20 helps to meet this overall objective. The M5 Growth Zone is also a key priority of GFirst LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and Draft Local Industrial Strategy, and the SDLPR Spatial Strategy, and the allocation of the site at PS20 helps to support this overall vision.

2.16 The allocation of Site PS06 for 90 dwellings also supports this overall objective as it is located within the settlement of Nailsworth, a Tier 2 settlement within the hierarchy, where growth is supported due to the access of services, facilities, growth and infrastructure.

Settlement hierarchy

The Council has produced a Settlement Role and Function Study (2014) (EB71) and an Update (2018) (EB72) to inform the settlement hierarchy and the development strategy. The Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy in Core Policy CP3.

15. Overall, is the settlement hierarchy and how it relates to the development strategy clearly explained within the Plan and is the approach justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

2.17 The supporting text to Policy CP3 highlights how it relates to the overall strategy for development. Paragraph 2.9.15 highlights that one of the primary aims of establishing a settlement hierarchy is to promote sustainable communities by bringing housing, jobs and services closer together in an attempt to maintain and promote the viability of local facilities and reduce the need to travel to services and facilities elsewhere. It goes on to note that the settlement hierarchy *'can help to achieve this by concentrating housing growth in those settlements that already have a range of services (as long as there is capacity for growth), and restricting it in those that do not. The development strategy aims to prioritise growth at sustainable locations, in accordance with the settlement hierarchy set out here in Core Policy CP3'*. This provides the justification as to how it relates to the overall strategy, and is consistent with the national, as well as local objectives to achieve sustainable development.