

Mr Andy Mortimer
Planning & Corporate Policy Manager
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Your Ref:
Our Ref: gc_4.2.14_SC Church Stretton SAMDev

4 February 2014

Dear Mr Mortimer

Site Allocations & Management of Development (SAMDev), Church Stretton

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership welcomes the fact that, subsequent to discussions with your officer, Joy Tetsill at our meeting of 19 November 2013, consideration has been given to alternative allocations of sites for both housing and employment land in Church Stretton.

As decisions on this issue are coming before the Cabinet shortly, we wish to reinforce the Partnership's strong objection to the inclusion of the New House Farm proposals within the SAMDev (as set out in our letter of 14 August 2013).

As well as seriously conflicting with important aspects of the statutory Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan, we consider the proposals fail to comply with key sections of the adopted Shropshire Core Strategy and a number of Draft Development Management Plan Policies.

We also consider them to be in substantial conflict with Sections 115 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Our greatest concerns in these respects are:

- The major visual impact of the proposals on iconic hills of the AONB, including Caer Caradoc (with its important hill fort monument), Helmeth, Hazler and the Long Mynd – already well-recognised in the published LVIA report.
- The distance of the proposed employment land site ELR070 from the current edge of the town, spreading development unnecessarily northwards up the valley well into the current countryside.
- The extent to which the proposed new access road would facilitate and encourage further development in this sensitive part of the valley in the future; and,
- The minimal value offered by the proposed visitor centre which could seriously undermine the economic benefit from visitors to traders within the town.

Were the New House Farm proposals to go ahead, we have no doubt they would constitute the most harmful development within the AONB in living memory.

Cont'd

As the Joint Advisory Committee established by the Council to advise it in relation to the AONB, we trust that our Partnership's serious objection to the New House Farm site allocation will be given particular weight in the Cabinet's decision-making.

Yours sincerely

George Chancellor
Chair

cc:
Cllr Tim Barker, Vice Chair of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Cllr Cecilia Motley, member of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Cllr Lee Chapman, member of Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership