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SENT BY E-MAIL AND POST

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Dear Sir / Madam

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE DESIGNATED LOCAL GREEN SPACES INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Introduction

Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the above mentioned consultation. The HBF is the principal representative body of the house-building industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing. We would like to submit the following comments and in due course attend the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites & Places DPD Examination Hearing Sessions to discuss these matters in greater detail.

Policy PSP4 : Designated Local Green Spaces

The HBF representations to the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places DPD Draft consultation in August 2014 and the Pre Submission consultation ended on 3 July 2015 set out concerns about the Council's proposal for the potential allocation of circa 560 areas of Designated Local Green Space.

As stated in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open spaces because any areas designated as Local Green Spaces must be demonstrably special to a local community and be of particular local significance because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value. The NPPG (ID 37-009-

20140306) emphasises that Designated Local Green Spaces must be demonstrably special to the local community and therefore this special nature must be evidenced. The NPPG also advises that where land is already protected by designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monument or conservation area, consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space (ID 37-011-20140306). It is difficult to believe that there are potentially circa 560 green spaces in South Gloucestershire that are demonstrably special to a local community and of particular local significance.

Designated Local Green Space should be local in character as opposed to an extensive tract of land as stated in the NPPG (ID: 37-015-20140306) the blanket designation of extensive tracts of land and open countryside adjacent to settlements is not appropriate. So it is equally difficult to comprehend that many of these allegedly demonstrably special spaces of particular local significance are joined together forming extensive tracts of land and open countryside adjacent to settlements, for example proposals in Charfield, Hanham Abbots, Iron Acton, Tormarton, Westerleigh and Yates Parishes. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF confirms that managing development within a Designated Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts. Therefore Designated Local Green Spaces should not be proposed to achieve by stealth what could be seen as the designation of a new localised Green Belt around smaller settlements.

From this current informal consultation it is now understood that of the circa 560 nominated areas approximately 103 areas are identified as “*considered currently suitable for designation*” by the Council. It is interesting to note that Cheltenham Borough Council is carrying out a similar consultation on Designated Local Green Spaces as part of its Cheltenham Plan Issues and Options consultation however the number of proposed designations amounts to only 29 areas which further highlights the disproportionate number of potential allocations in South Gloucestershire.

As previously stated in HBF representations it is procedurally irregular that the Regulation 19 South Gloucestershire Pre Submission Policies Sites & Places DPD consultation including Policy PSP4 which ended on 3rd July 2015 commenced ahead of the consultations to determine the final list of Designated Local Green Spaces in Appendix 2 and the final Proposals Map associated with Policy PSP4. It is unfortunate that this separate consultation process on changes to the Proposals Map and Appendix 2 has a different timescale to the DPD consultation as proposed this current informal consultation ends on 30th July 2015 whilst the final list in Appendix 2 and the final Proposals Map will not be formally consulted upon until September / October 2015. It is also noted that this current separate consultation does not cross reference to the DPD consultation. Therefore it is possible that land owners have been confused by the separate processes and denied the opportunity to submit representations. Moreover it is not obvious if the Council has contacted land owners directly about the potential designation of their land as Local Green Space and the development management implications of such a designation. The land owners affected by Policy PSP4 may be

unaware of the proposed designation of their land and even if aware of the potential designation they may be unaware of the relationship with Policy PSP4 and that the consequential implications for managing development is the same as Green Belt.

Conclusion

For the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites & Places DPD to be found sound under the four tests of soundness as defined by paragraph 182 of the NPPF, the Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and compliant with national policy. Unfortunately there are a number of concerns about the soundness of the DPD with particular reference to Policy PSP4 as outlined above. Therefore the DPD has not been positively prepared and properly justified as such it is inconsistent with national policy and is likely to be ineffective.

It is recommended that after further formal consultation with land owners and other interested parties on Designated Local Green Spaces the Regulation 19 Pre Submission South Gloucestershire Policies Sites & Places DPD including Policy PSP4 together with Proposals Map and Appendix 2 is re-run. If the process is not re-run as suggested then Policy PDP4 should be deleted before submission of the South Gloucestershire Policies Sites & Places DPD to the Secretary of State for examination. If as suggested Policy PSP4 is not re-consulted upon or alternatively deleted the Council's actions may be vulnerable to Judicial Review.

In conclusion it is hoped that these representations are of assistance to the Council in preparing the next stages of the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places DPD. If any further information or assistance is required please contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully
for and on behalf of **HBF**



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