

Toby Jones Statement

The town is surrounded on three sides by higher ground of the Cotswolds Hills including Salters Hill and Sudeley Hill to the east, Langley Hill to the west and Cleeve Hill to the south (all within the AONB). Consequently, development in and around Winchcombe has the potential to impact upon a wide area of elevated land in the AONB by intruding into views or by altering the setting of the town in the valley and its relationship with the surrounding hills and other settlements.

Following a number of landscape sensitivity studies, land to the west of the town was considered to have the potential to accommodate some new development without appearing conspicuous in distant, elevated views of the town, nor intrusive in views from valued vantages such as public rights of way or long distance paths within the AONB. In the context of new development being needed in and around Winchcombe, Site WIN1 does effectively conserve the scenic beauty of the town as perceived from the surrounding hills all within the AONB by allowing a modest extension to the town in a way that respects the existing morphology without being conspicuous or intrusive and without disrupting the relationship between the town, the surrounding hills and neighbouring settlements. In terms of forming a new settlement edge along the western edge of the town, WIN1 offers some opportunities to enhance the landscape and scenic beauty. The existing settlement edge is fairly abrupt, linear and unsympathetic. A range of boundary treatments and domestic gardens exert a strong influence on the settlement boundary to the AONB. Development within WIN1 can deliver a more nuanced, fragmented and greener transition from town to AONB.

I have attached a photograph illustrating a key view from the AONB at Salters Hill. It demonstrates how the western edge of Winchcombe follows the contours along the base of Langley Hill. By respecting contours, development within WIN1 will not create a conspicuous expansion of the town from this vantage.



In response to the Inspector's question: If acceptable in principle, is the precise boundary of the site justified in the light of the topography? Should areas of adjacent land be included? For development to be accommodated along the western edge of Winchcombe without appearing conspicuous or intrusive, it is important that some restraint is applied to the extent to which development extends up the lower slopes of Langley Hill. By using contours to help to guide the western edge of the settlement we can ensure that new development will have only a modest effect in distant and elevated views from the east. The new development will appear as part of the existing settlement without creating any conspicuous, angular or intrusive additions. It is envisaged that the new western boundary created by any new development would take the opportunity to create a fitting edge facing the AONB. It is very important that new built form within WIN1 is guided by topography so as to create a flowing settlement edge when viewed from distance elevated vantages in the AONB to the east. The edge proposed corresponds with the contour to which Winchcombe already extends and no further. In contrast, I think the design of the new settlement edge might be quite fluid in terms of the land take for landscape. The key function of this edge will be to improve the landscape character along this edge of Winchcombe and views towards the town from the west.