

Response to Inspector's Issues (ED009)

Representor Id: 215

Comment Ids: 1343, 1340

M4 - Green Belt & Infrastructure

- GI-5** *There are significant areas of LGS identified at Leckhampton Fields and Swindon Village. Is there any evidence that an area of 39.91 or 24.5 ha could be considered not to be "an extensive tract of land"?*
- GI-7** *For Leckhampton Fields, guidance was provided by the JCS Inspector in her report. She stated it would be for the CP to identify the detailed boundaries of the LGS. Can the scale and extent of the proposed LGS be fully justified in accordance with the JCS, and National policy and guidance?*

It is commendable that the CLP is not allowing Omission Sites to be re-rehearsed by developers.

However, it seems **inconsistent that developers appear to be being positively invited to re-run the old "extensive tract of land" arguments**, attacking Leckhampton's exhaustively debated 'valued landscape'.

The only remaining issues which the CLP ought to address concerning the Leckhampton LGS are the following fine-tunings to the full LGS area which has been ruled acceptable in principle by the JCS Examination:

- (1) **Reject CBC's sudden proposal to remove from the LGS the vital walking link of Kidnappers Lane (KL) itself**, thereby splitting this historic landscape into two less plausible/viable halves. CBC should be required to answer my Objection thereto, and should withdraw this unexplained and insidious proposal.
- (2) **Reject the siting of a suddenly revised Secondary school inside the LGS**, and even the siting of its urbanising playing-fields (and likely etceteras such as carparking and pavilions) where they would impact/cut this valued landscape's most essential Amenity feature, its "figure of eight" walking loop.

In addition, GCC's proposed re-siting of Secondary school buildings inside the LGS needs to be barred from relocating its urbanising playing-fields from their location in the CLP to GCC's two smaller fields (either side of the access lane to rural Moat Cottage).

However much the massed developers (including GCC, and their deferential officer "colleagues" in CBC) may wish to discount or disparage this exhaustively established 'valued landscape' at Leckhampton, they cannot properly or fairly or validly be allowed to replay this whole LGS issue. That would undermine the way a 'second tier' plan properly respects the verdicts of its preceding Strategic plan and of the major **Leckhampton-650** appeal Decision (by the Secretary of State), Appeal 3001717 (<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseID=3001717&CoID=0>).

Leckhampton is the most sensitive landscape bordering the Cheltenham PUA but which is not safely protected by AONB status. Sensitive settings are the most profitable places to insert development, and accordingly SouthWest Cheltenham is the most targeted by multiple developers.

The sheer quantity of developers around the Leckhampton LGS, screaming their financial disappointment at the JCS **verdict**, and the quantity of misrepresentation being supplied by their planning consultants and purchased legal opinions, is shameful.

Nevertheless, this ship has sailed.

The JCS did all the large land allocations, made the necessary assessments against the NPPF et al, and the Leckhampton landscape survived what ought to be its final hurdle (27 years on from its initial 'success' at the 1992 CLP Inquiry).

Anyone pondering a significant reduction to the LGS areawhich has been outlined by the JCS Inspector needs to benefit from all the detailed field-by-field analysis supplied to the JCS debate by Leckhampton PC and by Leglag and by me. However, since the publication of the above **Question GI-5** (with its alarming wording "could not") there has been insufficient time to assemble all the most informative extracts into Appendices to this response, or even to point to all the documents and paragraphs in the complex **JCS document archive** (if it is all still available on the rather needlessly revamped JCS website).

The fate of the Leckhampton landscape. (LGS) should not now be reversed by a time-limited Inquiry which does not allow for cross-examination/rebuttal (of developer nonsense) or presentation of further details/analysis.

Considering that local residents* have had years of stress and effort opposing incessant development attempts upon this profitably-located 'valued Landscape', it would be unreasonable now to reopen the multi-session JCS decision achieved in favour of a substantial LGS.

(* not me; I have lived in districts outside Leckhampton (The Park and Up Hatherley) but have defended Leckhampton's 'countryside setting' since 1992 **for** its intrinsic merits combined with its Amenity value for wider Cheltenham.)

Yet every scrap of the JCS-indicated LGS area is still being assailed by development agents, (many of whom did not participate in the JCS sessions and who show no awareness of the detailed evidence commending every part of the eventually reduced LGS application, as submitted successfully by Leckhampton PC and Leglag and others).

The list is extraordinary:

- * RPS for Miller Homes;
- * Walsingham Planning and Thea Osmund-Smith (unsuccessful when assisting Jeremy Cahill QC at the Leckhampton-650 Appeal inquiry) for Miller and Bovis Homes;
- * Origin3 for Redrow, (who acquired the SW corner of the LGS area along with their interest in Site SD2, now sadly under construction);
- * Pegasus Planning for Robert Hitchins, for the Berry and Blakeway nursery land, recently rejected at Appeal 3178952 (<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ViewCase.aspx?CaseID=3178952&CoID=0>);
- * Savills for Taylor Wimpey, attacking the southern core of the LGS extending northwards from Church Farm;
- * Turley for David Wilson Homes, for housing instead of the revised location for the proposed Secondary school;

If any of these developers wished to contest the **large area of LGS found justified in principle by the exhaustive evidence and debate in the JCS Examination**, then they should have initiated a judicial review, not pester the Inspector of an ensuing Local Plan to do more than minor boundary adjustment/confirmation and thereby undo and rerun the entire matter.

At Leckhampton, with **"its varied topography, landscape history, dense network of footpaths and pedestrian access from several residential districts"** (1993 Local Plan Recommendation, para. 6.107, see attached **Appendices-1 & -2**), 39 hectares is amply justified; and Leckhampton's seminal establishment of 'valued landscape' predates (and has been cited by) many other LGS and VL cases nationwide.