



Public Document Pack
STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the next meeting of the Environment Committee, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

4. **Public Questions (Pages 3 - 4)**

The Chair of the Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS

Noon on Friday, 8 September 2023

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services,
Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and can be sent by email to

Democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

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Public Questions to Environment Committee.

Questions from Mr Steve Willetts

1. **Background:** The Local Plan Inspection and the request to pause by SDC following the letter from the Inspectors and specifically the pause letter from the Chief Executive to the Inspectors, the press release and the proposed timing to deliver a detailed plan in that letter where the CE says “The Council proposes to provide you with a document setting out the detail of this work with relevant milestones, within 10 working days of the date of this letter i.e. by the 12th September 2023”

Question one: Which senior Council Officers and Democratic Leaders were involved, what was the process used and meetings held including any external bodies consulted following the receipt of the Inspectors' letter to agree and sign off the request for a pause, the contents of the letter and press release and how have these meetings and decisions been minuted for public scrutiny?

Reply

Which senior Council Officers and Democratic Leaders were involved, what was the process used and meetings held including any external bodies consulted following the receipt of the Inspectors' letter to agree and sign off the request for a pause, the contents of the letter and press release and how have these meetings and decisions been minuted for public scrutiny?

The Chief Executive received the Inspectors letter 4th August 2023 at the start of the Summer recess period. No committee meetings are held during the month of August. Unfortunately, several senior Officers, the Leader of the Council and Chair of Environment Committee were away on planned annual leave.

The Chief Executive briefed the Chair of Environment Committee and the Leader of the Council on the Leader's return on 23rd August. This was followed with a briefing of Alliance Group Leaders 29th August and an All-Member Briefing 30th August, these meetings were not minuted.

The Head of Planning Strategy and Economic Development and the Interim Planning Strategy Manager discussed the contents of the Inspectors' letter with the Sharpness and Wisloe promoters so that they could input into the proposed Action Plan, to address the concerns raised by the Inspectors relating to those two sites.

Through these discussions and under the Officer Scheme of Delegation B1.1 and B1.2, the Chief Executive had the authority to request a pause of the Examination.

2. **Background:** The Local Plan Inspection and the request to pause by SDC following the letter from the Inspectors and specifically the statement on Radio Gloucestershire by Cllr. Turner where she said on Tuesday 5th September on the David Smith morning show and I quote "70% of the

homes can be delivered with no impact at all on the motorway network" and that other local plans "are recognised as sound with that kind of percentage".

Question two: Referencing that 70% figure, which allocations and associated house numbers do not impact the motorway junctions and why is it deemed they do not impact at all, which allocations and house numbers do impact and why and which are the other local plans referred to that are deemed as sound with that type of percentage?

Reply

The District Council is not a highway authority, to understand the highways issues relating to the Local and Strategic Road Network the Council is required to consult the County Council and National Highways. The assessment of the potential impacts on motorway junctions is undertaken using a 'SATURN' based software system that uses complex industry and government standards and calculations that are supported by the County Council and National Highways.

The modelling is very complex and the assessments are set out in the Local Plan Examination Library. Given the high number of sites not impacting Junction 12 and 14, it would be far simpler to state which sites the modelling has determined as having a material impact on the junctions.

Junction 12 is impacted by sites G1, G2 and PS30. Junction 14 is impacted by sites PS34, PS36 and PS37. The Council was asked by the Inspectors during the examination process to prepare a summary of the expected housing supply which was not identified specifically as having a material impact on these junctions. This shows a cumulative total of 8632 dwellings coming forward over the plan period. This can be compared with the total housing need identified in the plan for the 20-year period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2040 (640 pa over 20 years) of 12,600 units. The trajectory demonstrates that nearly 70% of the housing need for the plan period can be delivered without any reliance upon the sites related to the M5 improvement works.