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|  | South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2026-2041 Regulation 19 Consultation Stage Representation Form | Our Ref: (For official use only) |
| South Gloucestershire Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation | | Public response form |
| <p>Please return this form to South Gloucestershire Council by emailing to policy.consultation@southglos.gov.uk by 11:59pm 11/04/2025. Return this form in MS Word format rather than PDFs.</p> <p>Data Protection</p> <p>Please be advised that all comments made on the new Local Plan will be published online in due course. Please note that all responses received, including some personal details cannot be kept confidential and will be made publicly available.</p> <p>Information about how we will use your personal data, and a copy of South Gloucestershire Council's Privacy Notice is available to view at: www.southglos.gov.uk/privacy, and our data protection policy is available to view at: https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/data-protection-policy/.</p> <p>If you have any questions, please contact us by email at policy.consultation@southglos.gov.uk and we will respond in a timely manner.</p> <p><i>A copy of the representations will be made available to the Planning Inspectorate and to the person appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination. The representations will be made available in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 – Regulations 20,22 and 35. This includes publication on the South Gloucestershire Council's website.</i></p> | | |
| <p><i>This form has two parts:</i></p> <p>Part A – Personal Details: need only be completed once.</p> <p><i>Please note: your <u>name</u> and <u>response</u> will be made publicly available but not your other personal details. This is in line with GDPR legislation and is a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. If you do not submit contact details your representation will not be able to be considered by the Inspector.</i></p> <p>Part B – Your representation(s). Please fill in a separate sheet for each representation you wish to make.</p> <p><i>Please do not include any personal details on this sheet as this will invalidate your response.</i></p> | | |

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Part A: Personal Details

| 1. Personal Details* | | 2. Agent's Details (if applicable) |
|--|--|--|
| | | <i>*If an agent is appointed, please complete only the Title, Name and Organisation in the boxes below but complete the full contact details of the agent in 2. Please submit in MS Word format rather than PDF.</i> |
| First Name | Joanne | Rebecca |
| | | |
| Last Name | Bryant | Miller |
| | | |
| Job Title* | Town Clerk | Planning Consultant |
| *(where relevant) | | |
| Organisation* | Emersons Green Town Council | Westgate Planning Services |
| *(where relevant) | | |
| Respondent's category* | Town Council | |
| *(please let us know whether you are responding as: a member of the public, Statutory Body, Developer/ Agent/ Site Promoter, Registered Charity, Neighbourhood Planning Group, Business or Company, Community Group, Local Councillor, Town & Parish Council or Clerk, Utility Company or Infrastructure provider, Other.) | | |
| Address Line 1 | 198 Westerleigh Road | |
| | | |
| Address Line 2 | Emersons Green | |
| | | |
| Address Line 3 | Bristol | |
| | | |
| Address Line 4 | | |
| | | |
| Post Code | BS16 7AN | |
| | | |
| Telephone Number | 0117 3026989 | 07359433413 |
| And/or | | |
| E-mail Address | Joanne@emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk | info@westgateplanningservices.co.uk |

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

2. Full Name or Organisation:

Emersons Green Town Council

Please do not include other personal details such as your address or other identification in the sections below or your response will be invalid.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LPS1 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | |
|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

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Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

Emersons Green Town Council does not believe the strategy and policy framework is sound and deliverable. Considerable work appears to have gone into the individual policies that support the strategy but an overall vision and cohesive, growth focussed approach to ensure the whole county thrives both now and into the future, while minimising the impact on the climate and protecting the natural environment appears to be lacking. The strategy is far too reliant on a small number of large-scale developments to meet the identified housing needs. The Town Council is unconvinced that this actually provides the housing where it is needed which has implications for keeping family networks together. The strategy is also premised on developer contributions providing or contributing to the infrastructure and services these largescale sites need despite this model having already been shown to be problematic with delays, rising costs or non-provision a strong possibility eg Lyde Green or Brabazon The West of England is an attractive place to invest, work and/or live but ensuring South Gloucestershire thrives requires engagement not only with South Gloucestershire's communities but necessitate the involvement and greater cooperation and co-ordination of other major West of England stakeholders. The local plan presented such an opportunity, not only to select the best sites from the call for sites to ensure organic and sustainable development across all communities but to ensure investment for regeneration, growth and employment opportunities are realised. The Town Council is concerned that the consequences of not trying to address the problematic M5 junction 14 has resulted in an inward-looking plan based on short-term decisions which will result in an expansion of Greater Bristol at the expense of green belt while disadvantaging and potentially precluding Yate, Thornbury and the northern parts of the county from realising new growth opportunities. Beyond the county, Stroud District may also have been negatively affected.

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

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Modifications-

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s).

You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

Please mark your response marking x in a box

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

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Hearing sessions-

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|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----|
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| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
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| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
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Legal compliance-

N/A

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Soundness-

The representation is in relation to draft Policy LPS2 – Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire which allocates site EG1 Land at Shortwood, Mangotsfield for residential development of 64 dwellings.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of this site will remove it from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. There is also inadequate existing infrastructure available to support additional housing in this location.

Green Belt

This site is located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

2023 NPPF paragraph 145 states:

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.”

The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant number of new homes on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no *need* to consider development on Green Belt at all.

From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF

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terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;

a) The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 advises that there is a Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary because using sites outside of the green belt would not create enough residential development for South Gloucestershire to meet their standard method housing requirement.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement. However, there is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for residential purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

The contribution of Land at Shortwood, Mangotsfield (SG387) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is open and there is no evidence of existing sprawl within the site. The site forms part of a wider area of Green Belt which is physically enclosed by the large built up area to the north, west, and south west. Due to the level of enclosure, development would round off the settlement edge and would not result in unrestricted sprawl. The edge of the large built up area is defined by the rear gardens of residential properties along its eastern boundary and Pomphrey Hill along its southern boundary. Therefore, the edge of the large built up area has a mixed boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by the A4174 to the east. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site has a defensible boundary which could prevent sprawl. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the Bristol urban area and the inset settlement of Pucklechurch. The existing gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch is 2.98km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 2.24km. The site forms part of a less essential gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch, which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: LIMITED'**

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'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site is open and contains 0.72% built form consisting of stables to the west of the site and overhead power lines running across the site. The site is flat and the only urbanising influences on the site are the pylons and the adjacent industrial uses. The site possesses a largely rural countryside character. Overall, the site makes a significant contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: SIGNIFICANT'**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA site is located in close proximity to the historic town of Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION''**

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA site makes a significant contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one purpose, a limited contribution to two purposes, and no contribution to one purpose. Professional judgement has been applied in taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open. Although the site is open with low levels of built form and it makes a significant contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the overall level of contribution is considered to be lower given the site makes a limited contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl of the large built up area and preventing neighbouring towns from merging and it makes no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore, it has been judged that the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. **RATING: MODERATE'**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of this site: EG1

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that *'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Site EG1 is considered to fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas, and this site in particular is in recreational use. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site in question (EG1) is undeveloped and is part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently in recreational use on this site and can also be accessed by footpaths. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over

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previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages to use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of the existing recreational use, it is a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity. The biodiversity value of this site is also likely to be high, due to its rural location.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove site EG1 from the Green Belt: to the contrary, it clearly performs well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include this site within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making

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effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would “not perform well enough in sustainability terms”, and therefore proposing to allocate site EG1 for development (as well as other sites in the Green Belt). There are many benefits to keeping this site in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, it provides visual amenity and recreational space. Taking these points into consideration, EG1 performs well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council's opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that site EG1 should not be allocated for development under Policy LPS2.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that “*Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.*”

The site has not been previously developed and is not well-served by public transport. Furthermore, the development of this site would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already operating at capacity and that they will not be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed growth identified in the draft Local Plan. The road network is integral to supporting development and it is already swamped. There is no reference through the draft Local Plan to the recent Western Gateway SIP consultation or WECA Joint Local Transport Plan. The Town Council are concerned that a joined up and comprehensive approach has not been undertaken to consider transport implications.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Report (HRA) that has been undertaken in the to provide a full assessment of the draft Local Plan including the policies and site allocations is incomplete and confirms that an addendum will be required to assess the recreation pressure and air pollution assessments. Without this information being available, it is not possible to conclude that the draft plan is sound. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to provide further comments once this information has been made publicly available.

Conclusion

The allocation of site EG1 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development. It would result in the loss of an existing recreational area and there is little or no infrastructure available to support the development of this site.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

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Modifications-

The removal of the proposed site allocation of EG1 – Land at Shortwood, Mangotsfield from Policy LPS2 Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire and the site returned to Green Belt.

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| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework-3-plan-making-guidance)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

This representation is in relation to draft Policy LPS2 – Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire which allocates site EG2 Land at Cossham Street, Mangotsfield for residential development of 150 dwellings.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of this site will remove it from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. There is also inadequate existing infrastructure available to support additional housing in this location, as all existing infrastructure is at capacity.

Green Belt

This site is located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

2023 NPPF paragraph 145 states:

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.”

The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant number of new homes on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no *need* to consider development on Green Belt at all.

From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the

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Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;

a) The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 advises that there is a Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary because using sites outside of the green belt would not create enough residential development for South Gloucestershire to meet their standard method housing requirement.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement. However, there is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for residential purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

The contribution of Land at Cossham Street, Mangotsfield (SG131) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

*Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is open and there is no evidence of existing sprawl within the site. The site is physically enclosed by the large built up area to the north beyond the football club, to the west, and to the south beyond Mangotsfield School. Due to the level of enclosure, development would round off the settlement edge and would not result in unrestricted sprawl. The edge of the large built up area is defined by Rodway Hill Road and the rear garden of residential properties along the western boundary. Therefore, the edge of the large built up area has a mixed boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by a narrow single track lane which backs onto Cleve Rugby Football club to the east, and hedgerow and a narrow single track lane to the south. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site has a less defensible boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: LIMITED'***

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

*Selected HELAA Site does not protect a gap between neighbouring towns given it is enclosed by the Bristol urban area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'***

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site is relatively open and contains no built form. The site is flat however it has a limited connection to the surrounding open countryside due to it being enclosed by the Bristol urban area and due to existing development to

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the south (Mangotsfield School) and east (Cleve Rugby Football Club). The site possesses a semi-urban character. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: MODERATE**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA site is located adjacent to the historic town and Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town.

RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION"

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA site makes a limited contribution to one purpose, no contribution to two purposes and a moderate contribution to two purposes. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes. **RATING: LIMITED**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of this site: EG2

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that *'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Site EG2 is considered to fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas, and this site in particular is in recreational use. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site in question (EG2) is undeveloped and is part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently in recreational use on this site and can also be accessed by footpaths. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages to use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain

and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of the existing recreational use, it is a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity. The biodiversity value of this site is also likely to be high, due to its rural location.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove site EG2 from the Green Belt: to the contrary, it clearly performs well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include this site within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would “not perform well enough in sustainability terms”, and therefore proposing to allocate site EG2 for development (as well as other sites in the Green Belt). There are many benefits to keeping this site in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, it provides visual amenity and recreational space. Taking these points into

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consideration, EG2 performs well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council's opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that site EG2 should not be allocated for development under Policy LPS2.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that "*Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.*"

The site has not been previously developed and is not well-served by public transport. Furthermore, the development of this site would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Assessment of Site EG2

The site requirements within Appendix 1 Site Allocation Development Principles of the draft Local Plan requires:

- Promotion of sustainable transport, including limiting the need to travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling, wheeling and effective access to public transport.
Protect and enhance the footpath through the site including Public Right of Way (PMR/26/10) which crosses the north-western corner of the site.
- The site is located within close proximity of Rodway Common Site of Nature Conservation Interest.
Development must protect and enhance locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity and mitigate any direct or indirect impacts.
- The site contains trees which are protected by Tree Protection Orders in the western margin.
- Development should recognise the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including of trees and woodland.
- New Green Belt boundary to be formed by retaining and enhancing existing hedgerow at the southern and eastern edges of the site. Mangotsfield Football Club will also be removed from the Green Belt.
- Development proposals should take account of Grade II Listed The Old Vicarage and Grade II* Listed St James Church and seek to preserve and enhance the significance of the identified heritage assets. This will require the submission of a Heritage Statement.

Taking all these constraints into consideration, it is not clear how much of this site is actually developable and deliverable. Given the number of constraints, a masterplan should support this allocation as without it, the is doubt that the development quota identified can be realised.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already operating at capacity and that they will not be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed growth identified in the draft Local Plan. The road network is integral to supporting development and it is already swamped. There is no reference through the draft Local Plan to the recent Western Gateway SIP consultation or WECA Joint Local Transport Plan. The Town Council are concerned that a joined up and comprehensive approach has not been undertaken to consider transport implications.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Report (HRA) that has been undertaken in the to provide a full assessment of the draft Local Plan including the policies and site allocations is incomplete and confirms that an addendum will be required to assess the recreation pressure and air pollution assessments. Without this information being available, it is not possible to conclude that the draft plan is sound. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to provide further comments once this information has been made publicly available.

Conclusion

The allocation of site EG2 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft

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Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development. It would result in the loss of an existing recreational area and there is little or no infrastructure available to support the development of this site.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Modifications-

The removal of the proposed site allocation of EG2 – Land at Cossham Street, Mangotsfield from Policy LPS2 Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire and the site returned to Green Belt.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

*In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s).
You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.*

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

Please mark your response marking x in a box

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Hearing sessions-

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

2. Full Name or Organisation:

Emersons Green Town Council

Please do not include other personal details such as your address or other identification in the sections below or your response will be invalid.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LPS2 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | EG3 |
|--|------|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----|
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

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[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

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Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

This representation is in relation to draft Policy LPS2 – Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire which allocates site EG3 The Hayfields off Cossham Street for residential development of 65 dwellings.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of this site will remove it from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. There is also inadequate existing infrastructure available to support additional housing in this location, as all existing infrastructure is at capacity.

Green Belt

This site is located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

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The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant number of new homes on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no *need* to consider development on Green Belt at all.

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From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;

a) The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 advises that there is a Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary because using sites outside of the green belt would not create enough residential development for South Gloucestershire to meet their standard method housing requirement.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement. However, there is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for residential purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

The contribution of The Hayfields off Cossham Street (SG784) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

*Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is partly open although there is existing development within it consisting of the club house and facilities associated with Cleve Rugby Football Club. The site is physically enclosed by the large built up area to the north, to the west beyond Mangotsfield United Football Club and the grassland, and to the south beyond Mangotsfield School. Due to the level of enclosure, development would round off the settlement edge and would not result in unrestricted sprawl. The edge of the large built up area is defined by the B4665 (Cossham Street/Pomphrey Hill) to the north. Therefore, the edge of the large built up area has a defensible boundary which may be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by tree line to the east, tree line and a narrow single track lane to the south, and hedgerow and a narrow single track lane to the west. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site has a less defensible boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: LIMITED'***

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

*Selected HELAA Site does not protect a gap between neighbouring towns given it is enclosed by the Bristol urban area and therefore makes no contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'***

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

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Selected HELAA site contains 2.01% built form consisting of the club house and facilities associated with Cleve Rugby Football Club. The remainder of the site consists of sports pitches with lighting. The site is flat and there are some urbanising influences due to the surrounding sports pitches and playing fields to the east and west of the site, as well as Mangotsfield School and its sports pitches to the south of the site. The site possesses a semi-urban character. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: LIMITED**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA site is located adjacent to the historic town and Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town.

RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA site makes a limited contribution to one purpose, no contribution to two purposes and a moderate contribution to two purposes. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Green Belt Purposes. **RATING: LIMITED**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of this site: EG3

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that '*the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.*'

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Site EG3 is considered to fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas, and this site in particular is in recreational use. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site in question (EG3) is undeveloped and is part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently in recreational use on this site and can also be accessed by footpaths. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages to use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of the existing recreational use, it is a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity. The biodiversity value of this site is also likely to be high, due to its rural location.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove site EG3 from the Green Belt: to the contrary, it clearly performs well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include this site within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would “not perform well enough in sustainability terms”, and therefore proposing to allocate site EG3 for development (as well as other sites in the Green

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Belt). There are many benefits to keeping this site in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, it provides visual amenity and recreational space. Taking these points into consideration, EG3 performs well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council's opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that site EG3 should not be allocated for development under Policy LPS2.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that *"Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land."*

The site has not been previously developed and is not well-served by public transport. Furthermore, the development of this site would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Assessment of Site EG3

The site requirements within Appendix 1 Site Allocation Development Principles of the draft Local Plan requires:

- Development should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport are taken up, including limiting the need to travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling, wheeling and effective access to public transport.
- New Green Belt boundary created at southern edge of site by retaining and enhancing existing hedgerow south and bound by sports pitches.
- Development should ensure the usage of sports playing pitches is retained or replaced on site in quantity and quality.
- The site contains potential for Roman activity. Development therefore has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, and as such, a desk-based assessment will be required and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Taking all these constraints into consideration, especially the potential for the site to have Roman activity, it is not clear how much of this site is actually developable and deliverable. Given the potential archaeological constraint, further investigatory work should be undertaken as there is doubt that the development quota identified can be realised.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already operating at capacity and that they will not be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed growth identified in the draft Local Plan. The road network is integral to supporting development and it is already swamped. There is no reference through the draft Local Plan to the recent Western Gateway SIP consultation or WECA Joint Local Transport Plan. The Town Council are concerned that a joined up and comprehensive approach has not been undertaken to consider transport implications.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Report (HRA) that has been undertaken in the to provide a full assessment of the draft Local Plan including the policies and site allocations is incomplete and confirms that an addendum will be required to assess the recreation pressure and air pollution assessments. Without this information being available, it is not possible to conclude that the draft plan is sound. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to provide further comments once this information has been made publicly available.

Conclusion

The allocation of site EG3 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development. It would result in the loss of

an existing recreational area and there is little or no infrastructure available to support the development of this site.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Modifications-

The removal of the proposed site allocation of EG3 – The Hayfields off Cossham Street from Policy LPS2 Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire and the site returned to Green Belt.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

Please mark your response marking x in a box

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Hearing sessions-

The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

2. Full Name or Organisation:

Emersons Green Town Council

Please do not include other personal details such as your address or other identification in the sections below or your response will be invalid.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LPS2 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | NC1 |
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

This representation is in relation to draft Policy LPS2 – Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire which allocates site NC1 West of Carsons Road as an employment only site allocation. The site is allocated for 25000m2 E(g) and 20000m2 B2/B8.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of this site will remove it from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. It will also have an impact on biodiversity as the site adjoins the Siston Common South SNCI and associated Priority Habitats.

Green Belt

This site is located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

2023 NPPF paragraph 145 states:

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.”

The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant amount of employment on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing

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land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no need to consider development on Green Belt at all.

From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;

a) The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 states:

'The Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary to allow for a sustainable strategy, is considered to exist. The spatial strategy initially focused sites, brownfield and greenfield within the urban area and within the settlement boundary of market towns. This was found however to not meet the standard method housing requirement for South Gloucestershire. The regulation 18 consultations carried out as part of this plan (Phase 3 2023-24 and Unmet Need Topic Paper 2024), set out a range of sites in locations beyond the Green Belt and within the urban area. As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.'

This supporting text does not provide any details of exceptional circumstances in relation to allocated sites within the Green Belt for employment.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement but there is no mention of essential circumstances in relation to employment land. There is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for employment purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

The contribution of West of Carsons Road (SG934) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built-up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is open and there is no evidence of existing sprawl within the site. The site is physically connected to the large built up area along the site's western boundary. The site's remaining boundaries are open and connected to the surrounding Green Belt. The site's western boundary is defined by the A4174. Therefore, the edge of the large built up area has a defensible boundary which could prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundaries of the site are defined by Carsons Road and Carsons Road Link to the north and east, and hedgerow to the south. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site is mixed and may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of the Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the Bristol urban area and the inset settlement of Pucklechurch. The existing gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch is approximately 3.1km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 2.8km. The site forms part of a less essential gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging. There is intervening development between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch consisting of the washed over village of Siston, however this does not influence the assessment of Purpose 2 given it is a washed over village. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site is open and contains no built form. The site is flat and is not directly affected by any urbanising influences although there is existing development in the Green Belt further to the north (Mangotsfield recycling centre) and further to the east of the site (along Goose Green Road). The site is connected to the surrounding countryside to the east and south. The site possesses a largely rural countryside character. Overall, the site makes a significant contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: SIGNIFICANT'**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA Site is located adjacent the historic town of Bristol however it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. Overall, the site makes no contribution to Purpose 4. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'**

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA Site makes a significant contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to two purposes, a limited contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to one purpose. Professional judgement has been applied taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open. Although the site is open with no built form and it makes a significant contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the overall level of contribution is considered to be lower given that the site makes a moderate contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built-up area, it makes a limited contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging, and it makes no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore, the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt Purposes. **RATING: MODERATE'**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of this site: NC1

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that 'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Site NC1 is considered to fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas, and this site in particular has high ecological potential. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site in question (NC1) is undeveloped and is part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently undeveloped. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of it being a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity. The biodiversity value of this site is also likely to be high, due to its rural location and adjoining the Siston Common South SNCI and associated Priority Habitats.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove site NC1 from the Green Belt: to the contrary, it clearly performs well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include this site within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

"a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would "not perform well enough in sustainability terms", and therefore proposing to allocate site NC1 for development (as well as other sites in the Green Belt). There are many benefits to keeping this site in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, it provides visual amenity and has potential to be high in ecological value. Taking these points into consideration, NC1 performs well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council's opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that site NC1 should not be allocated for development under Policy LPS2.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that *"Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land."*

The site has not been previously developed and adjoins the Siston Common South SNCI and associated Priority Habitats. Furthermore, the development of this site would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Assessment of Site NC1

The site requirements within Appendix 1 Site Allocation Development Principles of the draft Local Plan requires:

- Development should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport are taken up, including limiting the need to travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling, wheeling and effective access to public transport.
- Development should protect and enhance the footpath through the site, including the Public Right of Way (PSN/8/40/61/10) which crosses from north to south on the sites western boundary.
- The site adjoins the Siston Common South SNCI and associated Priority Habitats. Development must protect and enhance locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity and mitigate any direct or indirect impacts, and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and habitat networks.
- New Green Belt boundary formed by Carsons Road Link to east and by retaining and enhancing existing hedgerow to the south of the site. Take account of the area of Common Land which adjoins the southern and eastern edges of the site.

Taking all these constraints into consideration, especially that the site adjoins the Siston Common South SNCI and associated Priority Habitats and the existing Public Right of Way that crosses the site, it is not clear how much of this site is actually developable and deliverable. Given the potential ecological constraint, further investigatory work should be

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undertaken as there is doubt that the development quota identified can be realised.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already operating at capacity and that they will not be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed growth identified in the draft Local Plan. The road network is integral to supporting development and it is already swamped. There is no reference through the draft Local Plan to the recent Western Gateway SIP consultation or WECA Joint Local Transport Plan. The Town Council are concerned that a joined up and comprehensive approach has not been undertaken to consider transport implications.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Report (HRA) that has been undertaken in the to provide a full assessment of the draft Local Plan including the policies and site allocations is incomplete and confirms that an addendum will be required to assess the recreation pressure and air pollution assessments. Without this information being available, it is not possible to conclude that the draft plan is sound. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to provide further comments once this information has been made publicly available.

Conclusion

The allocation of site NC1 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development. It would result in the loss of an existing recreational area and potential adverse impact on ecology.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

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6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

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Modifications-

The removal of the proposed site allocation of NC1 – West of Carsons Road from Policy LPS2 Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire and the site returned to Green Belt.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

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7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

Please mark your response marking x in a box

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

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Hearing sessions-

The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

2. Full Name or Organisation:

Emersons Green Town Council

Please do not include other personal details such as your address or other identification in the sections below or your response will be invalid.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| | | | | | |
|--|------|--|--|--|------|
| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LPS2 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | BV16 |
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-3-plan-making-guidance)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

This representation is in relation to draft Policy LPS2 – Locational Strategy for South Gloucestershire which allocates site BV16 Glenfern and Land to East of Carsons Road as an employment only. The site is 2.6Ha and is allocated for E(g), B2, B8 uses.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of this site will remove it from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. The site also contains a number of trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and there is an area of Common Land that must be avoided.

Green Belt

This site is located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

2023 NPPF paragraph 145 states:

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.”

The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant amount of employment on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no *need* to consider development on Green Belt at all.

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From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;
a) *The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'*

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 states:

'The Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary to allow for a sustainable strategy, is considered to exist. The spatial strategy initially focused sites, brownfield and greenfield within the urban area and within the settlement boundary of market towns. This was found however to not meet the standard method housing requirement for South Gloucestershire. The regulation 18 consultations carried out as part of this plan (Phase 3 2023-24 and Unmet Need Topic Paper 2024), set out a range of sites in locations beyond the Green Belt and within the urban area. As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.'

This supporting text does not provide any details of exceptional circumstances in relation to allocated sites within the Green Belt for employment.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement but there is no mention of essential circumstances in relation to employment land. There is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for employment purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

The contribution of Glenfern and Land to East of Carsons Road (SG896) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is not physically connected to the large built up area however it is perceptually connected being approximately 127m away and due to existing development in the Green Belt between the built up area and the site (a household waste recycling centre). There is evidence of existing sprawl within the site consisting of light industrial uses (storage containers and car dealership) concentrated within the northern half of the site. The southern half of the site is open. The edge of the large built up area is defined by the A4174 which is a defensible boundary which could prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined the curtilage of a residential dwelling and cattery to the south; hedgerow and field boundary to the east; a single track lane to the north; and Carsons Road to the west. Therefore the outer boundary of the site is less defensible and may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. Overall, due to the existing sprawl within the site, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of the Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the Bristol urban area and the inset settlement of Pucklechurch. The existing gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch is approximately 3.01km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 2.57km. The site forms part of a less essential gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging. There is intervening development between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch consisting of sporadic residential development and farm buildings as well as the washed over village of Siston, however this does not influence the assessment of Purpose 2 given it is a washed over village. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 2 **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site contains 3.82% built form consisting of light industrial uses (storage containers and a car dealership) concentrated within the northern half of the site. The site is flat and there are urbanising influences both within the site and adjacent to the site due to the household waste recycling centre to the west. The site possesses a semi-urban character. Overall, the site makes no contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA site is located in close proximity to the historic town of Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'**

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA site makes a moderate contribution to one purpose, no contribution to two purposes and a limited contribution to two purposes. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. **RATING: LIMITED'**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of this site: BV16

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that 'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Site BV16 is considered to fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas, and this site in particular has a number of trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in

principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The site in question (BV16) is undeveloped and is part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently undeveloped. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages to use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.”

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of it being a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove site BV16 from the Green Belt: to the contrary, it clearly performs well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include this site within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

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The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

"a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would "not perform well enough in sustainability terms", and therefore proposing to allocate site BV16 for development (as well as other sites in the Green Belt). There are many benefits to keeping this site in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, it provides visual amenity, part of the site is Common Land and has a number of trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Taking these points into consideration, BV16 performs well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council's opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that site BV16 should not be allocated for development under Policy LPS2.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that *"Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land."*

The site has not been previously developed and contains trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Furthermore, the development of this site would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Assessment of Site BV16

The site requirements within Appendix 1 Site Allocation Development Principles of the draft Local Plan requires:

- Development should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport are taken up, including limiting the need to travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling, wheeling and effective access to public transport.
- The site falls within the Grassland Connectivity Opportunity area of the Nature Recovery Network. Development should identify opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of surface water flooding, including maximising opportunities for natural flood management and multi-functional green infrastructure.
- Development should demonstrate how they will ensure a strong defensible Green Belt boundary.
- Take account of the area of Common Land, which runs the length of the western boundary of the site.
- The site contains trees which are protected by Tree Protection Orders on the western margin of the site. Development should recognise the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including of trees and woodland.

Taking all these constraints into consideration, especially that part of the site is Common Land and that there are a number of Trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, it is not clear how much of this site is actually developable and deliverable. Given the potential constraints, further investigatory work should be undertaken as there is doubt that the development quota identified can be realised.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already

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Conclusion

The allocation of site BV16 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development. It would result in the loss of an existing recreational area and potential adverse impact on Common Land and trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

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Modifications-

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This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LP6 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

Emersons Green Town Council does not believe the inclusion of LP6 North Lyde ecotech village in its current format is justified as there are concerns around the subjective nature of its selection. Despite this area of Green Belt being assessed as 'Significant' for purposes (a), (b) and (c) (NPPF p143) by WECA, this was conveniently downgraded in the ARUP 2025 Sustainability Assessments to 'moderate' which has allowed a 'professional judgement' to be made that development would not be deemed urban sprawl.

The whole sustainability of the site is questionable and aspirational and is unlikely to be deliverable based on other recent large-scale developments.

- This is an 'isolated island' of green belt hemmed in by the M4 and Westerleigh Road which will be viewed as adding to 'greater Bristol'.
- Proposed employment opportunities associated with an extended Science Park will be in specialist fields. This will provide little benefit to most residents and based on the existing science park will generate additional traffic to the site.
- There is nothing wrong with proposing denser housing and reduced car parking to encourage uses of sustainable public transport and active travel options. However, nothing has been learnt from the Brabazon "New Town" which has similar housing but within a larger more sustainable site. Even with greater economies of scale SGC is aware of its transport infrastructure issues and a potential influx of cars (up to 12,000). Similar results can be anticipated at this site which could generate 4000 cars.
- Site infrastructure delivery is mainly premised on developer contributions. The site is located within a heritage rich and environmentally diverse area but no consideration appears to have been given to the potential implications and costs in the event of archaeological outcomes or costs associated with BNG which could impact funding for infrastructure. Based on experiences at neighbouring Lyde Green, far longer timeframes and larger financial contributions are needed to get the infrastructure in place if it happens at all (secondary school still not built, huge problem with GPs who are already at capacity or closed Emersons Green Medical Centre, dentists etc) suggesting infrastructure will not be delivered within the plan period.
- There has been no consideration that LP6 is an area of green space already used for recreation by the adjacent Lyde Green and Emersons Green communities. Once this disappears any remaining green areas will be subject to unsustainable and damaging footfall.

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

You will need to say why each modification will make the Local Plan legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be as precise as possible.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Modifications-

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

In your representation you should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification(s). You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions.

7. If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s)?

Please mark your response marking x in a box

No, I do not wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Yes, I wish to participate in hearing session(s)

Please note that while this will provide an initial indication of your wish to participate in hearing session(s), you may be asked at a later point to confirm your request to participate.

8. If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Hearing sessions-

The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to participate in hearing session(s). You may be asked to confirm your wish to participate when the Inspector has identified the matters and issues for examination.

Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

2. Full Name or Organisation:

Emersons Green Town Council

Please do not include other personal details such as your address or other identification in the sections below or your response will be invalid.

3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

This question is required and should be answered for each policy or site commenting on, unless commenting on the whole plan.

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|--|--|--|-------------------|
| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LP7 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | BV3 BV6 BV9 |
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework-3-plan-making-guidance)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Local Plan or its compliance with the duty to co-operate, please also use this box to set out your comments.

Please note this section must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

This representation is in relation to draft Policy LP7 – Carsons Green and Rockhouse Farm New Neighbourhoods which allocates sites BV9 Carsons Green, BV3 Rockhouse Farm and BV6 Shortwood Hill for a minimum of 1930 dwellings and a new strategic employment area.

This representation to Regulation 19 follows the representation that was submitted in response to the Phase 3 consultation, under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Town Council through their comments on the draft Local Plan seek to preserve existing recreational land and the Green Belt. The allocation of these sites will remove them from the Green Belt and result in the loss of recreational land. There are a number of potential constraints that development needs to take into account, including but not limited to:

- Siston Conservation Area
- Grade I listed Siston Court and Grade II listed Lodge Farm
- Public Rights of Way
- Cotswold National Landscape (AONB)

Green Belt

These sites are located entirely within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt. As this Local Plan has been prepared under transitional arrangements, it will be examined under the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and not the December 2024 NPPF.

The 2023 NPPF made a significant change to Chapter 13 on Green Belt land. Former paragraph 140 stated:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.”

2023 NPPF paragraph 145 states:

“Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process.”

The amendments to the 2023 NPPF are significant with regards to Green Belt as regardless of whether exceptional circumstances exist, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed. The previous NPPF provided the assumption that alteration to the Green Belt boundaries would at least be considered where exceptional circumstances existed.

The Town Council does not believe there is enough evidence to support the proposed release of green belt on the scale being promoted in the emerging preferred strategy which in turn results in the loss of existing recreational land that is well used by the community. Evidence from the various strategic lenses suggests that if a whole county approach was adopted, the loss of green belt could be far better managed and proportionate.

It is the Town Council's view that this approach needs to be re-examined by the council, due to the changes to national planning policy on Green Belts because there is now no requirement to consider review or change to Green Belt boundaries. This contrasts with the draft local plan that allocates a significant amount of employment on land that is currently designated as Green Belt.

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Given the changes to 2023 NPPF Chapter 13, the council should reconsider whether a strategy that includes removing land from the Green Belt is still appropriate as there is no need to consider development on Green Belt at all.

From the current consultation it is not apparent that the council has evidence of the effect the removal of land from the Green Belt would have on the Green Belt. The removal of land from the Green Belt is therefore not justified, in NPPF terms. The South Gloucestershire Stage 2 Green Belt Review states at 2.4 that:

'Changes to Green Belt are not generally supported by the NPPF, as the general extent has already been established and given the intended permanence of the Green Belt. This is indeed reflected within the NPPF which states that 'there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated'. Any proposed changes will need to be supported by a robust 'exceptional circumstances' case, which is fully justified and evidenced. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Green Belt Review will only provide the starting point and it will be necessary for the Council to develop the exceptional circumstances case, both at strategic and site level, as part of the wider Local Plan process.'

Draft Policy LPS1 – Strategy Principles at point 12 states:

'All development proposals in the Green Belt, including on allocated sites removed from the Green Belt, for new homes, including Gypsy/ Traveller and Travelling Showpeople, employment land, community and leisure uses, will be expected to deliver new or enhanced, long term Green Belt boundaries, which are capable of enduring beyond the plan period. In addition;
a) *The extent of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt within South Gloucestershire is defined on the Policies Map'*

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 states:

'The Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary to allow for a sustainable strategy, is considered to exist. The spatial strategy initially focused sites, brownfield and greenfield within the urban area and within the settlement boundary of market towns. This was found however to not meet the standard method housing requirement for South Gloucestershire. The regulation 18 consultations carried out as part of this plan (Phase 3 2023-24 and Unmet Need Topic Paper 2024), set out a range of sites in locations beyond the Green Belt and within the urban area. As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.'

The supporting text to this policy at paragraph 12 advises that there is a Strategic case for exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt boundary because using sites outside of the green belt would not create enough residential development for South Gloucestershire to meet their standard method housing requirement. The supporting text does not provide any details of exceptional circumstances in relation to allocated sites within the Green Belt for employment.

Exceptional circumstances

Due to the changes to the 2023 NPPF at chapter 13, the Town Council considers that the overall spatial strategy needs to be reconsidered. It is acknowledged that the removal of land from the Green Belt is still considered to be a necessary part of the spatial strategy and that the exceptional circumstance is to enable the Council to meet their standard method housing requirement but there is no mention of essential circumstances in relation to employment land. There is no specific evidence setting out why this site should be released from the green belt. The extent of discussion of exceptional circumstances appears to be limited to the supporting text in relation to draft Policy LPS1. There appears to be no topic paper available that considers this matter further. No further evidence of this has been presented and therefore it is the Town Council's opinion that exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to support the release of this land for employment purposes.

Green Belt Report Stage 2

In Autumn 2023, ARUP was commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council to undertake a Stage 2 Green Belt assessment of sites emerging from the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2023). The purpose of this report is to form a secondary, spatially-focused stage to the strategic Stage 1 Strategic Development Strategy – Strategic Green Belt Assessment, which was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), prepared by LUC and Atkins and published in November 2021.

The purpose of the Green Belt Review is to provide evidence of how different areas of Green Belt perform against the

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Green Belt purposes, as set out in the NPPF. Alongside other supporting evidence, the Stage 2 Green Belt Review underpins the evidence to inform policy choices regarding the strategy for growth within the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

BV9 - Site A Carsons Green - SG SG868

The contribution of Carsons Green (SG868) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

*Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built-up area. The site is predominantly open and there is some evidence of existing sprawl within the site consisting of residential properties, a children's nursery, and open storage. The site is physically connected to the large built-up area along the site's western boundary. The remaining boundaries are open and connected to the surrounding Green Belt. The western boundary is defined mainly by the A4174. Although the boundary extends around Syston Farm, the A4174 is beyond this. Therefore, the edge of the large built-up area has a defensible boundary which could prevent sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by the rear gardens of residential properties, field boundary and Shortwood Hill to the north, field boundary and the curtilage of a farm to the east, Glenfern Yard, mature hedgerow and field boundary to the south, and Carsons Road, the A4174 and the curtilage and rear gardens of residential properties, and mature tree belt to the north west. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site has a mixed boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: MODERATE'***

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

*Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of the Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the inset settlement of Pucklechurch and the Bristol urban area. The existing gap between the neighbouring town and inset settlement is approximately 2.42km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 1.05km. The gap consists of agricultural land although there is intervening development consisting of sporadic development along the B4465 and the washed over village of Shortwood however this does not influence the assessment of Purpose 2 as it is a washed over village. The site forms a gap, or part of a gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch where there may be scope for some development, but where the overall openness and the scale of the gap is important to restricting merging. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: MODERATE'***

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

*Selected HELAA site is predominantly open and contains 0.24% built form consisting of residential development and open storage located within the centre of the site at Lodge Farm, and a children's nursery located to the south west of the site. Lodge Farm consists of rural land uses and is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The site has varied topography and is well connected to the surrounding open countryside to the east and south. The site possesses a largely rural countryside character. **RATING: SIGNIFICANT'***

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

*Selected HELAA Site is located adjacent the historic town of Bristol however it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. Overall, the site makes no contribution to Purpose 4. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'***

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

*All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'***

'Overall Assessment

*Selected HELAA site makes a moderate contribution to three purposes, a significant contribution to one purpose and no contribution to one purpose. Professional judgement has been applied taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open. Although the site is open with low levels of built form and it makes a significant contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the overall level of contribution is considered to be lower given that the site makes a moderate contribution to preventing neighbouring towns from merging and checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, and it makes no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore, it has been judged that the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. **RATING: MODERATE'***

BV3 – Rockhouse Farm – SG209

The contribution of Rockhouse Farm (SG209) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

*Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is open and there is limited evidence of existing sprawl within the site consisting of the curtilages of two residential dwellings and agricultural buildings. The site is perceptually connected to the large built-up area along the site's southern boundary. This is due to ribbon development extending along Main Road. The edge of the large built up area is defined by the rear gardens of residential properties which is a less defensible boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by the B4465 to the north, Cattybrook Road to the east, and Main Road to the south, a small section of the southern boundary is defined by hedgerow and woodland. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site is mixed but is predominantly defensible and may be able to prevent sprawl. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: MODERATE'***

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of the Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the Bristol urban area and inset settlement of Pucklechurch. The existing gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch is approximately 2.1km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 1.8km. There is intervening development between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch consisting of sporadic development along the B4465 and the washed over village of Shortwood however this does not influence the assessment of Purpose 2 as it is a washed over village. The site forms part of a less essential gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site is predominantly open and contains 1.8% built form consisting of residential dwellings and agricultural buildings located along Catybrook Road. Given that the agricultural buildings are rural land uses, they are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Pylons are also dispersed throughout the site. The site is flat and the only urbanising influences on the site are the pylons and the washed over village of Shortwood to the south. The site possesses a largely rural countryside character. Overall, the site makes a significant contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: SIGNIFICANT'**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA Site is located in close proximity to the historic town of Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core, and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. Overall, the site makes no contribution to Purpose 4. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'**

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA sites makes a significant contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to two purposes, a limited contribution to one purpose and no contribution to one purpose. Professional judgement has been applied in taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open. Although the site is open with low levels of built form and it makes a significant contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the overall level of contribution is considered to be lower given that the site makes a moderate contribution to checking unrestricted urban sprawl, a limited contribution to preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, and no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore, it has been judged that the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. **RATING: MODERATE'**

BV6 – Shortwood Hill – SG346

The contribution of Shortwood Hill (SG346) to the purposes of the Green Belt is considered within the Stage 2 report, set out in Appendix E and provided for reference below.

'Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Selected HELAA site is located at the edge of the large built-up area (the Bristol urban area). The site is open and there is no evidence of existing sprawl within the site. The site is perceptually connected to the large built-up area along the site's northern and western boundaries. This is due to ribbon development extending along Shortwood Hill. The northern boundary is defined by Shortwood Hill, and the western boundary is defined by the curtilage of residential dwellings. The edge of the large built up area is defined by the rear gardens of residential properties along its eastern boundary and Pomphrey Hill along its southern boundary. Therefore, the edge of the large built up area has a mixed boundary which may not be able to prevent unrestricted sprawl. The outer boundary of the site is defined by Shortwood Hill to the north and west, and hedgerow and field boundaries to the east and south. Therefore, the outer boundary of the site is mixed and may not be able to prevent sprawl. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to Purpose 1. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Selected HELAA site is located between the neighbouring towns of Bristol urban area and Yate with the site forming part of the gap between the Bristol urban area and the inset settlement of Pucklechurch. The existing gap between the neighbouring town and the inset settlement is approximately 2.4km across the site. Development of the site would reduce the gap to approximately 1.24km. There is intervening development between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch consisting of sporadic development along the B4465 and the washed over village of Shortwood however this does not influence the assessment of Purpose 2 as it is a washed over village. The site forms part of a less essential gap between the Bristol urban area and Pucklechurch which is of sufficient scale and character that development is unlikely to cause merging. Overall, the site makes a limited contribution to Purpose 2. **RATING: LIMITED'**

'Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Selected HELAA site is open and contains no built form. The site is predominantly flat. The washed over village of Shortwood to the west has an urbanising influence on the site. The site possesses a largely rural countryside character. Overall, the site makes a significant contribution to Purpose 3. **RATING: SIGNIFICANT'**

'Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Selected HELAA site is located in close proximity to the historic town of Bristol, however, it is located a significant distance away from the historic core and therefore has no role in maintaining the immediate context and setting of the historic town. Overall, the site makes no contribution to Purpose 4. **RATING: NO CONTRIBUTION'**

'Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

All Green Belt is considered to play a role in contributing to Purpose 5 by encouraging re-use of urban land. All Selected HELAA Sites therefore make a moderate contribution to Purpose 5. **RATING: MODERATE'**

'Overall Assessment

Selected HELAA sites makes a significant contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to two purposes, a limited contribution to one purpose and no contribution to one purpose. Professional judgement has been applied in taking into account the overall aims and purposes of the Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open. Although the site is open with no built form and it makes a significant contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the overall level of contribution is considered to be lower given that the site makes a moderate contribution to checking unrestricted urban sprawl, a limited contribution to preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, and no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. Therefore, it has been judged that the site makes a moderate overall contribution to Green Belt purposes. **RATING: MODERATE'**

The Town Council's view of the Green Belt performance of these sites (BV3, BV6 and BV9)

Whilst the draft Local Plan is supported by a technical report that assesses the sites contribution to the Green Belt, the Town Council has undertaken a similar assessment to the one undertaken by the Council that has been presented in a technical report. The Town Council's assessment is detailed below.

The 2023 NPPF Chapter 13 states that *'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Town Council considers that all three sites fully meet purposes (a), (c) and (e).

Purpose (a): to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The built-up area of Bristol and surrounding localities within the Green Belt, which includes Emersons Green, is considered to be a large built-up area for Green Belt purposes. Green Belt land around this area serves Purpose A by restricting developed areas. It is the fact that the sites are included within the Green Belt that prevents the sites from being developed, in principle. Without this protection, it is likely that the large built-up area would sprawl further out, thus conflicting with Purpose (a). This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (c): to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The sites in question are undeveloped and are part of the countryside. In this case, the Green Belt countryside extends into the urban area, providing valuable access to countryside land to residents of Emersons Green. The land is currently undeveloped. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Purpose (e): to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

This purpose serves to encourage the development of previously developed land instead of greenfield land. It is generally cheaper to develop greenfield land and therefore developers tend to prefer to develop greenfield land over previously developed land. NPPF paragraph 89 also encourages to use of previously developed land. By keeping this site in the Green Belt and therefore out of the supply of land available for development, this encourages urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict land. This purpose is therefore considered to be met.

Paragraph 150 states:

"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land."

The Bristol Bath Green Belt was first described in 1966, although it has been altered periodically, it is an established Green Belt. Given that it was established in 1966, South Gloucestershire Council should plan positively to enhance its beneficial use. In this case, access to this site exists by virtue of it being a green landscape, which is valued by several local communities for its visual amenity.

Therefore, to accord with 2023 NPPF paragraph 150, South Gloucestershire Council should not be seeking to remove these sites from the Green Belt: to the contrary, they clearly perform well against several purposes and is used in ways consistent with NPPF paragraph 150, in terms of enhancing their beneficial use. Continuing to include these sites within the local plan would be considered an issue of soundness due to inconsistency with national policy which seeks to retain the Green Belt.

NPPF paragraph 147 states:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

The position advocated by South Gloucestershire Council in the draft Local Plan appears to be that not releasing land within the Green Belt would mean that the Council is unable to meet their standard method housing requirement and development would instead need to be directed beyond the Green Belt. The supporting text for Policy LPS1 states that *‘As part of the Phase 3 consultation, a strategy approach of including sites and locations beyond the Green Belt was tested and consulted on. This was not considered the most appropriate strategy in terms of meeting the plans objectives, including impact on environmental, heritage and landscape assets, availability and reasonable prospect of delivering access to key services, facilities and necessary infrastructure, particularly in respect of Junction 14.’* To support this statement, it would be expected that an appraisal of how sites perform would be undertaken but there is no record of this and therefore it is difficult to understand if this position has been taken based on evidence.

It is assumed that part of the reasoning behind this strategy is in relation to longer travel / distance to Bristol if development occurs beyond the Green Belt which may be considered to be unsustainable. However, from the information available, it is not possible to find any further evidence or explanation around this point but, sustainability does not relate solely to distance.

The NPPF states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three objectives:

“a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

From the information available, it does not appear that South Gloucestershire Council has taken all three of these objectives into account, in stating that not removing land from the Green Belt would “not perform well enough in sustainability terms”, and therefore proposing to allocate these sites for development (as well as other sites in the Green Belt). There are many benefits to keeping these sites in the Green Belt, including but not limited to it being an undeveloped area of land, adjacent to existing communities, they provide visual amenity, have ecological value. Taking these points into consideration, the sites perform well in terms of the social and environmental objectives of the planning system and therefore helps to achieve sustainable development. It is therefore the Town Council’s opinion that in attempting to address NPPF paragraph 147, in terms of developing a spatial strategy, the council has only partly

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assessed the effects described in paragraph 147. If these aspects had been properly considered, it is our view that sites BV3, BV6 and BV9 should not be allocated for development under Policy LP7.

Furthermore, paragraph 147 states that *"Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land."*

These sites have not been previously developed, the development of these sites would worsen the accessibility of Green Belt land, by increasing the distance between the Green Belt and existing communities, as well as a significant reduction in environmental quality of the land.

Infrastructure

The Town Council is concerned that the existing road networks (A4174, M4, A432, A420 and B4465) are already operating at capacity and that they will not be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the proposed growth identified in the draft Local Plan. The road network is integral to supporting development and it is already swamped. There is no reference through the draft Local Plan to the recent Western Gateway SIP consultation or WECA Joint Local Transport Plan. The Town Council are concerned that a joined up and comprehensive approach has not been undertaken to consider transport implications.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

The Habitats Regulation Assessment Report (HRA) that has been undertaken in the to provide a full assessment of the draft Local Plan including the policies and site allocations is incomplete and confirms that an addendum will be required to assess the recreation pressure and air pollution assessments. Without this information being available, it is not possible to conclude that the draft plan is sound. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to provide further comments once this information has been made publicly available.

Phasing Plan

If this policy is found sound and is adopted in the Local Plan, a significant amount of development could be delivered under this policy which if appropriately planned and delivered in a phased approach could deliver some much-needed infrastructure to this area. It is essential that all 3 sites work together and accord to a detailed phasing plan to ensure that required infrastructure is delivered to meet any impacts of the development before the impacts are felt in the local area.

Conclusion

The allocation of these sites under draft Policy LP2 and associated removal of land from the Green Belt is considered to require reconsideration. The Town Council do not believe that the council has properly taken national policy into account in pursuing its draft Local Plan and therefore it is considered that the plan is not sound. It is also our view that, upon a correct and full assessment of this site against Green Belt policy, it should not be allocated for development.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

It is not possible to fully assess this given that only a brief statement has been issued and the full Duty to Co-operate will be published at a later date. The Town Council seek to reserve the right to make further comments as new / additional information is made publicly available.

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

6. Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified at 5 above.

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Modifications-

The removal of the proposed site allocations BV3, BV6 and BV9 from Policy LP2 – Carsons Green and Rockhouse Farn New Neighbourhoods and the site returned to Green Belt.

(Continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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Hearing sessions-

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Part B: Please use a separate sheet for each representation

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Emersons Green Town Council

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3. To which part of the Local Plan does this representation relate?

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| Policy number or Policy Title e.g. LPS10 | LP8 | Policy Criteria or Paragraph number | | Site allocation reference e.g. NX1 | |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

or please mark 'X' instead if your response is not specific / relates to the whole plan.

4. Do you consider the Local Plan is: *please mark your response marking 'X' in a box*

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 4.(A) Legally compliant | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(B) Sound | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.(C) Complies with the Duty to Co-operate | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please note, the tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared
- Justified
- Effective
- Consistent with National Policy

Please, see the separate statement of representation procedure (guidance note) for further information on 'soundness'.

[National Planning Policy Framework - 3. Plan-making - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

5. Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not compliant with relevant legislation, or does not meet the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate. Please be as precise as possible making reference to specific aspects of the plan and relevant legislation and policy.

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Legal compliance-

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

Soundness-

Emersons Green Town Council believes LP8 North Warmley New Neighbourhood in its current format is another site where there is a lack of robust justification for 'conveniently' reducing the green belt protection across all the sites (ARUP 2025 Sustainability Assessments) to allow such extensive development.

- This is yet another development marooned behind the A420 which will be seen as adding to 'greater Bristol'. Its isolated location makes it highly unlikely that the envisaged connection to Warmley High Street will materialise.
- No-one has looked at the combined impacts of LP 7 & 8. These sites together with the adjacent Carsons Green neighbourhood will actually put enormous stress on the remaining green spaces and immense pressure through increased footfall on local Commons, woods and strategic green corridors which it is claims will benefit from the development.
- Visually important hillsides including Pucklechurch Ridge and adjacent Oldland Ridge, will be directly impacted by the proposed developments.
- Promoting sustainable public transport and active travel options is to be applauded but nothing has been learnt from the Brabazon "New Town". Even with greater economies of scale it has encountered transport infrastructure issues leading to a large influx of cars. Similar results can be anticipated across these sites with up to 2000 cars feeding onto the already congested A420.
- Site infrastructure delivery is mainly premised on developed contributions. The site is located within a heritage rich and environmentally diverse area but no consideration appears to have been given to the potential implications and costs in the event of archaeological outcomes or costs associated with BNG which could impact funding for infrastructure. Based on experiences at Lyde Green, far longer timeframes and larger financial contributions are needed to get the infrastructure in place if it happens at all (secondary school still not built, huge problem with GPs who are already at capacity or surgery closed, dentists etc) suggesting infrastructure will not be delivered within the plan period.

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

N/A

(please continue on a separate sheet /expand box if necessary)

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Modifications-

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|---|------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Table in policy | | Figure in Policy | | Other | |

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Legal compliance-

N/A

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Soundness-

Emersons Green Town Council consider LP11 to be unsound as it includes specific factual inaccuracy, and a logical mismatch between its premise and conclusion, particularly in its justification for applying a generic policy approach to future strategic developments.

The core of the argument is:

"Because the Council has experience delivering some large sites and the TCPA has published general guidance, this proves that we should apply a generic set of requirements to all future strategic sites."

This reasoning is flawed. Experience with some strategic sites does not automatically justify uniform policy requirements for all future sites. Each development site has unique constraints, stakeholders, infrastructure needs, and environmental or social contexts that may not be adequately addressed by generic requirements. Sites detailed such as Lyde Green, Ladden Garden Village and Charlton Hayes are yet to see infrastructure delivered as promised in the original plans and still see unadopted roads with no visibility of this situation improving.

"Large sites take time to deliver and are complex."

This doesn't logically follow. Complex sites may require more flexible, site-specific policies rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. In fact, rigidity may hinder delivery rather than speed it up, contradicting the stated goal.

Lack of Evidence for Effectiveness

The argument implies that because experience has been gained, and national documents exist, generic policy will improve outcomes and speed:

"It is vitally important that this learning is captured and applied in a consistent way..."

However, the statement does not demonstrate that consistency (via generic policy) leads to improved delivery or outcomes. Without evidence or case studies showing that this approach has worked before, the policy justification remains assertive but unproven. Current experience across South Gloucestershire demonstrates outcomes are not sufficient.

Emersons Green Town Council consider this statement to be unsound because it makes logical leaps and generalisations without sufficient evidence or justification, and it assumes that a generic, consistent policy approach will address the complex, varied challenges of strategic site delivery. An evidence-based, flexible, and site-specific approach would likely be more appropriate and defensible in planning policy.

While well-intentioned and seemingly logical on the surface, Emersons Green Town Council consider LP11 unsound because it contains a few implicit assumptions, logical overextensions, and potential policy weaknesses that undermine its strength as a justification for formal policy.

1. Overgeneralisation of Process and Context
The statement assumes that all large-scale developments can, and should, follow the same structured process involving:
 - A vision
 - A programme with milestones
 - Specific governance structures
 - A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)

Why this is unsound:

Not all sites will have the same level of complexity, capacity, developer experience, or pace. Imposing a uniform process may be inflexible and counterproductive in some contexts - for example, smaller strategic sites or sites led by less resourced developers may struggle with the same level of formality or resourcing.

2. Unproven Assumption that Process Guarantees Success

Please note this form must be submitted as an MS Word document rather than a PDF.

The statement implies that by having a vision, programme management, and governance structures in place: "...the ambition is achieved."

Why this is unsound:

Having structures in place does not guarantee the ambition will be met. There's an assumed causal link here that isn't supported by evidence - real-world outcomes often depend on market conditions, legal challenges, infrastructure delays, etc. Good governance helps but doesn't ensure success. Sites detailed such as Lyde Green, Ladden Garden Village and Charlton Hayes are yet to see infrastructure delivered as promised in the original plans and still see unadopted roads with no visibility of this situation improving.

3. Prescriptive Policy Language Without Legal Backing
Phrases like:
"should be agreed ideally at pre-app stage but absolutely prior to outline approval"
suggest a mandatory procedural requirement.

Why this is unsound:

Unless these steps are supported by legal frameworks or established local validation requirements, they risk being challenged as unreasonable or ultra vires (i.e. going beyond planning law). The use of words like "absolutely" implies inflexibility, which is hard to defend in the planning system, where discretion is key.

4. Potential Conflict with National Planning Framework
National policy encourages LPAs to be flexible, proportionate, and enabling. By pushing a rigid, multi-layered governance model as a prerequisite for outline approval, the statement may unintentionally deter development, contrary to the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
5. Unclear Accountability or Mechanisms for Enforcement
The statement outlines what should happen - vision, PPA, governance - but provides no clear mechanism for:
 - What happens if it doesn't?
 - Who ensures compliance?
 - How is progress monitored and enforced?

Without this, it reads more like an aspirational management approach than a robust planning policy.

Summary:

The statement is unsound because it:

- Assumes a one-size-fits-all solution to inherently variable developments.
- Overstates the effectiveness of process and governance without evidence.
- Prescribes requirements that may not be legally enforceable through the planning system.
- Risks being inflexible and incompatible with national guidance on proportionate planning.

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

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Legal compliance-

N/A

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Soundness-

Emersons Green Town Council welcomes the recognition and obligations to limit the impact of development on the climate through adaptation, by reducing emissions and building resilience. As noted in LP23 it seems ironic that SGC did not appear to apply the same rigor to the selection of sites LP6, 7 & 8 where inclusion in the local plan will directly contribute to climate change through the loss of natural carbon sinks, alleviation of urban heat island effects (especially around the already densely populated urban eastern fringe) and flood risk mitigation. The fracturing of important wildlife and green corridors are not be rectified by BNG initiatives which are not guaranteed on site.

The Town Council is concerned the descriptions in the policy are broad and nonspecific and open to interruption and the aims are aspirational. This increases the likelihood they will not be deliverable as envisaged for the following reasons:

- Climate mitigation measures are more costly – there is a risk during development, developers claim measures are too financially onerous/impactful on profits leading to a scaling back.
- Risk above will impact the financial contributions for other essential infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainability matters which could be reduced.
- Rowing back of government commitment to green agenda.

Complies with the Duty to Co-operate -

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