

Peter Gilbert  
Planning Strategy Manager  
Stroud District Council

Dear Mr Gilbert

## CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

My Council has now had an opportunity to respond to the consultation about the various alternative strategies proposed by Stroud District Council to shape the future of Stroud District.

My Council did not wish to deal with the suggested alternatives one by one, nor did it wish to respond in the online format, but prefers to set out its views and response as follows:

On the wider view of the Core Strategy, there was some acknowledgement that a large single development plus significant increases of homes in a number of areas in the near-ish vicinity of KS might result in enhanced use of the village's facilities (like bus services and shops) as people pass through, but any likely through traffic increase would also need to take account of the narrow bridge along Ryeford Road. However, the general feeling at the full Parish Council Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> March was for a dispersal option of some kind.

It was agreed that building new large 1,000 or 2,000 settlements would not help the vitality and sustainability of the numerous villages in the district, but that it would be better to have new batches of mixed development dwellings in many of the existing settlements to achieve this aim.

The Parish Council has adopted a Parish Plan which in 2007 suggested a need for affordable housing for various types of household. That need has not yet been met, nor disappeared. Our Parish needs dwellings for people with young families to help sustain the school and a vibrant community, and for older people who wish to remain living in the parish, be it in sheltered accommodation or dwellings more suited to their needs. These two types of people are more likely to use local facilities than those who can afford larger properties who would almost certainly commute out to work - and shop.

KS is a medium sized village with good amenities, but as time goes on and habits and policies change we have seen the number of shops and employers reduce. Four shops have gone in the last ten years and no new ones have opened. The Post Office is now within The Cooperative store with the loss of another retail outlet. The pay phones are going and the pub has closed (we hope only temporarily) and The Bell Inn at Selsley looks like going the same way. King's Stanley parish is heading towards the same state that Leonard Stanley is in for shopping and a village centre. We will only be able to protect the amenities if they are used.

The Parish Plan calls on us to "retain the essentials" and provide a "balanced community with homes, education and employment opportunities for all".

In the changing world, we can only achieve the sustainability of KS as a fully functioning community by increasing the number of people in the village and thereby increasing the number of "service users" for the shops, pubs, schools, buses and playing fields.

My Council strongly believes that KS would benefit from an additional 150-200 housing units. If we were to have a smaller number of houses, we may find that we get additional people but no additional facilities and little increase in the use of local facilities.

The people who best support local facilities and amenities are those with young families and older members of the community. These demographic groups are those who are much more likely to use local shops, buses etc and we believe that the housing units provided should be designed to attract these people. This is likely to mean a higher percentage of social housing and smaller housing units. We may also then get better consideration for improvements to local services such as bus routes, road maintenance, playing fields, enhanced recycling, cycle routes etc.

The Parish Council recognises a need for more in the way of local employment opportunities which could be provided for in the Stanley Mill complex if proposals to develop it for both housing and employment uses come to fruition.

In favouring a strategic dispersal option, neither the Parish Council nor parishioners want to be forced to accept unwelcome types of development, nor overdevelopment for the sake of developmental ease, as it will be important to maintain the particular character of the area. Bearing in mind the NIMBY factor, it will be extremely important as to exactly where and what type of development is ultimately implemented. Parishes like ours, which could take more dwellings, will need the District Council's full support to ensure that the right development is ultimately located in the right place.

The Parish Council's view is that to do nothing is to allow the village to continue to decline further into being a dormitory village with few local facilities and little chance of service improvements.

Yours sincerely

E J Roberts  
Clerk to the Council