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## Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 22-24 April and 6-7 May 2026

Accompanied site visit made on 22 April 2026

**by G Rollings BA(Hons) MAUD MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026

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### Appeal Ref: 6002408

#### Land North of Taits Hill Road, Dursley, GL11 6BN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Clifton Homes (SW) Ltd & Landowners against the decision of Stroud District Council.
  - The application Ref is S.25/0447/OUT.
  - The development proposed is an outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for residential development to provide up to 73 dwellings, public open space, community orchard, and associated access, vehicle parking, and drainage and landscaping works.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The Inquiry was held at Stroud District Council's (the Council's) offices and online. At the time of my decision, all core and inquiry documents are hosted on the Council's website.<sup>1</sup> Relevant document lists are annexed to this decision.
3. At the Inquiry, I agreed with the appellant and the Council ('the main parties') that completed and signed planning agreements between the landowners and the Council, and the landowners and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) could be submitted after the Inquiry closed. I received these on 22 May 2026.<sup>2</sup>
4. I held an online case management conference (CMC) on 26 February 2026, which was attended by the main parties and at which the Inquiry format and main issues for consideration were agreed. My post-CMC note sets out a summary of the meeting.<sup>3</sup>
5. Together with the main parties, I visited the site and its surroundings on the accompanied site visit, following an agreed route. Various properties were included, including private homes. We were accompanied by other interested parties, from whom I invited suggestions for additional vantage points both before the visit and during the presentation of evidence. I made an informal, unaccompanied visit to the site the day before the Inquiry opened, and further unaccompanied visits during the Inquiry and on 8 May 2026. Locations visited at these times included other development sites cited by the parties during the Inquiry, and viewpoints identified in the landscape evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> Council planning search reference: S.25/076/APPREF

<sup>2</sup> P/ID 01 and P/ID 02

<sup>3</sup> CD11.3

## Main Issues

6. The Council refused the application for the development being considered in this appeal, providing seven reasons.<sup>4</sup> At the start of the Inquiry, the Council confirmed that it no longer wished to contest all but two of these reasons. Some of the reasons related to the terms of the section 106 obligations, which were agreed prior to the Inquiry.
7. Nonetheless, the Inquiry was structured around the reasons for refusal and interested parties were invited to make submissions accordingly. They inform the main issues of this appeal and were identified at the CMC and agreed at the start of the Inquiry. During the Inquiry, I asked participants for their views on splitting one of the main issues to consider separate matters.
8. The main issues are:
  - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
  - The effect of the proposed development on the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape;
  - The effect of the proposed development on highway safety and sustainable transport; and
  - The effect of the proposed development on biodiversity and protected sites.
9. I consider matters related to the planning agreements after the main issues.

## Reasons

10. The development plan for the area includes the *Stroud District Local Plan* (DLP), adopted in November 2015. A plan review is currently at the examination stage but has been recommended for withdrawal by its Inspectors.<sup>5</sup> The examination is still in progress, but the plan's adoption is far from certain. Accordingly, I have afforded the plan review minimal weight in my decision.
11. The *Cam Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2031* (adopted in 2020)<sup>6</sup> was raised in evidence at the Inquiry. The site abuts, but is not within, the operative area of the Neighbourhood Plan. Although the plan references the importance of land outside its boundary in terms of landscape sensitivity and other considerations, the appeal development is not subject to its policies.

### *Character and appearance*

12. The site is close to the linked settlements of Cam and Dursley, lying outside but abutting the settlement boundary. The site is within Stinchcombe, although the main built-up area of the village is situated a short distance to the south. Various other buildings are scattered around the area, including a cluster of several houses on Clingre Down and Oldhill Lane, which are located to the west of the site across Taits Hill Road.

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<sup>4</sup> CD10.1

<sup>5</sup> CD7.9

<sup>6</sup> CD7.22

13. The site is undeveloped and pastoral, but its topography provides a natural division into two distinct zones: a gentle to moderately sloping field enclosed by hedgerows and abutting Taits Hill Road, which would wholly accommodate the proposed built component of the proposed development; and a field that slopes steeply downward towards a treed stream.
14. The pattern of existing development is scattered around the appeal site, but not to the extent that it is completely enclosed. Development appears to have crept up the hill along Taits Hill Road from Cam in recent years. This has varying form and density but is clearly distinct from the suburban development to the east of the site. Additionally, during my visit to the site, I noticed a more bucolic character in some parts but nonetheless retained the impression that I was never far from existing development.
15. Indeed, existing development adjoins or is in close proximity to its west, south, and east edges. Indicative/illustrative plans and drawings suggest a low-lying development with traditional rural-style architecture and a layout that could make good use of the developable part of the site. Nonetheless, its density and the closeness of buildings would give it more in common with the suburb to the east than the cottage- or farmstead-style development to the south and west. Effectively, the development would have the form of a modern suburb that would appear as an extension of Cam beyond its existing edge. Although the scheme's proposed landscape features would provide some integration between the built area and retained countryside, they would not fully mitigate the visual impact of this density, which would stand in sharp contrast with the lower-density, more spread-out form of adjoining development along Taits Hill Road.
16. The scheme would be separated from much of the existing development of Cam due to its topography and retention of the steep field. However, this would only be apparent in views, rather than journeys, which would almost wholly involve travel along Taits Hill Road. The site would adjoin Cam, but residents would have no direct route into it; rather, travel to Cam would be circuitous. The predominant experience would therefore be one of a continuous built-up area, which would in no way be negated by green space separation within the site.
17. The current absence of development on the site, together with its current greenfield appearance, retains separation between the buildings within the settlement boundary and those outside. More importantly, this openness enables an identifiable edge to Cam and a gateway to the town in journeys along Taits Hill Road. The clear transitions to and from built-up zones are strong contributors to spatial character and, as I heard at the Inquiry, vital to the identity of the various settlements in the area. I agree that development of the site would have an amalgamating effect that would be harmful to this character.
18. The DLP directs growth within a settlement hierarchy as set out in Core Policies CP2 and CP3. Stinchcombe is identified as a fourth-tier settlement, in which development should be limited to that needed to help meet specific housing needs. Cam is a first-tier settlement which is expected to provide a significant number of homes. Other documents provided in evidence include the Council's 2013 and 2016 Landscape Sensitivity Assessments<sup>7</sup> which variously identify the site as having a feeling of separation from the main settlement of Cam (despite its visual

<sup>7</sup> CD4.2 - CD4.4

relationship), a green corridor, and sensitivity to change. All of these considerations emphasise the harmful impacts of the proposal.

19. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with DLP Core Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, and CP4, which together require development to integrate with existing neighbourhoods and the district's strategic growth vision, and to provide good design, amongst other considerations.

### *The setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape*

20. Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on decision makers to seek to further the statutory purposes of protected landscapes. The proposed development is not within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), but abuts its boundary, which runs along Taits Hill Road in the vicinity of the appeal site. The site is within the setting of the CNL due to its proximity and the views between the CNL and the site.
21. A statutory purpose of the protected landscape is the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL. Policies for this are set out in its Management Plan (CNLMP),<sup>8</sup> which also lists its special qualities. One of these is the Cotswold Escarpment, including views from and to the CNL. Outcomes of the CNLMP include landscape, local distinctiveness, tranquillity and dark skies. Appendix 10 of the plan states that consideration should be given to impacts on the outcomes and special qualities from major development within the setting of the CNL.

### Landscape

22. Landscape evidence within the appeal focused on the likely impact of the proposed development on the CNL, defined via views from outside the CNL in which the appeal site and CNL can be seen together, or from notable vantage points within the CNL in which the site can be clearly identified. These views were agreed between the main parties as being those most important in demonstrating the effects of the proposed development, and I do not disagree. I acknowledge that they are representative 'snapshots' of more extensive routes or journeys. The main parties differ in their assessment of the sensitivity and effects, with the latter considered in the first and fifteenth years following development.<sup>9</sup> My consideration of the landscape impact focuses on the viewpoints over which there are differences in opinion, and focuses on the long-term effects of development in year 15, allowing for the establishment of on-site landscaping.
23. Viewpoint 1 is the site of verified views 1a and 1b from two closely spaced locations on the verge of Taits Hill Road opposite the site, near the intersection of Clingre Down. At present, the distant CNL escarpment can be seen, but such views would likely be restricted or channelled by the appeal development. There would be an adverse effect, but as views in this context would generally be seen from a moving vehicle or pedestrian alongside a busy road, the effect would be moderate.
24. Viewpoint 2 is from the Stinchcombe Bridleway 16 next to the playing fields adjacent to Taits Hill Road, and the impact would be similar to that of viewpoint 1, but less immediate due to the greater distance between the viewpoint and the

<sup>8</sup> Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030, CD4.1

<sup>9</sup> ID 012 is a summary table setting out the areas of agreement and disagreement between the main parties.

development. This would be the case despite the prevailing urbanising impact of the playing fields, and consequently, my assessment is that there would be a moderate adverse effect. The development would be distantly visible from viewpoint 3, from Stinchcombe Bridleway 19, but would be alongside similarly perceived existing buildings. In this view, the escarpment would remain wholly visible, resulting in a minor adverse impact.

25. Viewpoint 4 is on Cam Footpath 13, looking upward to the site, with the view terminating at Stinchcombe Hill. Much of the rise to the hill is within the CNL, identifiable by its tree cover, in contrast to the farmed nature of the land closer to the viewpoint. The development would be identifiable on the minor crest of the fielded land, in front of the treed area of the CNL. Groups of buildings are already visible on the periphery of this view, but the development would urbanise land between these discrete clusters, drawing the eye from the viewpoint and resulting in a major adverse impact. Viewpoint 5 is near the emergence of Cam Footpath 44 onto Orchard Leaze. The CNL is not visible from the viewpoint, but it is visible along the footpath, with a minor to moderate impact on trips along the path with effects similar to those from viewpoint 4.
26. Viewpoint 6 is on Stinchcombe Hill, within the CNL, and looks across to the River Severn and beyond. Open fields make up much of the visible land. Other clusters of buildings are visible, but the location of the site means that development would be clearly visible and have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the land. The development would introduce a significant extension of the built-up area into the centre of the view, with a resultant major adverse effect.
27. The effects from viewpoints 8, 9, 10, and 15 are minor or smaller in scale, as the development would only be seen distantly or be barely distinguishable from existing development. In respect of the other views, the harmful effects would detract from appreciation of the landscape of and from within the CNL, including its escarpment, thereby affecting one of the special qualities of this National Landscape.
28. Paragraph 189 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2024) ('the Framework') states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The reasoning to Policy CE13 of the CNLMP states that the great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL should also be applied in relation to the impact of development outside the area on views from within.
29. Although the scheme would incorporate landscaping which, over time, would blend with the surrounding landscape and screen the proposed buildings to a limited extent, its mitigating effects would be limited in respect of the harm that I have identified. The development would not conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the CNL.

#### Tranquillity and other CNL considerations

30. The CNL escarpment in the vicinity of the appeal site is subject to background noise from the M5 motorway, which registers as a generally constant, low volume ambient hum that does not distract from the more immediate sounds of the natural environment. Although some noise impacts will be apparent from the development within those parts of the CNL closest to the appeal site, such as the opposite side of Taits Hill Road, these areas are more built up and subject to other noise

interference, such as specific vehicles and sounds of domestic activity. In contrast, at a more distant location such as Stinchcombe Hill, it would be unlikely that there would be any perceptible sounds from the development.

31. The development would add visual clutter to views to and from the escarpment. Although this would be minor in scale when viewed in the context of the wider landscape and limited to specific views, it would nonetheless affect the special quality of tranquillity of the CNL described in the CNLMP as: "The tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution".<sup>10</sup>
32. Another special quality of the CNL is "extensive dark sky areas". The proposal has the potential to introduce new lighting that could affect this special quality. Were the appeal to be allowed, a planning condition would limit dark sky disruption by requiring Council approval of the external lighting scheme. I am satisfied that there would be no harm in respect of this matter.

#### Conclusion on the setting of the CNL

33. The Framework states that development within the setting of a designated area (such as a National Landscape) should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas (paragraph 189). In this instance, the siting of the development results in adverse effects which I have assessed as minimal to major. The visibility of the proposed development and its effects on the landscape indicate that adverse impacts resulting from its location are not minimal. There would also be some minor harm as a result of disruption to tranquillity, due to visual clutter.
34. The proposed development would introduce an urbanising effect that neither avoids nor minimises adverse impacts, despite some limited landscaping-based mitigation in the long term. While the Framework does not indicate that such effects should be avoided completely, the scale of the harm arising in this instance leads me to conclude that the development has not been sensitively located or designed to minimise adverse impacts on the CNL.
35. Furthermore, the development neither conserves nor enhances the natural beauty of the CNL and thereby fails to further the statutory purposes of this protected landscape. I will consider the effects of the failure to comply with this duty within the planning balance. For the purposes of concluding on this main issue, I find that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the setting of the CNL and would conflict with DLP Policies ES7 and CP14. Together, these policies require high quality sustainable development, and that where this may affect the setting of the CNL, priority is given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape, amongst other considerations.

#### *Highway safety and sustainable transport*

36. The Council's reasons for refusal set out its objections in respect of this issue at the application stage. It considered that the application did not provide sufficient information to demonstrate that safe and suitable access could be provided from the site onto Taits Hill Road, stating that the proposed visibility splays were substandard. Additionally, the Council considered that the information provided was

<sup>10</sup> CD4.1, section 4



insufficient to demonstrate that the site is accessible by suitable pedestrian and cycle routes, and that as a result, the proposal failed to address the need for sustainable transport, and safe and suitable access.

37. During the appeal and prior to the Inquiry, the appellant submitted additional information and evidence to address the Council's concerns. The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) on transport and highway safety matters sets out the matters agreed between the main parties, detailing the discussions and submission of additional evidence. It advises: that the parties agree that the proposed access onto Taits Hill Road is appropriate and safe; that subject to specified off-site highway improvements, the site would be accessible to nearby facilities by walking and cycling; and that suitable public transport provision would be available and enhanced through a section 106 contribution for the improvement of bus stops.
38. The Council's planning proof of evidence confirms that the main parties and GCC consider the Council's concerns on highways matters to have been satisfactorily addressed, and that the relevant reasons for refusal have been resolved.<sup>11</sup> Concerns raised by local residents in relation to this main issue include accessibility to shops and services in Cam, traffic volumes, and speed along Taits Hill Road, together with other safety considerations.
39. I acknowledge that the transport mitigation and improvement measures included within the section 106 agreement will widen transport choices and increase the attractiveness of modes other than private cars. Road safety measures are proposed for Taits Hill Road, aimed at increasing careful driving and ensuring safe access to and from the site. The appellant's Transport Statement indicates that there is sufficient capacity in the local road network to accommodate the 326 daily vehicular movements that are anticipated to be generated by the development.<sup>12</sup>
40. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not have harmful effects on highway safety and sustainable transport and would not conflict with DLP Policies CP13 and CP14. Together, these promote safe, accessible transport choices and seek to mitigate adverse impacts on the transport network, amongst other considerations.

#### *Biodiversity and protected sites*

41. In its reasons for refusal, the Council stated that there was insufficient information to be able to adequately assess the impacts on biodiversity or demonstrate that the proposed development would be able to deliver mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG). Additionally, as the appeal site is within 12.6km zone of influence of the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), and Ramsar site, the Council considered that there was insufficient information in the planning application to demonstrate that the impact of the proposed development on this area could be sufficiently mitigated.
42. In common with the previous main issue, the appellant submitted additional evidence in the lead-up to the appeal to address the Council's concerns. Section 4 of the SoCG sets out the subsequently agreed matters between the main parties:
  - A financial sum to mitigate the development's impact on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site;

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<sup>11</sup> CD10.8, paragraphs 5.56-5.57 and 5.61-5.62

<sup>12</sup> CD2.3a, table 6.4

- Provision of a watercourse survey contributing to updated BNG calculations, together with an updated BNG plan indicating the potential habitats to be created within the site.
43. In respect of the former, the contribution is contained within the section 106 agreement between the appellant and the Council. In respect of the latter, section 5 of the SoCG sets out the additional information provided, noting that a revision would be expected at the reserved matters stage, alongside the inclusion of a mechanism within the section 106 agreement to deliver 10% BNG. The Council's planning proof of evidence<sup>13</sup> confirms its agreement that these measures are appropriate, and that its concerns as expressed within the reasons for refusal have been satisfactorily addressed. Having considered the evidence and the provisions of the section 106 agreement, I have reached my own conclusion that the proposed development would deliver the required BNG. I have not reached a conclusion on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar impacts, for the reasons set out at the end of this section.
44. At the start of the Inquiry, a representation delivered by a resident on behalf of Stinchcombe Parish Council set out numerous concerns in relation to the potential impacts of the proposal on bats and the Woodchester Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).<sup>14</sup> Although the SSSI is around 7 kilometres from the appeal site, it is within the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC and accommodates a colony of rare Greater Horseshoe Bats. The representation states that this one of the most significant colonies within the country, that they are highly mobile and reliant on habitat corridors, and that the appellant's and Council's consideration of potential impacts is deficient. The appeal site is identified as an important corridor component.
45. Rebuttal statements were prepared by the appellant and Council.<sup>15</sup> The appellant considers that the appeal site does not form part of any identifiable ecological network associated with the SSSI population and that there is no functional connectivity between the two areas. The Council's statement sets out its agreement with the appellant, concluding that the appellant's survey effort was sufficient and that the application was adequately assessed in relation to bats.
46. Persons providing expert evidence to the Inquiry have a duty to provide accurate, honest, and objective evidence. This overrides any duty to the party that they represent. Additionally, experts who are members of a professional body are expected to comply with any relevant code of conduct.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, even though the main parties' evidence contradicts that of the interested party, I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of their submissions.
47. The rebuttal statements confirm the methodology used in the assessments and the findings set out in previous evidence, and I consider the scope and content of the evidence to be appropriate. I acknowledge that the site is still likely to be visited or overflowed by foraging or commuting bats, as is common with sites in or near the countryside. A planning condition would be appropriate to prevent any impacts on bats from external lighting within the appeal site, were I to allow the appeal.

<sup>13</sup> CD10.8, paragraphs 5.58-5.60 and 5.63-5.66

<sup>14</sup> ID 09

<sup>15</sup> ID 014 and ID 015

<sup>16</sup> As set out in part 15 of the Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England (for appeals relating to applications dated on or before 31 March 2026, updated 18 May 2026 and on the date of this decision, available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-appeals-procedural-guide/procedural-guide-planning-appeals-england>



48. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not have a harmful effect on biodiversity but reach no conclusion in respect of its effects on the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site. This matter aside, the proposal does not conflict with DLP Policies ES6 and CP14, which include a requirement for all development to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
49. The impact of the proposed development on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site and the section 106 provisions in relation to mitigation would be considered as part of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) that I would undertake if I were to allow the appeal. There is no need for me to undertake an HRA, as would otherwise be required by *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*, because the scheme is unacceptable for other reasons. The absence of an HRA means that I have not reached a conclusion on the acceptability of the proposed measures.

### Other Matters

50. The Council has a housing land supply of 3.24 years. The main parties agree on housing land supply matters, including the current annual requirement of 846 dwellings in accordance with the Government's Standard Method calculation. This is significantly greater than the DLP's provision of 456 dwellings per annum. The undersupply results in a shortfall of 1,461 homes (from January 2025). Between April 2006 and March 2025, 9,488 new homes were completed in the Council district, but this has not been sufficient to avoid a shortfall of 2,546 homes over the whole period, measured against the minimum target set by Policy CP2 of the DLP.
51. A high proportion of the Council's future housing land supply is reliant on the delivery of large strategic sites which have inherent uncertainty around the timeliness and/or likelihood of delivery. The lack of a five-year housing land supply, the poor rate of delivery, and the proportionately large shortfall correspond with a high demand for housing in the area, which cannot be accommodated. Given the uncertainty of the local plan review timeline, any short-term improvement in this situation is unlikely.
52. The appellant considers that the DLP's settlement boundaries are out of date and overly restrictive, given that they were set in accordance with the lower housing supply figure that applied when the plan was adopted. I do not dismiss the suggestion that some of supporting reasoning of the current settlement boundaries might be dated but consider that they still have an effective role in containing settlements, preventing the sprawl of built-up areas, and protecting the countryside. The plan-making process is the appropriate channel for any review of the settlement boundaries, which might include the allocation of new housing sites, as is appropriate in a plan-led system. The piecemeal review of boundaries to accommodate development proposals for individual sites would not be effective or proper planning, and while I recognise that delays to the local plan review has created uncertainty, this does not justify short-term reviews that would have long-term outcomes.
53. The DLP's provisions for affordable housing are similarly out of date, with Policy CP9 setting a target of 446 affordable homes per annum. The current need is yet to be confirmed due to the delayed local plan review, but the Council suggests that it could be between 424 and 521 dwellings per annum. One need indicator is Home Seeker Plus, on which there are 2,708 households registered as being in

immediate housing need. Given that there has been an average of only 172 affordable dwellings completed per year since 2016, there is no prospect of relief.

54. The two section 106 agreements contain obligations that would come into effect if the appeal were to be allowed. As the appeal is being dismissed, it is not necessary that I consider the agreements in detail. However, some of the obligations contribute to the planning balance and are referred to below.

### **Planning Balance**

55. The Council has a significant housing supply shortfall, a poor delivery record, and high housing need. The proposal would deliver up to 73 dwellings. Accordingly, this has substantial beneficial weight.
56. The scheme would deliver 40% of its dwellings as affordable homes, with an even split between social rent and shared ownership tenures. This total provision is 10% above the Council's requirement, and the tenure split would address the Council's identified needs. Given the very high demand for affordable housing in the district, and the significant and persistent shortfall in delivery against the DLP requirement, the dwellings would assist in meeting targeted needs. The delivery of these affordable homes attracts substantial beneficial weight.
57. The section 106 agreements make provision for new infrastructure and services of varying weight in the balance. The Severn Estuary SAC/SPA/Ramsar site mitigation strategy would address impacts that would result from increased demand directly originating from residents of the appeal site only, and provides no wider benefits; thus, it is a neutral factor in the balance. The Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% is set at the statutory minimum but would nonetheless provide improvement to habitats on the site. This attracts minimum beneficial weight.
58. The creation of new open space on the site is beneficial, but as I heard at the Inquiry, the indicative layout of the site, the limited access, and the proposed open space locations – which would generally be set well within the site away from public edges – would mean that its attraction to off-site residents would be limited. As such, this attracts only limited beneficial weight.
59. The proposed highway improvements include those necessary to make access to and from the site safe, which provide no overall benefit and are therefore a neutral consideration, in addition to road safety measures, improved street lighting and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. These would benefit the wider community and exceed what would be needed to mitigate the increased demand for these facilities from future appeal site residents, and as such, they have moderate beneficial weight.
60. Public transport and sustainable travel-related measures would include resident welcome packs and cycle and bus voucher funding, which would be directly targeted at initial residents of the scheme and provide no wider benefit, thereby being a neutral factor in the balance. Proposed improvements to the bus stop locations outside the site on Taits Hill Road would both address new demand from the site's residents and provide a better experience for existing users, resulting in minor beneficial weight.
61. Economic benefits suggested by the appellant include jobs in the construction stage, tax revenue, and increased local spending on goods and services. I agree

that the creation of jobs would provide some temporary benefits that contribute moderate weight. Tax is mitigatory in that it pays for required services and infrastructure, and in the case of new homes, it is usually transferred from a resident's previous location and thus attracts no beneficial weight. Evidence of likely support for local goods and services is limited, lacks a target and focus, and also attracts no beneficial weight.

62. Both main parties highlight the ability of the site to be delivered without relying on M5 motorway junction capacity improvements, in contrast to other proposed development within the area. I am not convinced that this could be weighted as a benefit. While this provides a positive sign that the site could be delivered, the fact that by virtue of its size and location it manages to avoid the encumbrances of other sites seems to owe more to serendipity than design. Given that the location and scale of the development are also factors that contribute to harm, I do not allocate any beneficial weight to this matter.
63. I have found that there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area. There would be significant detrimental effects that would result from this harm, and I have applied substantial weight to this consideration.
64. I have also found that the proposed development would harm the setting of the CNL due to the adverse impact on escarpment landscape views to and from designated area and tranquillity. Great weight must be given to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the CNL, and because the harmful effects would interfere with the fulfilment of the purposes for which this National Landscape was designated, the scheme would not conserve its natural beauty. There is a clear visual relationship between the development in the setting of the CNL and the CNL itself, the pair being closely located, and the effects of the harm would be identifiable from within the protected area. The impacts therefore extend beyond the setting and affect the statutory purposes of the CNL. In accordance with paragraph 189 of the Framework and apportioning of great weight, I accord substantial weight to this harm. ('Substantial' is the highest category of weight used in this balancing exercise).
65. In discharging my duty to seek to further the statutory purposes of the protected landscape, I have considered whether the proposed development would conflict with those purposes. The effects would be limited to a relatively small part of the CNL, and the extent of the conflict with the purposes of the designation is limited to the Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape, and tranquillity. Only two of the 14 special qualities of the CNL are affected. However, harm to just two special qualities can be a decisive consideration. Given that the proposal would result a range of adverse effects, up to major in respect of one of the special qualities, and because the harmful effects would or could not be wholly mitigated, that harm is decisive in this case.
66. The absence of a five-year housing land supply means that the housing and relevant spatial policies of the Local Plan are out of date. Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless: (i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed

against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, (with particular regard to specific policy topics. Footnote 7 includes National Landscapes as areas or assets of particular importance.

67. The application of the Framework policies relating to the protection of National Landscapes provides a strong reason for refusing the proposed development, and therefore paragraph 11(d)(i) is applicable to this decision.
68. The totality of the harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the proposal, such that the proposal does not represent sustainable development. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations to indicate that I should determine the appeal otherwise than in accordance with the development plan for the area.

### **Conclusion**

69. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

*Glen Rollings*

INSPECTOR

Richborough

## **Annex A: Core documents**

*On the date of this decision, all documents were available to view on Stroud District Council's website.*

### **CD1 Development Plan & National Planning Policy**

- CD1.1 Stroud District Local Plan November 2015 (Whole Document)
- CD1.1a Policy CP1
- CD1.1b Policy CP2
- CD1.1c Policy CP3
- CD1.1d Policy CP4
- CD1.1e Policy CP6
- CD1.1f Policy CP9
- CD1.1g Policy CP13
- CD1.1h Policy CP14
- CD1.1i Policy CP15
- CD1.1j Policy ES6
- CD1.1k Policy ES7
- CD1.2 Adopted Policies Map 4 Stroud District
- CD1.3 Planning Obligations SPD April 2017
- CD1.4 SDC Guidance Notes Severn Est SAC 2024
- CD1.5 Severn Estuary SPA Special Area of Conservation Rams
- CD1.6 SDC Design Guide 2000
- CD1.7 Stroud District Residential Development Outdoor Play Space Provision SPG 2000

### **CD2 Application Documents**

- CD2.1a 416.065549.0001 Taits Hill Stroud FRA V2 Part 1
- CD2.1b 416.065549.0001 Taits Hill Stroud FRA V2 Part 2 Appendices D E and F
- CD2.1c 416.065549.0001 Taits Hill Stroud FRA V2 Part 2 Appendices A and B
- CD2.1d 416.065549.0001 Taits Hill Stroud FRA V2 Part 2 Appendix C
- CD2.2 LVIA
- CD2.3a Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part1
- CD2.3b Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part2
- CD2.3c Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part3
- CD2.3d Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part3-appendix F
- CD2.3e Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part3-appendix G
- CD2.3f Transport Statement v2.0 Optimized Part3-appendix H
- CD2.3g Travel Plan v2.0 Optimized Part1
- CD2.3h Travel Plan v2.0 Optimized Part2
- CD2.4 25-0015.01 Geophysics Report Figs
- CD2.5 508 A3 AK Site Waste Management Plan
- CD2.6 508 A3 AW 110225 Statement of Community Involvement-merged
- CD2.7 508 A3 AW Planning Statement-merged
- CD2.8 508 A5 AK Affordable Housing Statement
- CD2.9 1297 Ecological Impact Assessment February 2025-compressed
- CD2.10 1297 Statutory Biodiversity Metric February 2025-v2
- CD2.11 2430 AIA MU Taits Hill Dursley Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- CD2.12 6774 Phase 1 Desk Study Taits Hill Road Dursley-compressed
- CD2.13 6774 Soakaway GIR Taits Hill Road Dursley (R1)
- CD2.14 13253-001 Site Location Plan
- CD2.15 13253-002 C Illustrative Site Plan
- CD2.16 13253 SE1 Indicative Street Elevations
- CD2.17 ACA0259-1-3 Land at Taits Hill Road Stinchcombe HEA
- CD2.18 Figure 3 Site Access
- CD2.19 Figure 4 Off Site Highway Improvements
- CD2.20 Housing Sustainable Construction and Design Checklist
- CD2.21 S.25-0447 OUT Officer Report

- CD2.22 Tait's Hill DAS pages 1-17
- CD2.23 Tait's Hill DAS pages 18-37
- CD2.24 09887-0-TP-DR-0006-P4 Proposed Highway Improvements (superseded)
- CD2.25 09887-0-TP-DR-0001-P2 Visi Long Section
- CD2.26 09887-0-TP-DR-0006-P5 Proposed Highway Improvements
- CD2.27 09887-0-TP-DR-0009-P4 Vehicle tracking refuse vehicle
- CD2.28 09887-0-TP-DR-0010-P1 Off-site highway improvements
- CD2.29 13253-002- F Illustrative Site Plan
- CD2.30 Plan 7 of the LVIA Landscape Strategy Plan
- CD2.31 Application forms
- CD2.32 HRA

### **CD3 Relevant Consultation Responses**

- CD3.1 Gloucestershire Constabulary (09.04.2025)
- CD3.2 Mineral and Waste (09.04.2025)
- CD3.3a BNG Officer (10.04.2025)
- CD3.3b Tait's Hill BNG Review (04.07.2025)
- CD3.4 Affordable Housing (10.04.2025)
- CD3.5 Natural England (16.04.2025)
- CD3.6 Environmental Health (17.04.2025)
- CD3.7 Contaminated Land Officer (23.04.2025)
- CD3.8a GCC Archaeology (25.04.2025)
- CD3.8b GCC Archaeology (05.06.2025)
- CD3.9 Education Assessment (06.05.2025)
- CD3.10a GCC Community Infrastructure (02.05.2025)
- CD3.10b GCC Community Infrastructure (06.05.2025)
- CD3.10c GCC Community Infrastructure (06.05.2025)
- CD3.11 Wessex Water (09.05.2025)
- CD3.12 Lead Local Flood Authority (23.04.2025)
- CD3.13 Arboricultural Officer (12.05.2025)
- CD3.14 Cotswolds Conservation Board (12.05.2025)
- CD3.15 Drainage Response (15.05.2025)
- CD3.16 Parish Council (15.05.2025)
- CD3.17 Cam Parish Council (21.05.2025)
- CD3.18 Dursley Town Council (30.05.2025)
- CD3.19 GCC Highways (11.06.2025)
- CD3.20 Ecologist Response (14.08.2025)
- CD3.21 Planning Strategy (15.05.2025)

### **CD4 Landscape Core Documents**

- CD4.1 CNL Management Plan 2025-2030
- CD4.2 Stroud Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Part 1
- CD4.3 Stroud Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Part 2 Amberley to Nailsworth
- CD4.4 Stroud Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Part 2 North Nibley to Wotton UE
- CD4.5 Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3) LI and IEMA, 2013
- CD4.6 Technical Guidance Note 2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition
- CD4.7 Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals
- CD4.8 Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, LI, 2021
- CD4.9 Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) Management Plan 2023-2025
- CD4.10a LCT-0 Introduction
- CD4.10b LCT-1 Escarpment Outlier
- CD4.10c LCT-3 Rolling Hills and Valleys
- CD4.11a Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines



CD4.11b LCT-3 Rolling Hills and Valleys 2016  
CD4.11c LCT-1 Escarpment Outliers 2016  
CD4.12 CCB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change  
CD4.13a Housing Position Statement FINAL April 2021  
CD4.13b Housing Position Statement FINAL April 2021-Appendices  
CD4.14 Setting Position Statement 2016 Adopted  
CD4.15a Landscape Led Development Position Statement FINAL  
CD4.15b Landscape Led Development Position Statement FINAL Appendices  
CD4.16 Tranquillity Position Statement FINAL June 2019  
CD4.17a Cotswolds Dark Skies Artificial Light Position Statement  
CD4.17b Dark Skies Artificial Light Appendix A Night Lights  
CD4.17c GN01-ILP Guidance Note 1 the reduction of obtrusive light-App B  
CD4.17d Dark Skies Artificial Light Appendix B  
CD4.18 2011 SHLAA  
CD4.19 Stroud District Landscape assessment 2000  
CD4.20 Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment (January 2006)  
CD4.21 Cam Valued Views Report (2019)  
CD4.22 Cam Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (November 2018)  
CD4.23 2013 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment  
CD4.24 DEFRA protected Landscapes Guidance  
CD4.25 Cam Community Design Statement

#### **CD5 Highways Core Documents**

CD5.1 Notice of Intention b4066 Taits Hill  
CD5.2 Notice of Making b4066 Taits Hill – Signed by CB  
CD5.3 Proposal Plan  
CD5.4 Sealed Order  
CD5.5 Statement of Reasons B4066 Taits Hill  
CD5.6 Manual for Streets 1  
CD5.7 Manual for Streets 2  
CD5.8 Traffic Signs Manual – Chapter 6  
CD5.9 CD 143: Designing for walking, cycling and horse-riding  
CD5.10 Manual for Gloucester streets  
CD5.11 Manual for Gloucester Streets Addendum  
CD5.12 Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN1/20)  
CD5.13 DMRB  
CD5.14 Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2020 – 2041

#### **CD6 Ecology Core Documents**

CD6.1 Agenda Item 9 Appendix A Severn Estuary Mitigation Strategy  
CD6.2 Email RE- S-25-0447-OUT - Taits Hill Appeal Watercourse survey  
CD6.3 Email RE- S-25-0447-OUT - Taits Hill Appeal  
CD6.4 Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Strategy – Part 1 (Feb 2026)  
CD6.5 Gloucestershire Nature Recovery Strategy – Part 2 (Feb 2026)  
CD6.6 PPG BNG  
CD6.7 BNG Metric User Guide 2025

#### **CD7 Planning Evidence**

CD7.1 S.15-2804 OUT Concept Masterplan 1777656  
CD7.2 S.15-2804 OUT Site Location  
CD7.3 S.20-1116 OUT Concept Plan 2506328-56 Unit  
CD7.4 S.25-0392 REM Site Layout Plan Wide Context  
CD7.5 S.21-1875 OUT Illustrative Masterplan 2709986  
CD7.6 S.21-1875 OUT Redline Plan 2709988  
CD7.7 Inspectors Letter dated 07.02.25  
CD7.8 SDC Letter dated 03.03.25

- CD7.9 Inspectors Letter dated 09.04.25
- CD7.10 SDC Letter dated 11.07.25
- CD7.11 Inspectors Letter dated 09.10.25
- CD7.12 SDC Letter dated 07.11.25
- CD7.13 Inspectors Letter dated 18.02.26
- CD7.14 GRP Representations to Local Plan
- CD7.15 SDC Submission Local Plan
- CD7.16 HLA 2025
- CD7.17 Gloucestershire SHMA 2014
- CD7.18 Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment Sep 2020
- CD7.19 Statutory Homelessness Detailed Local Authority Data
- CD7.20 SDC Five Year Land Supply Update January 2025
- CD7.21 Lichfield's Start to Finish report
- CD7.22 Cam Neighbourhood Plan
- CD7.23 Stroud Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study
- CD7.24 GCC Highways Response to Application S.25/0417/OUT
- CD7.25 Stroud District Settlement Role and Function Study Update 2018
- CD7.26 Stroud District Housing Land Supply Update March 2024

#### **CD8 Miscellaneous Evidence**

- CD8.1 508 A3 CC 180521 FINAL Pre-App Ltr Rev A
- CD8.2 13163 MP3 Framework Plan
- CD8.3 EIA Response
- CD8.4 ufm14 PrePlan Advice Given
- CD8.7 HLA 2024 final 15082024
- CD8.8 Indexation Guidance Note 2026
- CD8.9 Cam Design Code (2020)

#### **CD9 Relevant Appeals and Judgements**

- CD9.1 Appeal Decision 3365253
- CD9.2 Appeal Decision 3354507
- CD9.3 Appeal Decision 3251126
- CD9.4 CPRE Kent
- CD9.5 Appeal Decision 3327643
- CD9.6 Ardleigh Parish Council r on the Application of v Tendring D
- CD9.7 Appeal Decision 3366140
- CD9.8 Appeal Decision 3303905
- CD9.9 Appeal Decision 3273015
- CD9.10 Land at Snatchells Farm 1767683289
- CD9.11 Waverley Borough Council v SoS Sigma Homes Limited copy
- CD9.12 Wrotham PC
- CD9.13 Basingstoke Borough Council v Secretary of State
- CD9.14 Appeal Decision 2207324
- CD9.15 Appeal Decision 3345598

#### **CD10 Appeal Documents**

- CD10.1 Decision Notice
- CD10.2 Appellants Statement of Case
- CD10.3 Council's Statement of Case
- CD10.4 Main SOCG Signed and dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- CD10.5 Highways SOCG Signed and dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- CD10.6 Updated Main SOCG 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- CD10.7 Landscape SOCG
- CD10.8 Councils Planning Proof of Evidence
- CD10.9 Councils Landscape Proof of Evidence
- CD10.10 Appellants Planning Proof of Evidence

- CD10.11 Appellants Landscape Proof of Evidence
- CD10.12 Taits Hill Action Group letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- CD10.13 Taits Hill Action Group Statement submitted 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- CD10.14 Representation on behalf of Stinchcombe Parish Council submitted 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- CD10.15 Representation on behalf of Cam Community Action Group submitted 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- CD10.16 Briefing Note prepared by Stroud District Council in respect of Biodiversity Net Gain

### **CD11 Pre-Inquiry Documents**

- CD11.1 Inspector's pre-conference note
  - CD11.2 Inspector's case management conference agenda
  - CD11.3 Inspector's case management conference summary
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## **Annex B: Inquiry documents**

- ID 01 Appellant's opening statement
  - ID 02 Council's opening statement and list of appearances
  - ID 03 Persimmon vs Worthing BC judgement [2023] EWCA Civ 762
  - ID 04 List of residents wishing to speak at the Inquiry
  - ID 05 Statement of Mr Willetts
  - ID 06 Statement of Mr Pinch
  - ID 07 Statement of Mr Hecht
  - ID 08 Statement of Councillor Rob Green
  - ID 09 Statement of Stinchcombe Parish Council (Dr Wray)
  - ID 010 Opening statement of Taits Hill Road Action Group (Mr Fong)
  - ID 011 Aerial photograph of site and surroundings
  - ID 012 Landscape evidence comparison of effects
  - ID 013 Appellant's list of appearances
  - ID 014 Appellant's statement: Consideration of Woodchester Park SSSI
  - ID 015 Council's statement: Consideration of Woodchester Park SSSI
  - ID 016 Letter to the Council from the Inspectors of the Stroud District Local Plan Review Examination, dated 25 March 2026
  - ID 017 Agreed schedule of planning conditions
  - ID 018 GCC response to Inspector's s106 agreement questions
  - ID 019 Email from Loxley Legal setting out s106 agreement changes
  - ID 020 Revised draft s106 agreement between the landowners and the Council
  - ID 021 Concluding statement from Stinchcombe Parish Council (Dr MacFarlane)
  - ID 022 Closing submissions of Taits Hill Road Action Group (Mr Fong)
  - ID 023 Council's closing submissions
  - ID 024 Appellant's closing submissions
  - ID 025 Appellant's closing submissions abbreviation list
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## **Annex C: Post-inquiry documents**

- P/ID 01 s106 agreement between the landowners and the Council
- P/ID 02 s106 agreement between the landowners and GCC

## Annex D: Appearances at the Inquiry

### FOR THE APPELLANT

Satnam Choongh, Counsel  
Chatura Saravanan

*They called*

**Matthew Kendrick** MRTPI BSc

Managing Director, Grassroots Planning

**Wendy Lancaster**  
PGDipLA PGDipUD FLI FRSA

Director of Expert Witness Services,  
Tyler Grange

**David Tingay** BEng(Hons) MCIHT

Technical Director, Phil Jones  
Associates Ltd

### FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Olivia Davies, Counsel

*She called*

**Martina Sechi** BSc BE MALA CMLI

Director, Stone & Meadow

**Thaddaeus Jackson-Browne**  
BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Director, DLP Planning Ltd

Additional assistance for planning conditions and agreements matters was provided by Richard Price and Gary Spencer for Stroud District Council, and Krzysztof Kwiatowski for Gloucestershire County Council.

### INTERESTED PERSONS

**Paul Fong** BA(Hons) MRTPI, Morgan Elliott Planning  
Representing Taits Hill Road Action Group

**Steve Willetts** Cam Community Action Group

**Jeremy Fowler** Chairman, Cam Parish Council

**Cllr Rob Green** Cam Parish Council

**Dr Stephanie Wray** on behalf of Stinchcombe Parish Council

**Local residents**

J Pinch, Dr I Cole, D Hecht, E Hecht, P Ellis, M Davies, P Leggatt, C Oakhill