

Submission to the SGC Core Strategy inspection in support ...



On behalf of the members of weLoveAlmondsbury.

Almondsbury villagers were alerted to the importance of the South Glos Core Strategy by a proposal and initial public consultation to develop up to 140 new dwellings in the middle of the existing village. The village currently comprises 204 dwellings in the central area of the village beneath the A38 hillside.

An initial public meeting of 150 people quickly followed the consultation meeting and voted to form an organization to protect the village environment. WeLoveAlmondsbury (wLA) was formed and has now been incorporated as a limited company. We have 296 signed up members from the village and surrounding area.

After various sub-committees had met, a second public meeting of 150 people was held and voted to ratify our action plans. These included examining the Core Strategy and the process of Neighbourhood Planning. We have met with the Parish Council twice now to share our thoughts.

On examination of the Core Strategy along with the Dec 2011 Green Belt strategy review on behalf of weLoveAlmondsbury, we fully support its conclusions for the area and look forward to working closely with South Gloucestershire on a more detailed DPD for the area in the future.

The community particularly values the Green Belt around it and we refer to a few of the points in the recent review which we strongly support...

The Green Belt review suggested that major development in the area would be unsustainable due to its location which inhibits connectivity with Bristol and public transport provision; it is unlikely to be improved due to the terrain.

Retaining the green belt and the current development boundaries will serve to protect the integrity of the village in terms of its visual amenity and open countryside aspects. Almondsbury has been developed piecemeal over the past 60 years by around 50% using infill sites without destroying the essential shape around its designated conservation area.

Preserving our green spaces which provide amenity to villagers, and the general public in the case of the hillside. Our hillside is recognised as visually important to a wider area as well as to the village and its conservation area.

Specific points in the Core Strategy itself which reinforce these views and for which we offer our support include...

1.39 In promoting this Strategy for Development, the Council has sought to limit the impact of new housing development on the Green Belt. The Council remains in principle opposed to significantly reducing the Green Belt to accommodate land for housing growth per se.

2.31 A number of rural settlements are within the River Severn flood plain, while others are within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or Green Belt. All villages have and continue to experience the impact of 'urban sprawl' while coping with a decline in local services and facilities, poor access to local jobs, and a lack of affordable housing.

Managing Future Development

Concentrating the majority of new development to take advantage of existing services and facilities and higher levels of accessibility

Locating development where it will provide the opportunity to minimise the need to travel and allow safe and convenient access to services by walking, cycling and public transport

Recognising and protecting the identity and heritage of existing communities

Supporting local housing needs and services in villages

Protecting the Green Belt and the countryside from inappropriate development

Providing a range of infrastructure, together with integration and access, in step with new development

Managing the Environment and Heritage

Conserving and enhancing the character and distinctiveness of the district's heritage assets and maximising their contribution to quality of place

Conserving and enhancing the district's distinctive landscapes, natural environmental resources and biodiversity

4.5 The strategy therefore focuses development in the locations where essential infrastructure is in place or planned. This will be achieved with minimal loss of Green Belt land.

John Mclevy
On behalf of – we Love Almondsbury.

29 May 2012