

Report – Spring consultation update

The logo for Wisloe, featuring the word "WISLOE" in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a dark green rectangular box with a thin light green border.

Background

In spring 2022, the Wisloe Project Team held a consultation in connection with the proposals for Wisloe, a sustainable community on land situated between the A38 and the M5 in Gloucestershire's Berkeley Vale.

The spring 2022 consultation ran from 11 February – 8 April. It included a special in-person event at the Slimbridge AFC Clubhouse on Friday 18 March, where local people could meet the team and discuss the proposals in more detail.

The in-person event was originally scheduled for Friday 18 February, but was rescheduled when a severe weather warning was issued for the Slimbridge area in connection with Storm Eunice.

More than 3,900 households and 134 businesses were contacted directly about the consultation and there were 3,430 visits to the website. Fifty-four local people attended our public and stakeholder sessions at Slimbridge AFC, while others engaged with the same information online.

Flyers were delivered to residential and business addresses in Slimbridge and Cambridge, and parts of Cam and Coaley, ahead of the event, via Royal Mail and door-to-door delivery. The event also featured in the Gloucestershire Gazette, with articles highlighting the original date and the revised date.

A small protest took place on 18 February organised by the Wisloe Action Group, who oppose the plans. There was no protest on 18 March, though unfortunately the group advised residents not to attend.

Feedback

The majority of feedback provided by consultees came directly to the team at the March event, but some consultees also gave feedback via paper and online feedback forms, and Freepost envelopes were available to facilitate this process.

Analysis of feedback showed that:

- Local residents were keen to ensure the Project Team had considered how people would travel to and from their homes and around the site.
- Consultees wanted to know what community facilities will be available at Wisloe, and how those would be delivered.
- Participants were keen to understand how the site would meet local housing need.
- Managing green spaces to help enhance biodiversity and how the site would manage drainage and sewage were also key topics of interest.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle links are a key priority for local people, as are additional facilities including a shop, café or allotments.
- Sustainability and energy efficiency were also high priorities, particularly photovoltaic panels and car charging points.
- Enhancement of the natural elements of the site were priorities including wetland spaces, natural play areas, enhanced natural habitats and woodland.

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- Participants responded positively to architectural styles which mirrored the appearance of buildings around Slimbridge and Cambridge, with traditional brick and larger windowed modern brick buildings scoring well.
- Parking, transport links and access to shared local services such as schools and doctors were also high priorities.

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Appendix I – Key issues and advice given by Project Team at in person event

Issues raised by consultees	Responses given by Project Team
<p>Sewerage - Local residents are keen to ensure the capacity of the local sewerage system and water treatment works will be considered as part of the development.</p>	<p>These are important issues to be dealt with by Severn Trent, and the Project Team will continue to highlight these with them. All new housing will have low water fittings and surface water run-off will be reduced.</p>
<p>Flooding - Residents raised concerns about flooding as a result of run-off from the Wisloe site.</p>	<p>In order to mitigate against increased rainfall/storms due to climate change, Wisloe has been designed using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). This provides an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes, reducing run-off compared to existing green field rates.</p>
<p>Traffic – Some residents raised concerns about additional traffic and traffic lights on A38 causing queuing, but others noted that existing speeding traffic is dangerous, sharing concerns that new junctions won't be safe. Some suggested that a 'no right-hand turn' system out of site might be helpful.</p>	<p>These are issues which the Project Team is actively considering, and they discussed benefits of traffic-controlled junction to slow traffic speeds and help pedestrians and cyclists cross the A38 /cycle crossing.</p>
<p>Pedestrian routes - Some consultees raised existing problem with the width of the pedestrian pavement on the A4135 railway bridge.</p>	<p>This is a matter which is the responsibility of Gloucestershire Highways, and they have previously indicated their desire to address the issue. The Wisloe plans will provide an alternative pedestrian and cycle route via Cam & Dursley Station.</p>
<p>Amenities - Some consultees voiced concerns that community facilities such as a school, green space, play and community benefits are not guaranteed, and asked for further assurances on these.</p>	<p>We are actively engaged with the relevant organisations, and will continue to do so. We have no reason to believe that these facilities will not be delivered as part of the Wisloe plans.</p>

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Issues raised by consultees	Responses given by Project Team
<p>Housing mix – Local people are keen to ensure a good mix of housing within the development, including affordable housing for young people who struggle to buy homes locally.</p>	<p>The mix of housing will provide for a range of household types - including families - and include a range of appropriate affordable housing (including social rent, shared ownership and self-build), along with later living accommodation in village centres.</p>
<p>Agricultural land – Local people are keen to ensure the quality of the land identified for a new community at Wisloe is properly understood by all parties, and that it will be protected.</p>	<p>We have been transparent that an assessment of the quality of the land conducted in 2019 suggested most of the site was ALC Grade 3b, but subsequent reviews and studies commissioned independently and by the Project Team confirmed the site was ALC Grade 2. Grade 2 defines the land as 'very good quality agricultural land with minor limitations which affect crop yield, cultivations or harvesting'.</p> <p>This classification is only one factor for Stroud District Council to consider on the suitability of a site for development and - in consultation with Natural England - we will explore ways to conserve the better-quality soils where possible should the development proceed.</p>
<p>Motorway noise – Some consultees raised issues around noise from the motorway</p>	<p>The masterplan allows for an acoustic bund along the M5, including a 4-6m high planted bund (with a noise barrier within the planting) which would screen views of vehicles as well as noise. This has been designed through a combination of earth mounding with planting that will vary in height to be more naturalistic and maintain views to the Cotswold escarpment to the east. We believe this would be a positive step both for Wisloe residents and those who already live locally, helping to address motorway noise.</p>

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<p>Green space and biodiversity – Consultees keen to ensure that green space is safeguarded, and biodiversity protected as part of the development.</p>	<p>Our masterplan shows that a significant proportion of the development site - around 35 hectares in total - would be open space. The site will deliver a net gain in biodiversity which will ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development.</p> <p>The masterplan allows for a landscape which is rich wetland habitats, designed with complex edge profiles and planting to benefit wildlife. This would enhance habitats for local wildlife.</p>
<p>Pedestrian and cycle routes – Consultees are keen to ensure safe pedestrian and cycling routes. There was strong support for a safe link to the railway station and beyond, and some supported making Dursley Road a no through-traffic route with pedestrian priority.</p>	<p>Providing safe pedestrian and cycle routes is central to our vision for Wisloe. Designs for an M5 Bridge Link and active transport routes have been developed to a preliminary level to inform the masterplan and ensure the bridge can be integrated with the noise bund to minimise hard engineering and excavations.</p> <p>A further key sustainable transport link will be provided in parallel with the A38 in the west, running through the southern and northern parts of the site and along Dursley Road to Cambridge, allowing for reduction of through traffic along Dursley Road and providing a pleasant green pedestrian and cycle link from Cambridge to the new community and its facilities.</p>

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<p>Vehicle use – Consultees were keen for the Project Team to understand the extent that existing communities in the area are reliant on cars, and ensure this is understood within the plans.</p>	<p>Whilst the masterplan has been designed to enable people to safely walk and cycle for many local trips, we do recognise that most residents will own a car, and dwellings will certainly provide for car use. Our illustrative masterplan therefore allows for an average of two parking spaces per dwelling, with the majority within housing plots, plus visitor spaces within the residential areas and in the local centre. In addition, garages - where provided - are proposed to be generously sized to allow use for parking as well as storage of bikes, tools and other equipment. We have been working with specialists on detailed planning for vehicle routes around Wisloe and connections to further afield via the A38 and A4135.</p>
<p>Horse riding – Will horse riding routes be provided in open space?</p>	<p>The Project Team is actively planning for safe non-vehicle routes around the site, and horse-riding routes are part of these considerations. Our undertaking to deliver a non-vehicle bridge link across the M5 is planned to comprise part of the 'Cam, Dursley & Uley Greenway', linking up to an 8km cycle, horse and pedestrian route linking Cam Dursley and Uley.</p>
<p>Doctors – A number of consultees expressed a desire to see a doctors' surgery on the Wisloe site.</p>	<p>We agree that this would be a positive asset for Wisloe but it is not something that the Project Team would decide. We are actively engaging with the relevant NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure they are considering this possibility.</p>
<p>Allotments and orchards – Consultees wanted to see allotments and orchards featured as part of the proposals.</p>	<p>The Wisloe Masterplan outlines a number of opportunities for community food production which will be provided in key locations throughout the site. This includes allotments and orchards.</p>

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Construction impact – Some consultees voiced concerns about potential noise, dust and timescales.	This is feedback we will consider as part of our planning. We are already exploring opportunities to explore the use of off-site and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) technologies.
Gas pipe – Some consultees raised issues around the gas pipe which runs through the site and the cost of works associated with it	Our technical feasibility report - which is available on our website gives details of the high pressure gas pipe that runs through part of the land at Wisloe, and outlines how it is possible to safely reroute this, presenting three different options. The preferred option is to run the pipe along the east of the site beside the M5, then run along the northern boundary.
Local artists / crafts – Consultees suggested exhibition space to suit local artists / crafts, a perhaps combined with a café, in order to support a creative community	This is certainly something that would be possible within the community outlined in the masterplan, but realistically a long term space would need the support of the local community to operate.

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Appendix II – Summary of feedback given by key stakeholder groups at in person event

- **Local councillors** – Some local councillors attended, either representing their constituent bodies or in a personal capacity. Their views largely reflected those of local residents, with conversations including the mix of types of homes within Wisloe, delivery of community facilities, and management and provision of shared green spaces.
- **Immediate neighbours** – Those who lived in the immediate area were understandably keen to appreciate how the proposals would directly impact their homes and access to those homes, and whether anything could be done as part of the proposals to address existing traffic issues and speeds, particularly on the A38. There was also an interest in the provision of play facilities for young people, which Slimbridge has historically lacked.
- **Stakeholders with local education connections** – Those with an understanding of local education were keen to have more details on the allocation of a site for a new primary school at Wisloe, as some local schools are already oversubscribed.

Appendix III – Comments received via ‘Shaping the future of Wisloe’ feedback form

Total submissions - 13

Q1. Stroud District Council has the ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. Developments like Wisloe will have an important role in supporting this aim. How could Wisloe help people reduce their carbon footprint (please tick all that apply)?

Improved connections to Cam and Dursley Station (pedestrian/cycle bridge)	10
Facilities (e.g. local shop, café etc.) that reduce journeys	8
Community spaces	6
Local employment facilities	7
Car club/bike share facilities	4
Walking and cycling connections	9
Natural outdoor play facilities	6
Local allotments	10

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Q: Is there anything that you would add to this list?

Buses
No
Energy generation and high efficiency house design
Less enormous housing estates
Plentiful car charging points
Cancelling the development would help the council reduce its carbon footprint. None of the measures above would reduce it; they would merely reduce the increase in carbon footprint that the development would cause
It would help more by leaving Wisloe as it is. Not destroying it for s*** housing
Family friend pub that serves food
Good internet provision to enable working from home
Solar panels and electric chargers in garages across all homes.
All houses to save energy/heated by solar panels, garage space

Q2: Open spaces for recreation and relaxation are integral to the masterplan. Which would be your priorities (please tick all that apply)?

Wetland spaces and streams	8
Outdoor community spaces	6
Natural play areas	8
Allotments and orchards	5
Woodlands	7
Hubs for enhanced natural habitats	7
High quality gardens	5
Spaces for outdoor exercise and wellbeing	6

Q: Is there anything else you would like to see?

No
Enhanced biodiversity generally
Less signs telling you what you are looking at (interpretation points) - they spoil the natural scene and just impose more human domination
Play parks with slides, swings, climbing equipment, etc
Cancel the development and preserve the current fields, trees and hedgerows
Just as it is perfect
Soundproofing of motorway and railway
No
Perhaps use local football club as meeting place/drinks

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Q3: How would you like to see open outdoor spaces managed and looked after?

You pay for it
Public private partnership for greater community involvement and engagement
Proper rubbish bins. Places to park. Not too precious.
By the parish council
I would like to see them left as they are currently, since this represents the most effective form of management.
Farmed and grazed as it is now
Areas of natural woodland and planting
By someone employed to specifically do this task

Q4: The masterplan sets out the principles in establishing a sustainable community at Wisloe. Which of these are your priorities (please tick all that apply)?

High quality and accessible green spaces with connections to surrounding villages	6
A landscape mound to the edge of the M5 motorway to screen views and noise from vehicles	6
A new local centre with community facilities	4
Direct and safe new walking and cycling routes	8
Woodland and wetland areas providing new habitats for wildlife	8
Spaces for outdoor exercise and wellbeing	4
Orchards and allotments	6
Attractive streets and spaces with tree planting	5
High quality homes and buildings with attractive gardens and boundaries	5

Q5: What designs and material styles would you like to see reflected in the design of the new homes and buildings at Wisloe (please tick all that apply)?

Design style	Number of selections
Wide fronted cottage	1
Mosaics, Oxford	3
Semi-detached mid century	2
Arcon Place, Altrincham	5
Slimbridge Primary School	4
Detached formal	6
Tudor Arms, Slimbridge	1
Frontage of buildings set back from the road	3
Horsted Park, Kent	2
Detached wide fronted cottage	3
Terraced with business below	1
Collection of buildings siding onto road	2

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Q: Please let us know if you have any additional comments about our plans for a new community at Wisloe.

It's too big.
There should be provision for those with larger vehicles such as vans to be able to park them, without obstructing neighbours.
The Wisloe development is entirely unnecessary and is insensitive to the needs of the community. It will destroy the character of the Cambridge/ Slimbridge/ Gossington area and has been hoisted (sic) upon the population without any relevant consultation. The resource being expended on this project would be better spent in developing the many brownfield sites in Cam and Dursley instead of destroying prime agricultural land, trees and hedgerows. Brownfield development would also be more cost effective since it would not require significant additional road and communication infrastructure. Many of the claims regarding benefits of the plan are spurious and unsupported. For example, the proposal will do nothing to help the council reduce its carbon footprint. The proposal goes against developing government policy on preserving greenbelt land and consequently should be stopped.
Nothing about what you are going to do is sustainable or carbon neutral! Absolutely disgusting
Add frequent reliable bus services to Gloucester and Cam and Dursley. The proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge over the M5 to C&D rail station must be an essential part of the plan.
Discussion with CCG around new healthcare services. Management of the River Cam and ensuring it is maintained properly.
The new community will also definitely need to include new schools, doctors and dentists surgeries as the local ones are already oversubscribed.
With the fields built on where will the rain water go? Our wildlife will suffer. Worried about traffic issues. And enough car parking spaces.
When building this new estate please be sympathetic to local surroundings. Thank you.