

HANHAM DISTRICT GREEN BELT CONSERVATION SOCIETY

South Gloucestershire Council Core Strategy

Representation to additional hearing on 7th March, 2013

We wish to comment on the inspector's note of 10th January, 2013 on Additional Housing Sites following the consultation on the draft Main Modifications to the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy.

We are confused by the inspector's statement that he does not invite submissions on sites which have not been put forward previously and yet says he wishes to consider various sites at a number of locations including the East and North Fringes. This approach seems to us to throw everything into the melting-pot all over again.

This society was formed in 1981 to conserve and protect the Green Belt in the Hanham area, and consistently over this period has maintained a core membership of about 200. The area could be described as part of the Eastern Fringe and includes areas of outstanding landscape value including the Avon Valley. We have played an active part in inquiries on various Green Belt and development issues and maintained a close relationship with councillors at all levels, with members of parliament and governmental organisations. The society is affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

We have seen no specific suggestions by the inspector that the area is at risk from development but because of the inspector's comments during the Core Strategy preparation period we feel that nothing is safe. We are dismayed by the inspector's attitude to the Green Belt and would remind him that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) retains all the Green Belt safeguards previously embodied in PPS2. This should be government policy and indeed various government ministers have proclaimed that the Green Belt is safe – the facts contradict this. South Gloucestershire is set to lose two significant areas of Green Belt in the Core Strategy and the inspector seems intent on taking more. The Localism Bill is supposed to transfer detailed policy to the local authority and local groups. The inspector seems intent on denying this.

We respectfully suggest that if the council can demonstrate that it can meet the 5 year housing supply and the 2027 target by identifying sites which are not in the Green Belt (other than those already identified at Cribbs Causeway and Harry Stoke/Stoke Gifford), then this should be accepted and there should be no further pressure to release Green Belt land.

In any case, the current and ongoing economic situation is likely to mean that developers will be unable to meet their targets, certainly in the next 5 year period and probably through the next decade. We have already seen that development has failed to take place on sites at Emersons Green which have had extant planning permission for 10 years.

C Hurfurt (Chairman) M Camm (Secretary) DJ Reade

28th January, 2013