

**STROUD LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**  
**CAMPAIN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE) RESPONSE, 5 DECEMBER 2017**

CPRE Stroud and Berkeley Vale District committees would like to offer the following observations in contribution to Stroud District Council's review of the Local Plan.

The Stroud CPRE district covers an area from Upton St Leonards down to Horsley and includes Stonehouse and Stroud as well as the mainly upland areas between Stroud and Cotswold District to the east. The Berkeley Vale district covers the Severn Vale to the west. Between them, these two district committees represent the geographical area covered by Stroud District Council.

**CPRE Stroud** recognises the need for small numbers (5-7) of houses within some of the villages in the valleys and uplands surrounding the town, and supports the individual parish councils in their comments on individual sites. Parish Councils are best placed to choose whether more housing is needed and where it should be placed and the committee therefore refrains from commenting on these individually.

Where more housing is required, CPRE is supportive of small clusters of around 5-7 affordable houses within the village envelope or in exception sites immediately adjacent to the settlement boundaries. This will allow the villages to grow naturally and meet the needs of its local people for affordable housing and to attract young people to live there. The elderly will also thereby have the ability to downsize within their own communities.

Large developments of higher numbers of dwellings on green field sites outside the village settlement boundaries is not desirable for many reasons:

1. Such developments are unsustainable in almost every way as residents would almost always have to drive considerable distances for work and services such as schools, doctors etc.
2. The infrastructure (especially the roads) does not exist to support such development and in most cases cannot be put in place without major damage to the landscape. In all sites earmarked as possible sites for development, the plan must take account of current building styles and density, landscape issues and traffic and parking matters.
3. Most of these villages lie within or immediately adjacent to the AONB which deserves (and has) special protection by virtue of its unique landscape status. CPRE strongly supports the preservation and enhancement of this status. Development must take account the protection afforded by the AONB to the land within it and also adjacent to it. , Special care must also be taken with Conservation Areas and any National Nature Reserves, SSSIs and SACs.
4. Development must respect the scattered style of buildings in small village settlements and must consider seriously the landscape of hills and valleys where views are so important. Materials and design of any new buildings should reflect the local style..
5. We believe that settlement boundaries should only be changed through the Neighbourhood Planning process whereby local residents can be in charge of the future shape of their towns/villages.
6. Similarly we believe that individual sites proposed for development (former SALA sites) should only be considered for development through the voice of the Neighbourhood

Development Planning process. Such a process may reveal that some small villages may welcome exception sites for a small group of affordable homes for the young or the elderly.

**CPRE Berkeley Vale** endorses the comments made by CPRE Stroud. Berkeley Vale District does not include large swathes of upland AONB but does include the Cotswold escarpment within Stroud District Council area, excluding the Stroud valleys, as well as the land between that and the Severn. The Vale includes all the main north south lines of communication and is therefore a prime target for development.

The Vale includes the Cotswold Way, the Severn Way, Slimbridge WFWT, the Stroud canal and the Sharpness canal. It has a well used network of recreational cycle routes including hill climbs. All these are popular tourist and recreational routes bringing business to rural areas. It is important to remember this when planning more development. When viewed from above the Vale has a delightful jigsaw of undulating field patterns with trees, hedges and woodland.

Developments within the Vale impact on the views out from the AONB and of the AONB and need to be carefully sited, sensitively planned with green infrastructure and screened by trees. The colour of brickwork and roofing of new developments need to blend into the landscape as they are visible from above – rather than coming straight out of a developer's reference library.

We are concerned about the accuracy of the forecast need for new housing given the current effects of Brexit on net immigration figures<sup>21</sup>.

We do not propose to comment all the proposed sites in the Local Plan but will raise points that should be borne in mind when considering any future development sites.

Eastington – land B1 south west of Alkerton – this area is undeveloped green field, it would be better to site any development to the north west of Alkerton where there is existing housing and proposed developments. Site A will be visible from Frocester Hill (AONB).

Stonehouse – D1 and D2 at Junction 13. Unless there are massive infrastructure improvements to this junction it will become completely gridlocked with the traffic from West of Stonehouse development. It is already very busy with commuter traffic in both directions which stacks on the motorway. Visually this area is an attractive stretch of green farmland which is can be seen from the motorway.

Cam – Cam/Dursley railway station needs much more parking. When the current developments under construction are completed parking will become more acute and the junction of Box Road with the A4135 will need major improvement. If the proposed sites are developed in addition to the current developments, the capacity of the schools and medical services will need to be expanded. Is there room at Rednock for these extra students?

Coaley – access to Coaley is through lanes. It is about to have another housing development built putting more pressure on the lanes and Cam/Dursley station parking. There are better places to build than this.

Dursley – Site A. This is on the wrong side of Dursley. Traffic already queues through Dursley in the morning and evening. Better to concentrate development on the Cam side.

Hardwicke – The southward spread of Gloucester down the A38 should have a defined boundary. We suggest that the line of Church Lane, Hardwick, to the canal should be it.

Berkeley – No more development should be allowed in Berkeley before the junction with the A38 /B4066 has been improved. When considering any future development it is important not to kill the golden goose of tourism with badly sited development.

Sharpness – The same traffic problems with the A38 apply. Access to most areas round Sharpness is through narrow lanes so any development should access via the B4066. It should also take into account that the current Local Plan is promoting Sharpness as a tourist destination and that it is neighbour to the SSSI/Ramsar site at Slimbridge so development should not happen to the north west (A 5 & A4). Sharpness should not be allowed to join up to Berkeley so the A2 area is too large; likewise A3 will impact heavily on Wanswell. The countryside around Berkeley and Sharpness is attractive and has a good network of footpaths which can be accessed from the proposed tourist sites in Sharpness.

Frampton-on-Severn – is listed as Tier 2 and Kingswood as Tier 3. This seems illogical as they both have much the same local services and accessibility. Perhaps Frampton-on-Severn should revert to Tier 3.

Whitminster – development should be allowed only on the north side of the village. Any building on sites A and B on the high ground to the south west of the village would impact on the spectacular views of and from the Industrial Heritage zone of the canal and the Frome (more tourism). We understand the sewage disposal system will require extra capacity if there is more development.