

Gladman Developments Ltd

Representations on
South Gloucestershire District Council
Policies, Sites and Places Plan
Proposed Submission Consultation



July 2015

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Gladman Developments Ltd (Gladman) specialise in the promotion of strategic land for residential development and associated community infrastructure. Gladman have significant experience in contributing to the local plan preparation process, having submitted representations to a number of local planning documents on a national scale and attending numerous Local Plan Examination's. From this experience, we understand the need for planning to deliver the homes, jobs and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made to delivering the housing and economic needs of an area, whilst responding positively to the wider opportunities for growth.

1.1.2 These representations are made in response to the current consultation held by South Gloucestershire District Council (SGDC) on the proposed submission version of the Policies Sites and Places Plan (PSPP). This follows from our previous submissions on the draft version of the PSPP in June 2014 and Main Modifications to the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy in May 2013.

1.1.3 Along with the Core Strategy (adopted 2013) and the Joint Waste Core Strategy (adopted 2011), we understand that the PSPP will form the final document that will make up the Local Plan.

1.1.4 Part 1 of the PSPP contains the development management policies which have been drawn up to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). In this regard, we submit that a number of these policies are inconsistent with the requirements of the Framework and PPG and may act to constrain the ability of future sustainable growth opportunities being delivered, counter to the national growth agenda and the positive approach required by the Framework.

1.1.5 Part 2 of the PSPP sets out the policies and land use allocations required to support sustainable development over the plan period. In this regard we note that the PSPP does not allocate a sufficient number of sustainable sites for residential development and therefore significantly jeopardises South Gloucestershire's ability to meet its full housing needs.

1.1.6 In line with our previous representations, Gladman are aware that the Core Strategy was adopted in December 2013, however Gladman note its housing requirement is not based on an objectively assessed needs (OAN) for housing. The Inspector's report made clear that in finding the Core Strategy sound, it was subject to the Council undertaking an early review of the Core Strategy and for that Plan to be implemented by 2018. Given this requirement we submit that it is inappropriate to progress with the PSPP at this time. The Council should cease

progression of the PSPP and commence work on the Core Strategy review immediately, ensuring that this review is based on a Framework/PPG compliant OAN. This review could encompass the strategic requirements, policies and allocations in a single document, providing a comprehensive and up-to-date planning Framework for the district.

2 SCOPE OF REPRESENTATIONS

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Notwithstanding the fundamental issue of there being no Framework compliant OAN, Gladman are significantly concerned over a number of development management policies proposed under part 1 of the PSPP. Our key concerns relate to the Council's use of policies which may arbitrarily restrict the ability of future sustainable growth opportunities being delivered. Our specific comments relate to policies PSP2: Landscape, PSP4: Designated Local Green Space, PSP8: Settlement boundaries, PSP41: Residential Development in the Countryside and PSP43: Custom Build Dwellings.

2.2 National Planning Policy and Planning Practice Guidance

2.2.1 The Framework sets out four tests at paragraph 182 that must be met for Local Plan's to be considered sound. The four tests set out in paragraph 182 are as follows:

- **Positively Prepared** – *the plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development'*
- **Justified** – *the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;*
- **Effective** – *the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and*
- **Consistent with national policy** – *the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework*

2.2.2 The PSPP cannot be considered sound as it is inconsistent with each of the tests outlined above. Gladman raise significant concerns over the deliverability of the adopted housing requirement on two grounds. Firstly, the housing requirement contained in the adopted Core Strategy was never based on an objective assessment of housing needs. It was made clear by the Inspector examining the Core Strategy that the Council is required to undertake an early review of the Core Strategy and for that plan to be implemented by the end of 2018. Progression of the PSPP can therefore not be seen to be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy if it is progressed on a housing requirement which fails to have any regard for the full OAN for the District.

2.2.3 Secondly, the Council's predisposition to deliver its housing requirement through the use of strategic sites without allocating a sufficient level of additional sites through the PSPP raises fundamental concerns. Whilst recognising the infrastructure benefits associated with such forms of development, a strategy which is over reliant on the delivery of large strategic sites

will certainly lead to deliverability issues and may lead to a further housing deficit. The development of Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) often requires a significant amount of time through master planning and coordination between various landowners, which can often take years to resolve. The delivery of such schemes are often subject to long lead in times, significant infrastructure requirements and may not deliver at the expected rate and/or level of development initially envisaged. Gladman has completed an extensive study of SUEs across England, Wales and Scotland (full report included at appendix 1), which demonstrates that it takes on average 8 years for such forms of development to start delivering the first phases of development.

- 2.2.4 The PSPP should identify a suitable range of deliverable housing sites that will provide sustainable locations for future development to meet the short and medium terms housing needs. This will allow for sites that come forward at a slower rate than expected, or those which fail to deliver at the scale initially expected. This approach will provide flexibility and will help ensure that the Council is able to achieve and maintain a flexible, responsive and continual rolling 5 year supply of housing.
- 2.2.5 The PSPP as proposed provides little flexibility and instead seeks to prevent development opportunities outside tightly drawn settlement boundaries. The PSPP therefore restricts its own ability to deliver the growth aspirations contained in the Core Strategy. The Council are unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply as recently demonstrated by Gladman at appeal at land south of Wotton Road, Charfield (Appeal ref: APP/P0119/A/14/2220291).
- 2.2.6 The Council's latest 5 year housing land supply assessment established in the AMR Extract 2014 identifies a number of sites with overly optimistic lead in times and build out rates. The Inspector at the Wotton Road Inquiry found a number of sites represented unduly optimistic lead in times, as such a total of 1,163 dwellings were removed from the 5 year housing land supply. The Inspector found that the Council were unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and at present can only demonstrate a supply of 4.63 years. It is important to note that this figure was not based on the full OAN (as this has not been identified) and the Council's true 5 year housing land supply is likely to be much lower. The appeal decision can be found in appendix 2 of these representations.
- 2.2.7 In order for the Council to ensure it can achieve a 5 year housing land supply there is a critical need to identify and deliver additional housing sites across the District. The progression of the PSPP in its current form will prevent the delivery of future sustainable growth and is counter to the objectives of the Framework, specifically the need to significantly boost the supply of housing and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 2.2.8 The PSPP in its current form cannot be considered to be positively prepared, justified, effective or consistent with national planning policy when there is a clear requirement for the Council to undertake a review of the Core Strategy and for that plan to be implemented by the end of 2018 based on the full OAN. To further delay the review of the Core Strategy is illogical and will delay the delivery of the District's OAN in full. We recommend that the Council abort any further work on the PSPP and instead commence work on the Core Strategy Review immediately.

3 CORE STRATEGY 2013

3.1 Context

3.1.1 The Core Strategy forms part 1 of the Local Plan and was adopted on 11th December 2013 covering the plan period 2006-2027. The adopted Core Strategy is required to deliver a minimum of 28,355 dwellings over the plan period. Policy CS15: Distribution of Housing seeks to deliver the housing requirement. The Core Strategy identifies three SUEs which will deliver 10,400 dwellings over the plan period, development at Thornbury will provide a further 800 dwellings. In total the SUEs will deliver 11,200 dwellings over the plan period which equates to 39% of the total housing requirement.

3.1.2 It was expected that the PSPP will provide the residual site allocations and development management policies however the PSPP does not identify a sufficient number of new allocations needed to deliver the housing requirement. It is important to reiterate that the Core Strategy housing requirement is intended to be the minimum figure expected to be delivered.

3.2 Position Post Inspector's Report

3.2.1 Whilst the adopted Core Strategy is a post-NPPF development plan its housing requirement was never based on an objective assessment of housing needs and was instead predicated on the now revoked RSS housing requirement.

3.2.2 The Inspector examining the Core Strategy published his report on 15th November 2013 (appendix 3). The Framework at paragraph 47 requires council's to undertake an objective assessment of housing needs. South Gloucestershire's assessment of housing need was undertaken prior to the national policy change was completed and focused on a more limited Housing Market Area.

3.2.3 Without a Framework and PPG compliant OAN the degree of reliance that can be placed upon the adopted housing requirement is questionable as it does not identify the full OAN as required by paragraph 47 of the Framework. The Inspector's Report makes clear that the Council is required to undertake an early review of the Core Strategy, paragraph 86 of the Inspector's Report states, '*South Gloucestershire should aim to adopt a replacement plan as soon as reasonably possible. I previously felt this should be done prior to 2021 but the timetable for the newly instigated SHMA process means this can and should be brought forward so that a review/replacement plan is in place by the end of 2018.*'

3.3 West of England SHMA 2015

- 3.3.1 The West of England SHMA final report (volume 1) has been recently published and went before the Planning, Housing and Communities Board (PHCB) on 26th June 2015. The West of England SHMA 2015 covers the period 2016-2036.
- 3.3.2 As required by the Inspector the Council has commenced work with its neighbouring authorities and have published the West of England SHMA (volume 1). Volume 2 of the SHMA is expected to be reported to the PHCB in September 2015 and will consider the assessments approach to identifying the HMA's housing mix by size, tenure and type for market and affordable housing.
- 3.3.3 Opinion Research Services (ORS) was jointly commissioned by the West of England local authorities to identify the functional HMAs. Gladman note that previous HMA analysis identified separate HMAs for Bristol and Bath. For the purposes of the West of England SHMA 2015 the assessment considered the 'best fit' of the wider Bristol HMA comprises of Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. However, Gladman believe this assessment does not consider the full HMA and fails to take into account the HMAs wider relationship with Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).
- 3.3.4 The West of England SHMA 2015 identifies the full OAN for housing in the Wider Bristol HMA to be 85,000 dwellings over the plan period 2016-2036, equating to an annual average of 4,250 dwellings per annum. This includes the OAN for affordable housing of 29,100 dwellings over the plan period, equating to an annual average of 1,455 dwellings per annum. This assessment does not apportion the OAN to the LPA's within the HMA.
- 3.3.5 It is a fundamental concern that the OAN does not make any provision for economic growth and states that demographic led projections are sufficient to meet the provision of future jobs growth.
- 3.3.6 Whilst the West of England OAN correctly identifies demographic growth assumptions using 2012 Household Projections, it identifies a number of adverse market signals (affordability, house prices and an imbalance on housing delivery therefore higher housing delivery may be required. Gladman note that this assessment includes a 7.5% uplift to account for adverse market signals. However we believe that the identified uplift provides an insufficient response to adverse market signals as a result of the OANs failure to factor in the relationship with Bath and North East Somerset within the HMA, and therefore fails to provide the significant uplift required to address these issues.
- 3.3.7 Gladman have commissioned Barton Willmore to undertake a full assessment of housing needs for the West of England Housing Market Area, this assessment was published in

December 2014 (OAN summary included at appendix 4). This assessment identifies Bath and North East Somerset as forming part of the West of England HMA and identifies the full objectively assessed needs for the West of England HMA to be 147,582 dwellings i.e. 7,379 dwellings per annum. It is intended that the Barton Willmore OAN will be updated to take account the latest 2012 Household Projections. This evidence will be submitted to the Council at a later stage. There is the potential that once the OAN is updated, it will continue to point to a significantly higher level of growth than the Council's OAN.

- 3.3.8 The OAN identifies 'comparable' HMAs with similar demographic and economic characteristics of the Wider Bristol HMA, this has been analysed from the ONS area classifications together with data from the CLG Index of Multiple Deprivation. The authorities assessed include; Leeds, Sheffield (with North East Derbyshire and Rotherham) and Southampton (with Eastleigh and New Forest). These areas are not appropriate comparators to compare against when considering adverse market signals.
- 3.3.9 Furthermore, the OAN states at paragraph 4.62 *'providing the net additional affordable housing needed will release back into the market (mainly the private rented sector) the dwellings occupied by a total of 6,192 (7,613 less 1,421) that are currently in affordable housing need who are unable to afford their own housing.'* Whilst the model does not count any dwellings in Private Rented Sector (PRS) as affordable housing supply, the Council should not be reliant on the provision of PRS to address its housing needs. Gladman note that if no households were to receive housing benefit to support the PRS, almost 65% of the growth in household numbers would need affordable housing. The Council should not be reliant on the provision of PRS as it cannot resolve the housing shortage, these are determined by the overall relationship between supply and demand and could lead to shortages in the HMA across the range of the housing market.
- 3.3.10 Gladman recommend that the authorities revisit the SHMA and incorporate BANES into the assessment to provide an appropriate portrayal of the HMA. The SHMA should address the issues of economic growth and adverse market signals and apply the necessary uplift required. Without further work on the OAN Gladman strongly believe it would be found unsound when tested through an EIP. The lack of consideration of economic factors and an insufficient market signals adjustment as a result of the ineffective approach taken when identifying the HMA renders the SHMA/OAN in conflict with the requirements of both the Framework and the PPG.

4 POLICIES, SITES AND PLACES – PART 1

4.1 Development Management Policies

4.1.1 This section of these representations focuses on the proposed development management policies contained in the PSPP which will introduce new development management policies as well as replacing those policies contained in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006) and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2002). These policies once adopted will sit alongside the Core Strategy (2013) and the Joint Waste Core Strategy (2011) and will form the Development Plan for South Gloucestershire.

4.1.2 Gladman are concerned that a number of policies contained in the PSPP will effectively act to prevent the ability of future sustainable growth opportunities coming forward and therefore does not accord with the positive approach required by national planning policy. As proposed the PSPP's development management policies do not seek to significantly boost the supply of housing and are based on a clear intention to restrict future growth having no regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. If progressed in its current form Gladman believe the likelihood is that the PSPP will be unable to meet the tests of soundness as required by paragraph 182 of the Framework as it cannot be seen to be positively prepared, justified, effective or consistent with national planning policy.

4.1.3 As Gladman recently demonstrated through the Charfield Inquiry, the Council are unable to identify a 5 year supply of housing land. The progression of the PSPP in its current form will result in a further undersupply of housing as the Plan does not have any mechanisms which will allow for the release of additional land to meet the District's housing needs.

4.1.4 Our specific comments relating to the development management policies and their effect on the delivery of sustainable development are as follows:

Policy PSP2 - Landscape

4.1.5 Policy PSP2 is essentially the same policy as proposed in the draft version of the PSPP. This policy sets out a number of landscape issues that are divided into three headings. The first heading 'Landscape Protection and Enhancement' states '*development will only be permitted if it conserves and enhances the quality, amenity and distinctiveness and character of the landscape.*' This then addresses a number of landscape matters that the Council seek to protect. It is disappointing to see that the Council have ignored our previous representations made in response to Policy PSP2. This policy as proposed seeks to 'conserve' existing landscape provision and could potentially be used as a mechanism to restrict future sustainable growth. We submit that it is critical that this policy is revised and that the wording 'does not cause unacceptable harm to...' is used to replace 'conserve'.

- 4.1.6 This alternation will make certain that future sustainable growth opportunities are not restricted by this policy whilst still ensuring that no harm to the District's landscape is caused.
- 4.1.7 Part 3 of this policy under the heading 'Landscape Management' states *'landscape features which contribute to landscape character, quality, amenity or local distinctiveness are to be retained, protected and managed...'* The resulting policy provides no flexibility and cannot be considered to be positively prepared. In some instances the removal of landscape features identified under this policy may be required i.e. hedgerows/trees for access. It should also be remembered that in some instances the removal of biodiversity features as part of a wider scheme may result in greater landscape benefits overall. It is therefore important that the wording of PSP2 as outlined in paragraph 4.1.17 of these representations is also reflected within this policy.

Policy PSP4 – Designated Local Green Space

- 4.1.8 Policy PSP4 states that inappropriate development within designated Local Green Spaces, as shown on the policies map and set out in appendix 2 will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances. The construction of new buildings on Local Green Spaces is deemed as inappropriate development unless identified as one of the exceptions under this policy.
- 4.1.9 Appendix 2 which supports PSP4 is noticeably absent from the PSPP's evidence base. However, we note that the Council is currently holding an 'informal consultation' under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This document simply provides details of nominated sites, the suitability of designation and the justification submitted to support the designation of Local Green Space. No formal decision has been made by the Council regarding the sites nominated as Local Green Space.
- 4.1.10 Gladman submit that the designation of Local Green Space should be consistent with the requirements of paragraph 76 of the Framework, which states *'Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.'* Paragraph 77 of the Framework further states, *'The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:*
- *Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - *Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquilly or richness of its wildlife; and*
 - *Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.'*

- 4.1.11 The Framework makes clear that Local Green Spaces should only be allocated where it is consistent with the wider context of an area and should not be used to designate large tracts of land that may constrain the ability of future sustainable development coming forward. The PSPP as proposed fails to identify and allocate a sufficient level of homes to meet housing needs and is therefore contrary to this national policy requirement. Taking the requirements of the Framework into account, it is essential that when allocating Local Green Space, plan makers can clearly demonstrate that the requirements for its allocation are met in full.
- 4.1.12 Gladman question why the Council would progress the PSPP at this time when the Plan as a whole has not been subject to robust consultation. Policy PSP4 cannot be considered to be positively prepared, effective or justified at this time until it has been subject to robust consultation.

Policy PSP8 – Settlement Boundaries

- 4.1.13 Policy PSP8 states settlement boundaries are defined on the policies map for the Bristol North and East Fringes, Yate and Thornbury urban areas and rural settlements. Within these settlement boundaries development will be acceptable. Outside the settlement boundaries development will be resisted.
- 4.1.14 The supporting text of this policy states that Policy PSP8 should be read alongside the Rural Housing Review contained in part 2 of the PSPP. Gladmans’ specific comments to part 2 of the PSPP can be found in section 5 of these representations.
- 4.1.15 Gladman contend that the approach taken through PSP8 is distinctly anti-growth, ineffective and inflexible. Progression of PSP8 in its current form will lead to the PSPP being unable to respond rapidly to changes i.e. where there is an undersupply of housing as is currently the case. The approach taken by PSP8 has no regard to the need to significantly boost the supply of housing or the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The use of tightly drawn settlement boundaries to arbitrarily restrict the delivery of sustainable development does not accord with the positive approach required by the Framework and is therefore considered to be unsound. Gladman submit that development which is sustainable should go ahead without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.1.16 The approach taken by PSP8 clearly illustrates the Council’s intention to restrict the delivery of any future sustainable growth opportunities. Gladman note the recent appeal decision at land south of Wotton Road, Charfield (appeal ref: APP/P0119/A/2220291) relating to the development of up to 106 dwellings, this appeal was allowed on 8th June 2015. In this decision the Inspector found that the policy requirements established under policy H3: Residential Development in the Countryside is time expired in relation to the Local Plan (2006) in that the settlement boundaries have not been carried forward into the Core Strategy without review for some 20 years. The Inspector found that the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5

year supply of deliverable housing land and therefore policies CS5: Location of Development and CS34: Rural Areas, policies relevant to the supply of housing, cannot be considered up-to-date. For these reasons the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 14 of the Framework applied.

- 4.1.17 The Council will need to ensure that Policy PSP8 incorporates a significant degree of flexibility with regards to settlement boundaries as the Inspector identified in the case above that this designation is significantly out-of-date and time expired. Gladman recommend that it would be more appropriate if Policy PSP8 was deleted and replaced with the following wording:

'Development adjacent to existing settlements will be permitted provided that the adverse impacts do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of development.'

- 4.1.18 This provision is also applicable to policies PSP2 and PSP41 and should also be encapsulated within those policies.

Policy PSP41 – Residential Development in the Countryside

- 4.1.19 This policy states that development will only be permitted outside defined settlement boundaries, subject to meeting the criteria identified by this policy. The criteria identified includes the following:

- Rural Housing exception schemes in accordance with Policy CS19
- The conversion and re-use of existing buildings
- Rural Workers dwellings, in accordance with PSP42
- Replacement dwellings
- Schemes of exceptional quality or innovative design

- 4.1.20 This policy seeks to implement an increased level of protection for land outside the defined (out-of-date) settlement boundaries. Gladman would like to reiterate the comments made to Policy PSP8: Settlement Boundaries. Policy PSP41 cannot be seen to be positively prepared as it seeks to implement a policy that is ineffective, inflexible and inconsistent with the requirements of national planning policy.

- 4.1.21 It has been demonstrated through numerous planning appeals and examinations that sustainable development can often be located on the edge of settlements without causing any adverse impacts. Developments which are sustainable should therefore go ahead without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 4.1.22 Policies PSP8 and PSP41, as proposed, do not have regard to the national growth agenda and the need to significantly boost the supply of housing. This policy is ineffective and does not meet any of the tests outlined in paragraph 182 of the Framework.

Policy PSP43 – Custom Build Dwellings

- 4.1.23 This policy states that proposals for custom build housing will be supported where they comply with the vision, strategic objectives and other policies of the Local Plan. This policy gives particular regard to custom build schemes of more than 10 dwellings in the urban area and 5 dwellings in the rural area. This policy requires all residential and mixed use development proposals above 100 dwellings to provide at least 5% of the total dwellings proposed to be provided as serviced plots for sale to custom builders.
- 4.1.24 Whilst we support and encourage the provision of self-build development, we believe that this should be at the developer's discretion. In its current form this policy is too prescriptive and the Council should not progress with a policy that serves as a 'general rule' governing all self-build development i.e. all developments required to deliver a percentage of custom build housing.
- 4.1.25 The justification of this policy must be based on robust evidence through a register of interested parties. This approach is supported by PPG (Reference ID: 2a-021) which states, *'Plan makers should, therefore, consider surveying local residents, possibly as part of any wider surveys, to assess local housing need for this type of housing, and compile a local list or register of people who want to build their own homes.'*
- 4.1.26 Gladman note that the Council under criterion 3 expect to set up and maintain a register for prospective custom builders. However, at this time there is no sufficient or robust evidence base to support the requirements of this policy.

5 PLANS, SITES & POLICIES – PART 2

5.1 Sites and Places

5.1.1 This section of these representations focuses on part 2 of the PSPP and provides Gladmans' response to the policies and land use allocations being proposed by the PSPP.

Rural Housing Review

5.1.2 The locational strategy set out in Core Strategy Policy CS5 requires development to be delivered in the communities of Bristol North and East Fringes, Yate, Thornbury and infill development within settlement boundaries. As discussed in section 3 of these representations the Core Strategy's housing requirement seeks to deliver a minimum of 28,355 dwellings over the plan period, however this figure has no regard to a Framework/PPG compliant assessment of need.

5.1.3 Paragraph 11.2 of the PSPP states that '*Sufficient provision is made through Core Strategy allocations to exceed the minimum housing requirement of 28,355 dwellings and so there is no need for additional allocations in the rural area. Core Strategy Policy CS5 does not therefore, require changes to settlement boundaries in rural settlements to meet the overall housing requirement.*'

5.1.4 Gladman oppose the above statement in its entirety, as the Council do not know what their OAN is. As recorded by the Core Strategy Inspector and the Inspector in his decision to allow Gladmans' Wotton Road site at appeal, the Council have failed to review the settlement boundaries in over 20 years and as such these are significantly out of date and time expired. If the Council ignore the need to review the rural housing provision the restrictive nature of Policy PSP8 will therefore act to restrict the ability of future sustainable growth opportunities being delivered to meet the District's housing needs. If the Council do not undertake the rural housing review this could be at the detriment of the rural settlements which often need a degree of growth to maintain their vitality and ensure the longevity of key services and facilities.

5.1.5 In addition, the Council should not be reliant on the delivery of housing through Neighbourhood Plans as there is no certainty that Neighbourhood Plans will be brought forward by local communities, that this will be in a timely fashion and even greater uncertainty whether they will deliver a sufficient level of housing to meet local needs when there is no Framework/PPG compliant OAN.

PSP51 – Rural Settlement Boundaries

5.1.6 This policy states that in order to deliver the sustainable locational strategy set out in Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy settlement boundaries in the rural areas have been reviewed. The

policy confirms that settlement boundaries have not been amended, where to do so would be contrary to the locational strategy in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS5.

- 5.1.7 Policy PSP51 supplements the locational strategy of Core Strategy Policies CS5 and CS34 which restrict development within the countryside outside of defined settlement boundaries. Paragraph 49 of the Framework states that relevant policies for the provision of housing should not be considered up-to-date if a local planning authority is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, as is currently the case in South Gloucestershire. The Council do not have a Framework/PPG compliant assessment of housing needs and are unable to identify a supply of deliverable sites. As such, the Council's 5 year housing land supply will likely continue to decline when the findings of the full OAN are published. To progress with this policy without a review of the rural settlement boundaries leaves no mechanism for the release of housing to meet the District's housing needs. It is therefore a fundamentally flawed approach and is unsound.
- 5.1.8 If the PSPP is progressed in its current form this will likely result in the local planning authority planning by appeal and does not provide a positive and effective strategy for the delivery of housing.
- 5.1.9 In order to display an accurate depiction of the rural settlements, the settlement boundaries will need to be reviewed to include land which has been granted planning permission, as once these sites are built out they will inevitably form a functional part of the existing settlement. Through this review, the settlement boundaries must enable a sufficient degree of flexibility to accommodate future sustainable growth.

PSP53 – Site Allocations and Safeguarding

- 5.1.10 The sites listed as part of this policy will be developed/safeguarded for the uses identified and brought forward in accordance with all other relevant development plan policies. The identified sites include those allocations previously contained in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006) that have yet to be allocated, new allocations and safeguarded land made in this plan. These allocations relate to the development of a wide range of uses including community facilities, open space, education, housing/mixed use development etc.
- 5.1.11 This policy identifies a total of 7 sites that will deliver market housing, extra care provision and mix use development. A number of these sites have been slow to progress since being initially identified by the Local Plan (2006).
- 5.1.12 The housing expected to be delivered by sites 13-18 will deliver approximately 1,241 dwellings over the plan period. The expected delivery of Northfield and Emersons Green East (mixed use sites) raise significant concern as the Council expects delivery of 300 dwellings per annum. The Council should not apply unrealistic delivery assumptions to the SUE's as a means of absorbing significant levels of growth and consequently reducing the need for further growth

across South Gloucestershire. As demonstrated through Gladman's SUE study, the delivery estimates are over ambitious and will likely result in the PSPP failing to meet its housing needs. Indeed, this assumption was also supported by the Inspector at the Wotton Road Inquiry, who found a number of the sites contained in the Council's 5 year supply portrayed overly optimistic lead in times.

- 5.1.13 The above clearly demonstrates that the Council have identified an insufficient level of housing sites to deliver its housing requirement and further illustrates the inadequacy of progressing the PSPP at this time.

6 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

6.1 Requirements of the SA

- 6.1.1 The Council have undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as part of the proposed submission version of the PSPP. The PPG and the SEA directive requires that the PSPP must consider all reasonable alternatives through the production of an SA. Gladman contend that the SA fails to analyse all reasonable alternatives in respect of the overall housing requirement and has no regard to meeting the full OAN for the District.
- 6.1.2 Gladman note that the alternatives considered as part of the Rural Housing Review assessed three options which include: a dispersed strategy option, SHMA/Local Housing Needs Assessment option and a community agreement option.
- 6.1.3 Gladman question why the Council dismissed option 2 which would assess the need to undertake a rural housing review in order to meet the full OAN as required by the Framework and PPG. Paragraph 5.9 states *'This option was dismissed because this need has already been incorporated into the objectively assessed need for housing to 2027 and this had been met through the adopted Core Strategy. This is confirmed by the Core Strategy Inspector's Report at paragraphs 140-141.'* Upon reading the Inspector's Report it is apparent that the housing requirement is seen as a minimum and one which is subject to an early review, based on a full OAN. The preferred option 'Community Agreement Option' states that *'the Core Strategy meets the OAN for housing for the whole of the Core Strategy, including the rural areas.'*
- 6.1.4 The above statements provide truth-less statements as the housing requirement contained in the Core Strategy does not represent the full OAN for the District. The Council through its SA has not thought it necessary to consider alternative means for the distribution and levels of growth set out in the plan and has had no appropriate regard to the requirements of national policy and guidance and therefore fails to meet its requirements.
- 6.1.5 Gladman do not accept that the housing requirement identifies the full OAN. The SA should be revisited to evaluate all reasonable options once the West of England SHMA has been completed. The SA should then examine the options and different development strategies available to deliver the full OAN figure as well as the adopted Core Strategy housing requirement.
- 6.1.6 Whilst the SA has examined alternatives for several villages through its preferred option of a community agreement approach it fundamentally neglects many settlements identified within the rural area. We consider it is critical that the Council examines all settlements within the District against a set of clearly identified criteria to assess their ability of accommodating future growth without restraint from restrictive settlement boundaries. In this regard we

submit that alternative approaches to Policy PSP8: Settlement Boundaries should also be tested through the SA process.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 Gladman have highlighted a number of significant flaws with the PSPP as proposed, these flaws reinforce the need for the Council to cease further work on the PSPP and commence work on a review of the Core Strategy immediately. To progress with the PSPP will further postpone the Core Strategy Review and will result in delaying South Gloucestershire's ability to meet its housing needs.
- 7.1.2 The Core Strategy is heavily reliant of the delivery of SUEs to deliver the adopted housing requirement, in total the SUE's make up 39% of the total housing requirement. The delivery assumptions used in the AMR 2014 Extract identify some questionable delivery assumptions and lead in times. It is likely that the expected delivery rates as presented by the Council's evidence base will fall significantly short of delivering the necessary annual housing requirement.
- 7.1.3 The Council need to ensure that the Core Strategy review adopts a more flexible and adaptable approach which does not restrict the ability of future sustainable growth opportunities being delivered outside of restrictive and out-of-date settlement boundaries.
- 7.1.4 Until the Council address the issues made throughout these representations, the PSPP cannot be seen to be a plan that has been positively prepared, effective, justified or consistent with national policy. If progressed, in its current form, to Examination it is likely to be found unsound by an Inspector.
- 7.1.5 Critically we submit that the housing requirement does not meet the requirements of the Framework and PPG. The housing requirement is not based on a full OAN as required by the Framework and PPG. Therefore, it is of crucial importance that the review of the Core Strategy starts immediately based on a Framework/PPG compliant assessment of the full OAN for the HMA which Gladman contend should include Bath and North East Somerset.
- 7.1.6 To be considered sound at Examination the PSPP needs to meet all four of the soundness tests set out in paragraph 182 of the Framework, which states:

"A local planning authority should submit a Plan for Examination which they consider is 'sound' – namely that it is:

- **Positively prepared** – *the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;*
- **Justified** – *the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;*

- **Effective** – *the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities; and*
- **Consistent with national policy** – *the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with policies in the Framework.”*

7.1.7 Gladman submit that the PSPP cannot be considered to be positively prepared as it is not based on a strategy which seeks to meet the full OAN contrary to the explicit requirements of the Framework and PPG. Through these representations, we submit that the Council are continuing to pursue with a housing requirement that falls substantially short of meeting the full OAN. It cannot be seen to be positively prepared when there is a clear requirement for an early review of the Core Strategy which is being neglected by the Council.

7.1.8 The PSPP is not justified in seeking to deliver a housing requirement that does not meet the full OAN. The suite of policies contained within the PPSP actively seek to constrain the ability of future sustainable housing growth being delivered.

7.1.9 The PSPP is not effective. A number of policies clearly seek to restrict future sustainable development and is contrary to the positive approach required by the Framework. The delivery of the SUE's as set out in the plan is also questionable and leads to uncertainties over the effectiveness of the strategy.

7.1.10 The PSPP is not consistent with national policy. Key areas of inconsistency include that the document will not provide a strategy to 'meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing,' and does not identify a 'supply of specific deliverable and developable' housing sites to meet these needs as required by paragraph 47 of the Framework, and has not been based on a SHMA assessing the authorities 'full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries' (paragraph 159).

