

GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL – PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee:	Planning
Date:	5 March 2024
Subject:	Response to a Major Planning Application within Stroud District Council – Land at Whaddon
Report by:	Adam Gooch, Planning Policy Manager
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Site location plan Appendix 2: Illustrative masterplan Appendix 3: Draft response to planning application

Purpose of Report

This report seeks Planning Committees approval to make a response to a planning application in Stroud District Council’s administrative area for development of land at Whaddon.

Recommendations

That the response to the planning application provided at Appendix 3 be approved and submitted to the case officer at Stroud District Council.

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Land at Whaddon is located to the south east of Gloucester City, in Stroud District Council’s (SDC) administrative area. The site is bound to the east by the A4173 Stroud Road, to the south by the M5 motorway and Naas Lane, and to the west by the Gloucester to Bristol railway line. To the north the site abuts open fields. The site location plan is provided at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The planning application seeks outline planning permission for up to 2,550 new dwellings, with supporting infrastructure including a local centre, ‘community core’, transport modal interchange, primary and secondary schools, open space, watercourse enhancement measures to Daniel’s Brook, drainage infrastructure, parking and supporting infrastructure and facilities. Access points would be provided in three locations from the A4173 Stroud Road and one from Naas Lane. The illustrative masterplan is provided at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 Land at Whaddon has been identified in the draft Stroud District Local Plan Review (SDLPR) as ‘safeguarded’ to meet unmet needs from Gloucester, should it be required and provided it is consistent with the approved strategy of the Cheltenham, Gloucester, and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy Review (now the Strategic and Local Plan, or SLP). The site subject to this planning application forms the largest part of the proposed safeguarded land, but not all of it.
- 1.3 The Stroud District Local Plan Review (SDLPR) examination is currently ‘paused’ to allow additional work to be undertaken to address concerns relating to the impact of proposed site allocations on the highway network, including junctions 12 and 14 of the M5.

1.5 SDC has engaged with Gloucester City Council, and the SLP authorities more widely, through the preparation of the SDLPR, under the legal 'duty to cooperate'. The SLP authorities responded to the formal 'Publication' stage in July 2021 (under Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). Through this, concern was expressed regarding the potential impact of development of land at Whaddon on the immediate and wider highway network, but the principle of the safeguarding of the site was supported, should these matters be addressed to the satisfaction of the statutory highways' bodies (Gloucestershire County Council and National Highways). This position was reiterated through a 'Statement of Common Ground' between the SLP authorities and Stroud District Council in February 2023, in support of the examination, along with a commitment to continue to work together.

2.0 CONSIDERATION

2.1 As mentioned earlier, the draft SDLPR safeguards Land at Whaddon, should it be required, and should it be in accordance with the SLP. The SLP is at an early stage of preparation, with consultation currently underway, which sets out a draft Vision and Strategic Objectives, and asks a series of questions regarding the principles, opportunities, and priorities the Plan could address. As part of this process, the councils are also undertaking a 'call for sites', whereby landowners, developers and the community can submit sites for the councils to assess for their development potential.

2.2 This feedback will be used, along with new evidence, to inform a 'Preferred Options' SLP, which will include a preferred strategy, proposed site allocations and draft development management policies, to be published for consultation in Spring 2025. This will then be followed by the 'Publication' of the Plan and submission to the Secretary of State for examination in public.

2.3 It is not therefore possible to confirm whether Land at Whaddon is required, and if it would meet the SLP strategy. Importantly, this includes the consideration of site alternatives.

2.4 The City Council remains concerned about the impact of the proposal on the local and wider highway network, on its own and in combination with other sites proposed for allocation on the edge of Gloucester City. This concern is shared by the SDLPR Inspectors who have paused the examination in order that further evidence regarding the impact and potential interventions that would address those impacts.

2.5 In light of the above, it is not considered possible for Gloucester City Council to support this planning application, which is considered premature. The relative merits of the site, in combination with other sites identified for allocation by SDC, needs to be considered through the ongoing examination of the SDLPR.