

## STANDISH HOUSE SITE - DRAFT PLANNING CONCEPT STATEMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM STANDISH PARISH COUNCIL

Standish Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the future of the Standish House site. In order to inform our response, we invited representatives from Stroud District Council and from the Homes and Communities Agency to our monthly Parish Council meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 and seven members of the public also attended. We held a subsequent 'drop-in' for residents on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May, attended by a further 8 residents. We have also encouraged residents to make their own individual responses.

1. We strongly support the proposal to market the site for private purchase. A sale of this nature is our preferred option. We would ask that, while respecting the need for confidentiality, we are kept fully informed of this process, including when and where the site is advertised; number of interested parties; nature of interest; etc.
2. We welcome the clarity about Enabling Development and about what can and cannot be allowed under this English Heritage designation. In particular we welcome the unambiguous requirement that development must be the 'minimum necessary' for the repair of the listed buildings, and does not include any refurbishment for a specific use (e.g the costs of kitting out as a hotel).
3. The Parish Council recommends some changes to the Concept Plan on Page 20 Figure 14. Firstly, we want to make it very clear that the Masterplan, developed at the EbD event, was not supported by the community. Although there was significant community involvement in pulling together the issues that should inform this plan, there was no involvement in actually drawing up the final proposals. We were presented with a fait accompli. It was made clear at the end of the event, that the community did not support the quantity of housing proposed nor all the proposals for indicative developable areas.

We accept that some enabling development may be necessary in order to bring the site back into use. At the EbD, the consultants proposed far more housing than we believe is necessary in order to meet the Enabling Development criteria as now laid out in the document. They therefore identified more houses and sites than would be required. We have consulted on these sites and propose that 4 should be removed from the Planning Concept Statement. For ease of response we have reproduced Figure 14 below with 8 labelled areas:

**Area 1.** This area is not supported for development. It is too close to existing properties (Fieldend and Roadway) and would compromise their privacy.

**Area 2.** This area is supported for possible enabling development

**Area 3.** We have divided this area into two sections with an indicative red line. We support possible enabling development in the area further from the

listed building were at present there are some existing fairly modern ward buildings which we do not expect to be retained.

**Area 4.** We do not support development in this area because it would compromise the setting of the listed buildings.

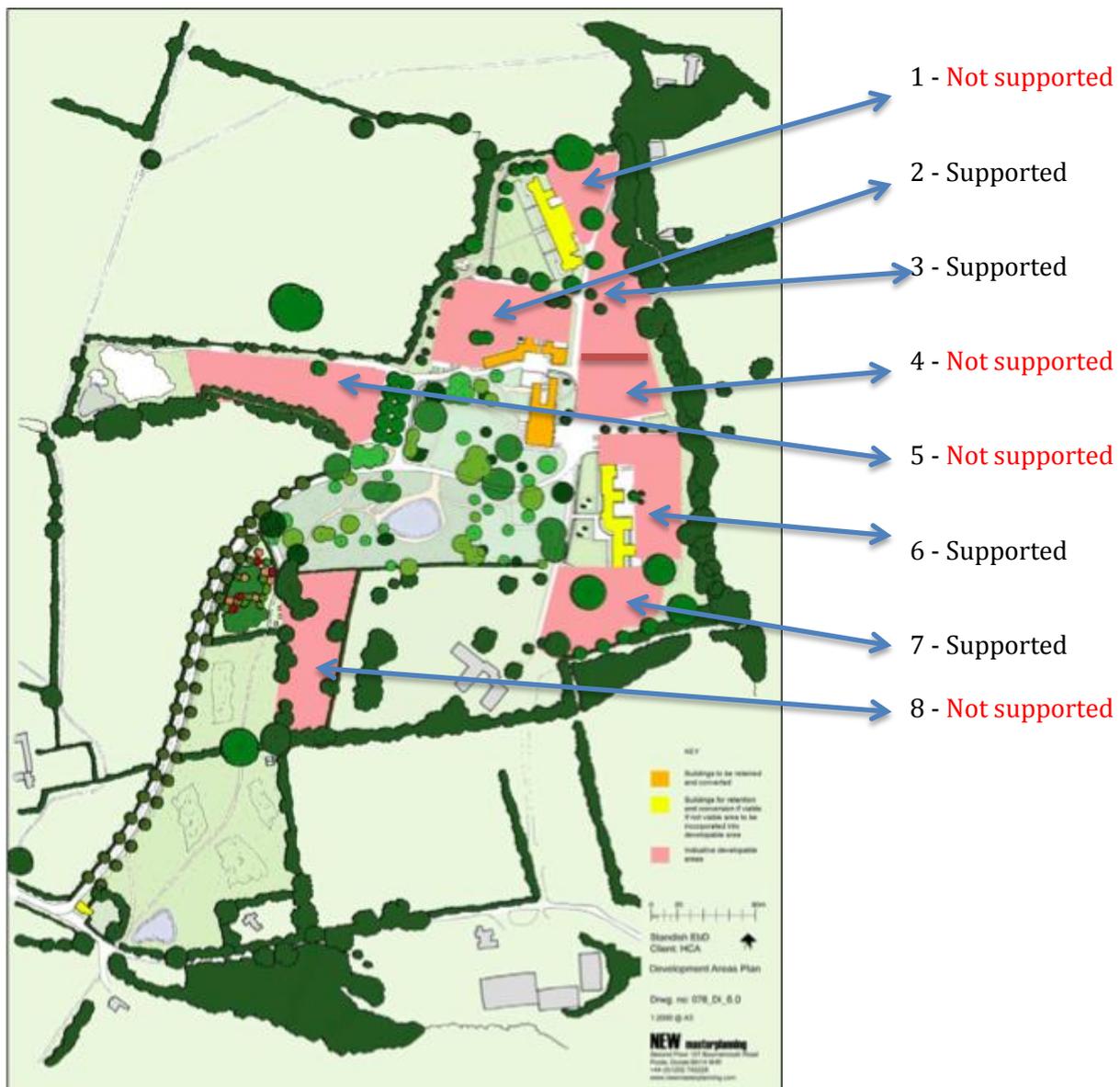
**Area 5.** We do not support development in this area. Firstly, this area is of ecological significance and should be allocated for badgers and bats and other wildlife on the site. Secondly, it is the area with the most Japanese Knotweed which requires treating over a number of years to eradicate it from the site, rather than building on it. Thirdly we feel that housing in this area would be too visible from other parts of Standish, compromising the beauty and rural natures of the AONB escarpment.

**Area 6.** We support possible enabling development in this area.

**Area 7.** We support possible enabling development in this area.

**Area 8.** We do not support development in this area because of visual impact from the Vale; because this is an important wildlife area; and because of the future possibility of 'infill' on the Westridge site that it would create.

**Figure 14. Development sites supported/not supported**



4. Oxlynch Lane Access. This access should only be used by Emergency Services vehicles (Fire, Police, Ambulances), while maintaining the bridleway access. We suggest a combination-padlocked gate, known only to the services.
5. Public access and bridleways should be maintained and improved throughout the site, in line with recommendations at the EbD.
6. Improvements should be made to Horsemarling Lane. Firstly the junction from Standish House into Horsemarling Lane should be improved to increase visibility. Secondly, some form of speed reduction scheme is required. Thirdly, provision should be made for a designated footpath along Horsemarling Lane as a large number of people use it to walk from Stonehouse to Standish Woods, as do horse riders, and with additional traffic there will be safety issues.
7. There is concern that the drainage infrastructure is insufficient to cope with the development. We heard anecdotal evidence of blocked drains when the site was used as a hospital.
8. The Plan should specify self-draining car parks - plastic mesh over grass or soil - to reduce surface water run off, and not tarmac.
9. Many of the distances and directions in the Draft Planning Concept Statement need checking. For instance, the site is 1.8 miles from Stonehouse Station - a 38 minute walk according to Google Maps and not a 30 minutes walk as stated in the plan.
10. The original views from the community, obtained through consultation events prior to the EbD, still hold. We enclose copies of the outcomes of those consultations. Appendix 1 records a meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The attached PowerPoint presentation was made at the EbD and shows site constraints and community views. Key points include:
  - a strong view that there should be fewer than 20 additional houses built on the site
  - support for commercial development, such as a health use, care home or hotel
  - a wish to see the listed buildings and the 2 ward blocks restored
  - retaining and improving public access to the site.

**NOTES FROM PUBLIC MEETING CALLED BY STANDISH PARISH COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE STANDISH HOSPITAL SITE**

The meeting took place at Standish Village Hall on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Approximately 40 people were present, including parish councillors. An attendance list was circulated and filled in by people in the audience. Chairman of Standish Parish Council Sue Oppenheimer took the chair. She told those present the meeting had been called because of concerns as to the possible future use of the site. The idea was to bring people together to hear information about what might be happening to the hospital, talk about what that might mean, and encourage thought about what parishioners might wish to see on the site and how they could influence what was done there.

Coun Oppenheimer drew attention to the increasing dereliction of the former hospital, including its formerly landscaped parkland which it appeared was being only minimally tended. The listed Standish House and stables were at the heart of the complex and were suffering from missing tiles, water ingress and similar problems after lying disused for the past 10 years. The Westridge NHS facility was the only remaining part of the site in active use. (Its manager Stephen Campbell was among those in attendance.)

The parish clerk read aloud a letter from NHS Property Services which said it took ownership of the old hospital in April 2013. Since then the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group had indicated it had no use for the site, which was therefore surplus to requirements. NHS Property Services were therefore in negotiations to pass the ownership to the government's Homes and Communities Agency.

Stroud District Council planning strategy manager Mark Russell gave an outline of planning policies affecting the old hospital. It was a residential institution in planning terms which meant it might be used as a nurses home, care home, boarding school, residential college, training centre or similar. Because the old hospital was in open countryside no development was proposed there in the emerging Stroud District Council Local Plan. Whatever happened there had to have regard to the wider strategies for the area. Mr Russell said because Standish Hospital was in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty priorities would be given to the conservation of the natural landscape over other considerations. Whatever might be proposed at the old hospital would have to respect the landscape qualities of the area, he said. Similarly the listed buildings within the site would also have to be retained and restored as part of any future scheme. It could also possibly be a hotel, commercial centre, or used for leisure. Vastly more houses than were already scattered throughout the grounds were unlikely to gain consent. A traditional housing estate would not be supported because of the impact on the landscape. Mr Russell said enabling development was however likely to win support, ie something that provided money for other goals for the site to be achieved.

Mr Russell said Stroud District Council had recently met with NHS Property Services about the old hospital and had made all of the above points to the NHS. He said there were two ways forward. The reactive one was for the parish to wait for a developer to come forward to talk to the local community about proposed ideas for the site. There would have to be an exhibition and consultation for a site of the hospital's size. Alternatively the pro-active approach was for Standish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which might give the parish more control over development on the site. Stroud MP Neil Carmichael, who was present, urged the Neighbourhood Plan approach.

The meeting was however concerned that production of such a plan was resource intensive and Standish was limited by its size and the number of volunteers it might muster to assist with a plan.

Questions from the audience drew attention to other Stroud places where developers had won permission for housing on sites not allocated in any plans. Mr Russell responded that those had all been on the edge of existing settlements. Some in the audience were worried that the hospital might be seen as on the edge of Standish.

A registered social housing provider in the audience made himself known. Simon Bostock from Housing 21, formerly RBL housing, co-incidentally also lived in the parish. Mr Bostock said his company had been in discussions with a number of organisations and had plans that were very close to being actually submitted for the hospital site.

The plan contained an element of housing, a small number, possible extra-care for over 55s, and there was also a hotel chain interested in developing a health hotel. There were very interested parties who would work in a very sympathetic manner, traffic would have no more impact than when it was a hospital, but the proposals were stuck in the land ownership changes and needed unblocking.

A participatory session followed during which those present wrote and posted stickers showing what they wished, and also wouldn't want to see, at the hospital. A strong message emerged against housing.

Coun Oppenheimer stated Standish had just gained Neighbourhood Area status, as the first step towards doing a Neighbourhood Plan. A plan would offer statutory control over what happened to the hospital site and she appealed for volunteers to compile it. Mr Carmichael would seek to find out NHS/HCA progress, and would facilitate a meeting between HCA, himself and Standish PC. The situation would be shared with neighbouring Stonehouse Town Council. Vice-chairman of Standish Parish Council Coun Stanley Dicker concluded with a brief resume of the history of the hospital site.

## WHAT PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE AT THE STANDISH HOSPITAL SITE

- Want viable and sustainable
- Want SDC to take enforcement action to protect listed buildings
- Retirement home/care
- For the young and old – whole age range
- Keep listed buildings
- Highlight the many historical legacies at Standish – Beatrice Potter, Fabian Society
- No high density housing
- For people with health needs
- Community centre
- Low mobility residents?
- No housing – keep it for community and health care only
- Country rest home
- Mental care home
- Health/spa type hotel
- Therapy units
- Rehab units
- Residential units for staff
- Protection for C block
- Public access to site
- Restoration
- Community to have a big say in what happens
- A home for a nice old gentleman
- The listed buildings and those of architectural interest preserved and restored
- The trees to be preserved and the grounds maintained
- Keep parkland aspect of site
- Keep care aspect with properties already there
- Would accept some housing if associated with care
- Community of young and older people, not isolated older people
- Activities happening that draws people to the site within reason, spas, healthy activities etc
- Keep communal grounds – absolute
- Co-housing
- Sustainable development using existing footprint
- Residences for older people and for health care
- Something for community use and not restricted to rich private users
- Keep the listed buildings
- Keep the preserved trees
- Historical attributions kept – blue plaques
- Health and social care centre
- Developing gardens and homes for the community – not sure how!!
- Reinstatement of park land and Grade 2 listed buildings could be used for hotel and health spa as previously proposed
- Respite care setting for people
- Maintain public access to the site
- Maintain character of area

## Appendix 2