

Briefing Notes

Cheltenham Green Belt Review

At a meeting of Cabinet on 6th September 2005 a list of projects was approved to be funded from Planning Delivery Grant.

http://tivoli.cheltenham.gov.uk/asp/minutes/start/cabinet%20documents/2005/reports/2005_09_06_Cabinet_Planning_Delivery_Grant_Allocation.pdf

This list of projects included an assessment of the green belt. A review of the green belt is essential if Cheltenham is to plan for the future in such a way that protects the important features of the Borough whilst meeting the development needs of the community it serves.

The green belt review is just one of a number of projects being undertaken by the Borough Council to develop an evidence base for Cheltenham's Local Development Framework (LDF). This reflects Government advice which requires local authorities to develop LDF's that when are examined can be demonstrated to be sound. It is the responsibility of the Regional Spatial Strategy to review the general extent of the green belt; however it is the responsibility of local authorities via LDFs to review the detailed boundaries as required by Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.

A consultant's brief was circulated during September 2006 and following interviews AERC (Applied Environmental Research Centre Ltd) were appointed. AERC bring extensive knowledge from across the UK in green belt policy and green belt reviews.

The Green belt Review began on 23rd October 2006 and is programmed to be completed by end January 2007. The draft methodology of the green belt review is attached.

The Borough Council from the outset of the project has emphasised the importance of involving stakeholders and the wider public in undertaking the review; this consultation will include;

1. consultation with Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council and the South West Regional Assembly (November 2006)
2. stakeholder workshop (4th December 2006) This will involve around 40 – 50 stakeholders identified from the LDF database, including representatives from parish councils, the business community, voluntary groups, developer consortiums, Cheltenham and Gloucester Strategic Partnerships, environmental groups
3. joint seminar/workshop for Cheltenham and Tewkesbury councillors together with County Councillors (13th December 2006)
4. Feedback session (10th January 2007)
5. letter circulated to all groups, organisations and individuals listed on the LDF database asking for written comments to be submitted to AERC (December 2006)

At a meeting between the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) and consultants AERC on 8th November 2006 the SWRA reported that "it considered Cheltenham had taken a proactive step in forward planning for its area".

Methodology: Cheltenham Green Belt Review

STAGE ONE: ESTABLISH CONTEXT

1. IDENTIFY GOOD PRACTICE:

- Liaise with RTPI regarding recent GB projects
- Contact with other relevant Institutes.
- AERC search of known GB areas.
- Review studies identified above.
- Confirm or modify methodology.

2. ASSESS NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES:

- Identify National/Regional policies regarding sustainability and GB.
- Identify criteria from National and Regional reviews.
- Note role of landscape character in GB reviews.

STAGE TWO: ESTABLISH PRESENT ROLE OF GREEN BELT:

1. ASSESS RSS GREEN BELT REVIEW/JOINT STUDY/AREA REVIEW/ANALYSIS OF EXISTING 1960 AND 1981 GREEN BELT PURPOSES AND RELEVANCE IN CURRENT CONTEXT:

- Define Study Area.
- Review Buchanan Report Findings.
- Review role of Cheltenham GB.
- Inform criteria for assessment.
- Note Cheltenham stance on GB strategy.
- Note RSS approach to constraints and sustainability.

2. IDENTIFY ROLE AND PURPOSE OF CHELTENHAM GB IN CONTEXT OF DRAFT RSS/STRATEGIC GREEN BELT REVIEW:

- Establish role and purpose of Cheltenham GB.
- Establish clarity of site selection criteria.
- Note constraints and sustainability.
- Determine the effectiveness of the GB – Identify land lost to GB since 1960 and 1981.

STAGE THREE: RANKING AND ANALYSIS:

1. DEVELOP AND APPLY RANKING OF SITES/AREA AGAINST GB PURPOSES:

- Identify previous GB boundaries.
- Agree criteria to define each of the five purposes.
- Agree ranking of the five purposes.
- Define sites/sub-areas.
- Score sub areas against criteria in matrices.
- Ascertain ranked performance against the five purposes.
- Establish sub areas of high, medium or low importance according to scores.
- Check scores against criteria in field for highest and lowest scoring areas.

STAGE FOUR: DEFINE BOUNDARIES:

1. IDENTIFY DEFENSIBLE GB BOUNDARIES:

- Agree criteria for boundary definition (permanence, physical features, history etc).
- Complete Desk Study of existing inner and outer GB boundary – including aerial photographs, local plan, planning history and development.
- Check boundaries adjoining high and low importance sub areas and sample of others by field work.
- Review CBC proposed scale of developments for Core Strategy.
- Assess need for compensatory GB allocation.
- Field work to check draft inner and outer boundaries against criteria.
- Prepare proposed GB boundaries to 2016 and 2026.

2. DEVELOP METHOD FOR DEFINING POST 2026 BOUNDARIES:

- Set out outline of repeating current review in the context of National and Regional guidance at the time.

3. ASSESS CHELTENHAM'S GB POLICIES AND RELEVANCE FOR LDF:

- Assess policies against agreed criteria for each of the five purposes.
- Assess policies against requirements for LDF inclusion.
- Identify policies requiring amendment (tests of soundness).
- Provide commentary on fitness for purpose of each policy.
- Identify policies which have low score against criteria or cannot be included in LDF.
- Suggest alterations to problematic policies to ensure a higher score and inclusion in LDF.

Welcome

Councillor Duncan
Smith – Leader
Cheltenham Borough
Council

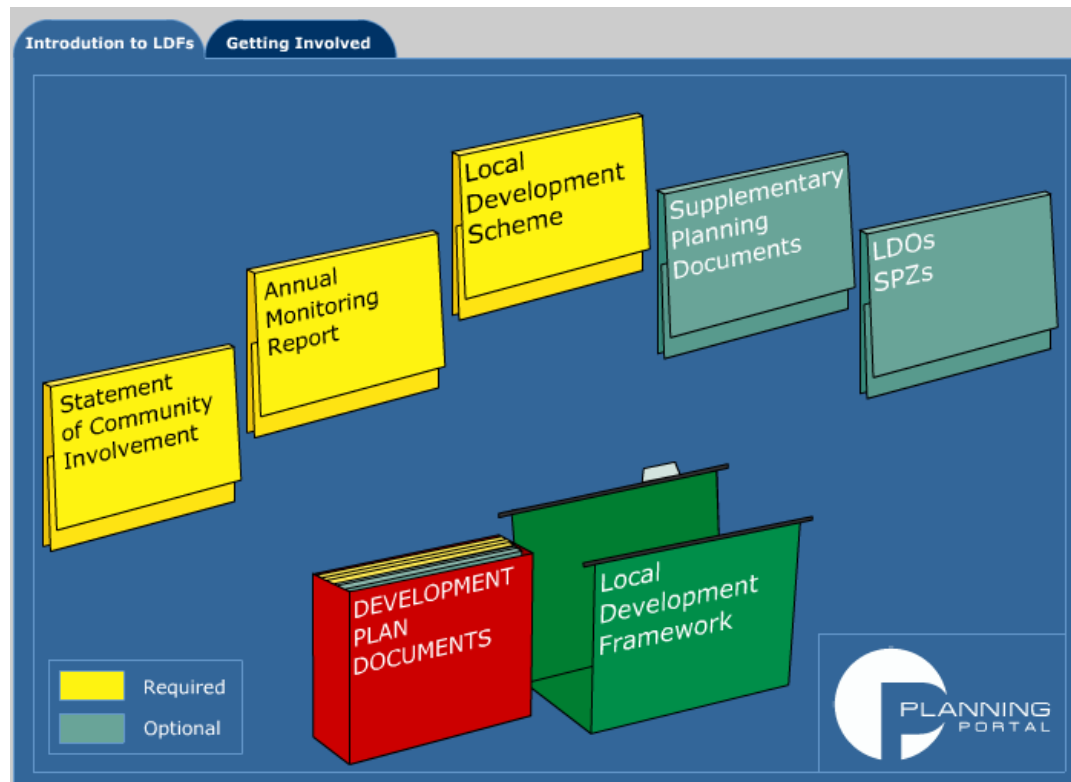
Introduction - Why is a review of the Green Belt needed?

Tracey Crews –
Strategic Land Use
Manager, Cheltenham
Borough Council

Strategic Context

- Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS) identifies Cheltenham as one of 21 strategic areas for growth
- PPG2 “Regional and strategic planning guidance set the framework for Green Belt policy and settlement policy, including the direction of long term development”
- PPS11 – Green Belt listed as a RSS policy topic

Local Context – Local Development Framework



Project Brief

- What the project will report on
 - role and purpose of Cheltenham Green Belt
 - assessment of Green Belt against national planning policy
 - assess whether existing policies are fit for purpose
 - define defensible green belt boundaries
 - areas of constraint
 - Sustainable locations
- What the project will not report on
 - allocation of sites to accommodate growth requirements set out by the RSS
 - landscape criteria
 - Green Belt outside the defined study area boundary

Next Steps

- The Green Belt review will inform the LDF core strategy
- Core strategy will be subject to public consultation Spring and Summer 2007 before being considered at an independent examination Spring 2008

CHELTHENHAM GREEN BELT REVIEW STUDY FINDINGS PRESENTATION

**by Steve Baker and Jed Griffiths
Wednesday 10th January 2007**

Key
greenbelt
Borough Boundary

INTRODUCTION

AERC and Jed Griffiths

- AERC (Applied Environmental Research Centre Ltd)
- Steve Baker, Project Leader, AERC
- Jed Griffiths, Principal, Griffiths Environmental Planning

AERC APPROACH

OBJECTIVE- BASED

- Consultancy Project Brief
- Objectives on Outputs
- Objectives on Process

OBJECTIVE PROCESS

- Based on Best Practice
- Agreed methodology

INDEPENDENT PROCESS

- Transparent Process

RELEVANT TO CONTEXT

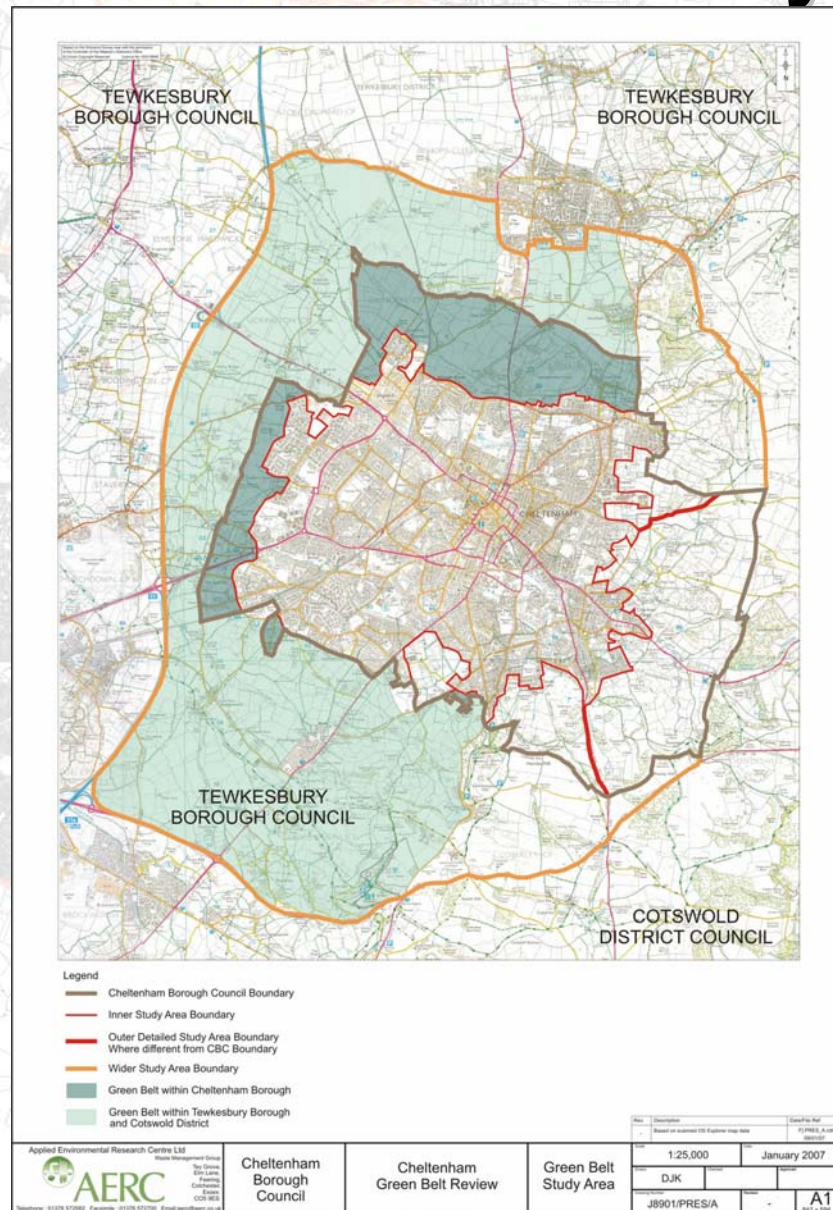
- The RSS and Gloucestershire
- Sub-Regional Strategy/Green Belt Review
- Government Policy

SCOPE OF STUDY

- Review of contribution of land to Green Belt
- Review of Current Boundaries
- Review of Current Policies
- Identification of Defensible Boundaries
- Sustainable Development Constraints and Opportunities
- Consultation Process consistent with SCI principles
- Outputs for Incorporation into Core Strategy
- Independent from Vested Interests

10 January 2007

Cheltenham Green Belt Study Area Plan



Key

greenbelt

Borough Boundary

METHODOLOGY 1

Stage One: Establish Context

- Identify Good Practice
- Assess National and Regional Policies

Stage Two: Establish Present Role of Green Belt

- Analysis of Existing 1960 & 1981 Purposes and Relevance
- Role in Context of Draft RSS and Strategic Review

METHODOLOGY 2

Stage Three: Ranking and Analysis

- Analysis of Areas against GB Purposes
- Ranking of Purposes
- Analysis of Constraints and Opportunities

Stage Four: Define Boundaries

- Identify Defensible Boundaries
- Assess GB Policies and relevance for LDF

OUTPUTS

- Analysis of Green Belt Policy, Role and Purposes
- Scoring of Areas
- Constraints and Opportunities Analysis
- Potential Green Belt Boundary Amendments
- Proposals for GB Boundary Review Post 2026
- Final Report for Input to Core Strategy



10 January 2007

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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Jed Griffiths

Key

-  greenbelt
-  Borough Boundary

10 January 2007

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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS:

The Three Stages

Stage One

- Meeting with SWRA and Local Authorities
- Circular Letter Seeking Views on Key Issues

Stage Two

- Stakeholder Workshop 4 December 2006
- Councillors' Seminar 13 December 2006

Stage Three

- Public Forum 10 January 2007

10 January 2007

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS:

The Outputs

- Information to AERC on Role and Purposes of the Green Belt
- Views on merits of areas within the Green Belt
- Identification of physical features
- Opinions about boundaries
- Guidance on long-term patterns of development



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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS:

Stage One Response

- Over 200 letters despatched
- 34 Replies – 17% response rate
- Existing boundaries still relevant
- Main purpose is to separate Cheltenham from nearby urban areas
- Critical areas are gaps between the town and Bishop's Cleeve, also Gloucester
- Development pressures, especially around Leckhampton and Swindon Village
- No strong physical boundaries
- Possibility of long term sustainable development to the north and west

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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS:

Stage Two Findings

- Most important role to prevent merger between Cheltenham and Bishop's Cleeve, also Gloucester
- Opportunities for countryside recreation, tourism, biodiversity, and landscape
- Concern about development pressures
- Lack of strong physical boundaries
- Long term sustainable development to the west
- Vulnerability of land around Leckhampton

10 January 2007

TODAY'S FORUM

- An opportunity to comment on the initial findings
- Opportunity to make further suggestions
- Please write or e-mail any detailed responses



INITIAL STUDY FINDINGS

Steve Baker

Key

-  greenbelt
-  Borough Boundary

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INITIAL FINDINGS: Green Belt Policies

- Local Plan Policies still Relevant to LDF
- Policies follow PPG2/consistent with draft RSS
- 2 Weaknesses:
 - Role in Sustainable Development
 - Green Belt Settlement Criteria for Development
- Policy for Racecourse as Green Belt policy – key location in GB



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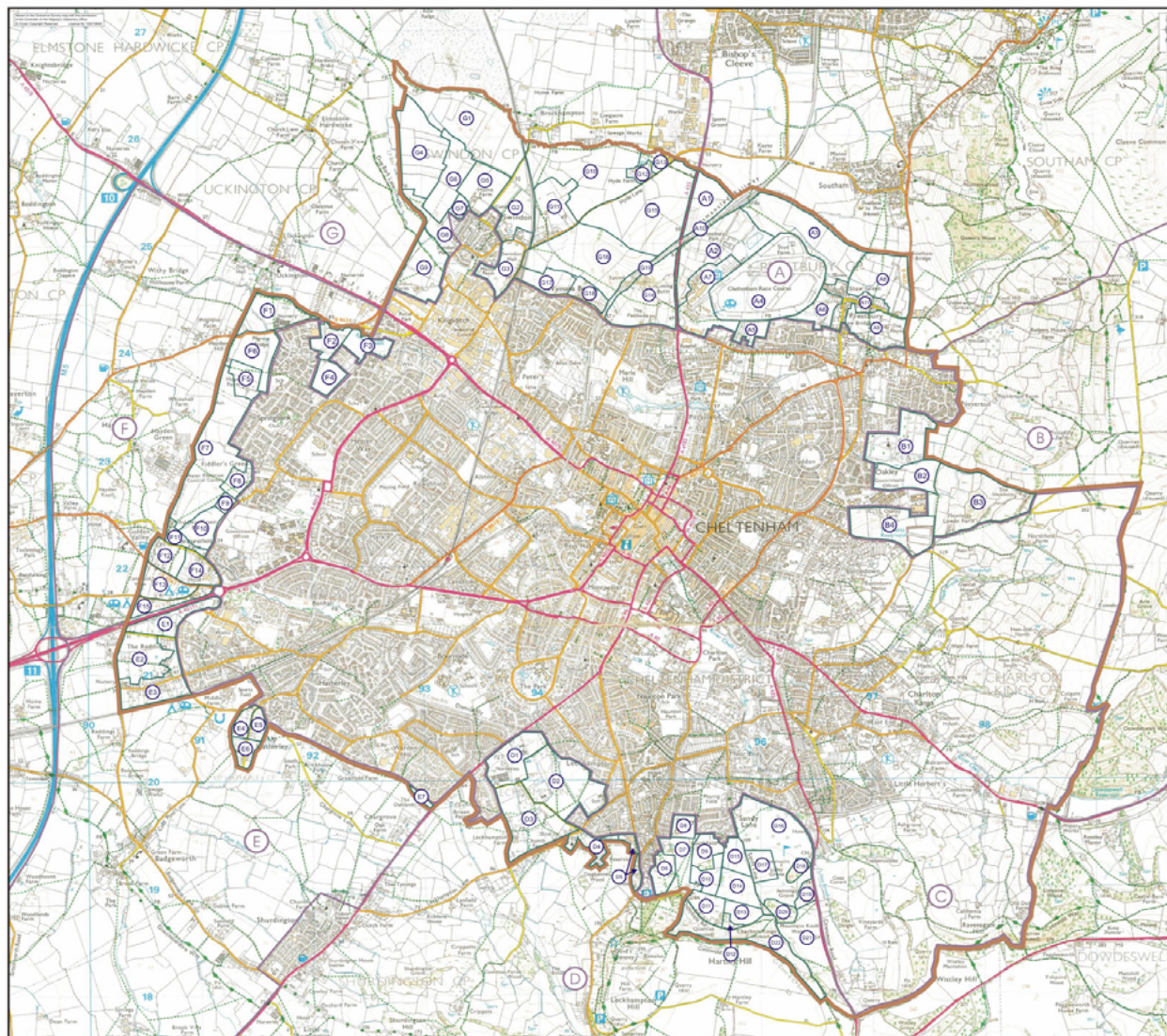
INITIAL FINDINGS:

Green Belt Purposes

- Lowest – Scoring areas of GB to West, North and North West
- No non-GB land scores high against Purposes:
 - AONB nearest to GBelt
 - Land between Urban Area and Inner GB edge
- Major Implications for Wider Study Area:
 - “Compensatory” GB outside Cheltenham Borough?
 - Any GB changes in lowest scoring areas would affect Tewkesbury.



Cheltenham Green Belt Sub-Areas Plan



- Cheltenham Borough Council Boundary
- Zone Boundary
- Study Area Boundary
- Zone Identification
- Study Sub-Area Identification

Scale: 1:12,500 (12.5 cm = 1 mile)
 Based on current OS Landranger map
 Date: 15 March 2006

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cheltenham
Green Belt Review

Cheltenham Green Belt
Study Sub-Areas

Scale: 1:12,500 (12.5 cm = 1 mile)
 Date: 15 March 2006

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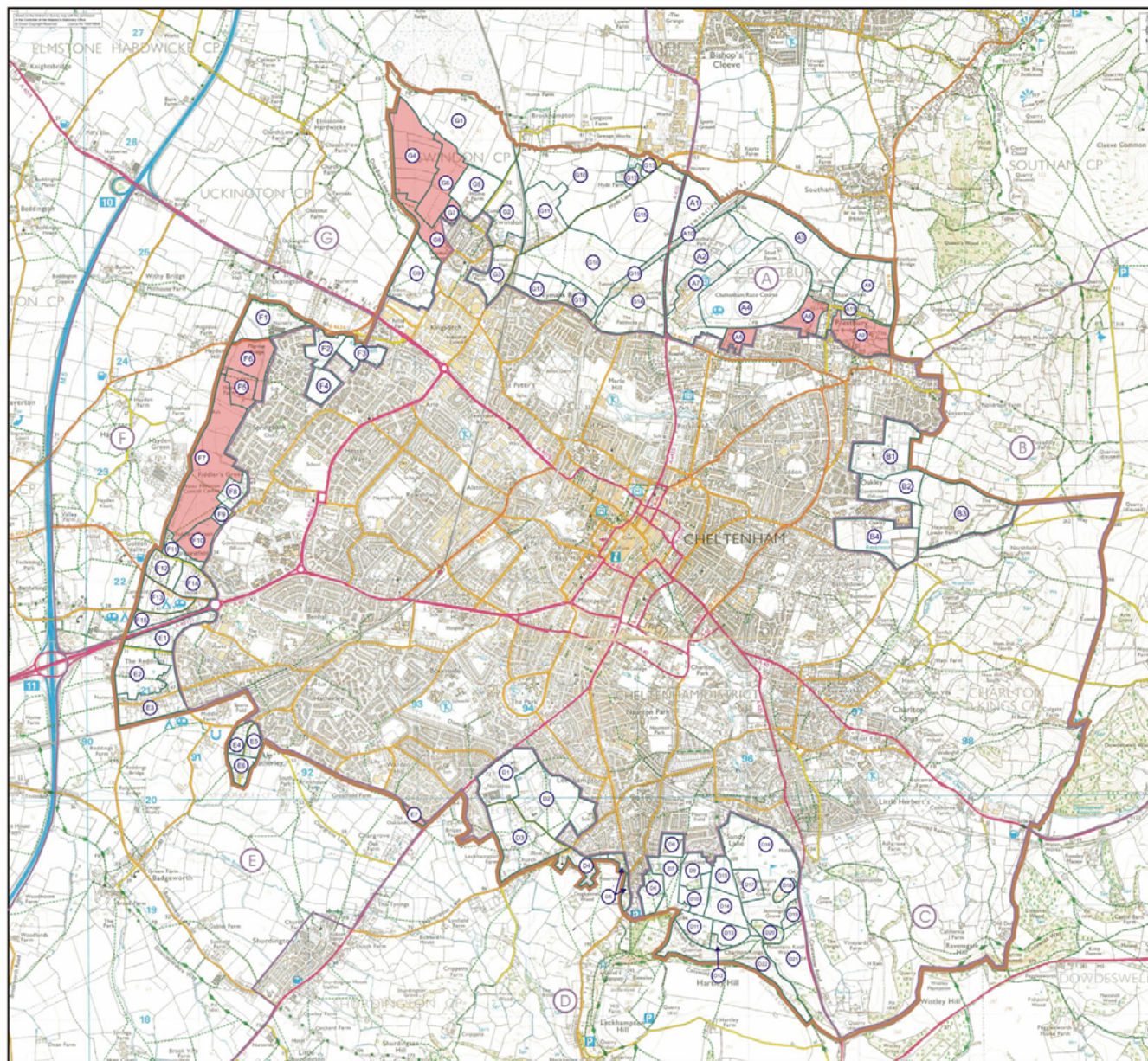
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A0

Applied Environmental Research Centre Ltd

AERC

Cheltenham Green Belt Sub-Areas with Lowest Scores Plan



-  Cheltenham Borough Council Boundary
-  Zone Boundary
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Zone Identification
-  Study Sub-Area Identification
-  Lowest Green Belt Scores

Rev	Description	Date/Iss Ref
1	Based on scanned OS Landranger map	F) PWS, 1/2000

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cheltenham
Green Belt Review

Green Belt Sub-Areas with Lowest Scores

Scale	1: 12,500 (12.5 cm = 1 mile)	Date	January 200
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Drawn	Checked	Approved
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Ordering Number	Revision	Alt
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Applied Environmental Research Center		



AERC

INITIAL FINDINGS:

Hard Constraints to Development in Green Belt

- Flood Risk Zones
- AONB
- Development Exclusion Zone from Sewage Treatment Works

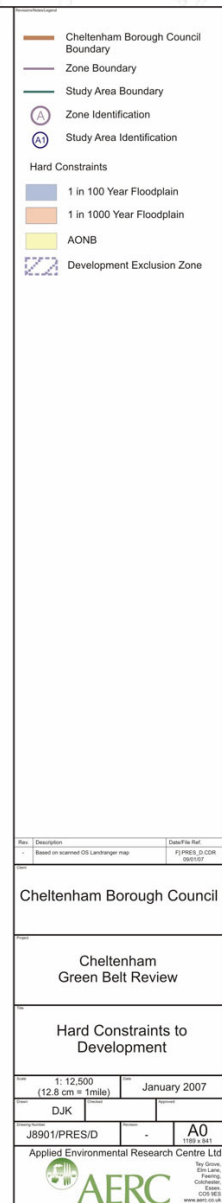
Key

greenbelt

Borough Boundary

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INITIAL FINDINGS:

Sustainable Development Opportunities in Green Belt

- Some Sub-Areas meet combination of “Sustainability” Criteria:
 - ‘Green Transport Location/Accessibility
 - Proximity to major Employment Areas
 - Proximity to Education Facilities
 - Proximity to Leisure/Recreation Sites
 - Proximity to other major Community Services/Retail Centres
 - Brownfield’ Land

- West and North-West Cheltenham

10 January 2007

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INITIAL FINDINGS:

Green Belt Boundaries

- Most of Current Green Belt Boundary is 'Defendable'
- No Defendable Alternative GB Boundary in Cheltenham
- Changes to GB Boundaries would have to be "Masterplanned"
- Defendable Boundaries Created through LDD by:
 - Road Construction/Design
 - Structural Planting
 - Urban Development Design
- Major Implications for Wider Study Area:
 - Any changes to NW in Joint working with TBC
 - Boundaries beyond 2026 as result of Review after 2020



10 January 2007

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REPORTING ON FINDINGS

- Interim Results of Study
- Draft Report to CBC
- Final Report to CBC



10 January 2007



Questions



What happens next?

www.cheltenham.gov.uk

ldf@cheltenham.gov.uk

Cheltenham Green Belt Review – Public Forum

Cheltenham Town Hall, 10 January 2007

This note outlines the presentations and debate which took place at the public forum on the green belt review which took place on 10th January 2007. The objective of the forum was to provide information on why the green belt review was being undertaken and present emerging findings.

Introduction

The meeting began with an introduction from Tracey Crews, strategic land use manager of Cheltenham Borough Council as to why Cheltenham needs a review of its green belt. A brief history of the green belt was touched upon and it was explained that the green belt can be used as a planning tool.

The long term needs of Cheltenham would have to be considered when taking a fresh look at the green belt.

Cheltenham will grow and change will have to take place – 12,000 new dwellings and 20,000 new jobs will be required. Cheltenham has been listed as 1 of 21 strategic areas for growth.

In 2004 the planning system changed. In the future all growth within Cheltenham will be in the context of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS provides the framework for future planning changes within Cheltenham.

Any new plans put forward will have to have a strong evidence base to back them up and will be thoroughly examined.

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will be the first document to prepare in the Community Strategy. This document will identify broad locations for growth but does not allocate specific sites for development.

Steve Baker and Jed Griffiths, representatives of AERC, the consultancy firm that carried out the green belt review introduced themselves to the audience.

Steve Baker explained the AERC approach to the green belt review outlining its objectives and output, the independent nature of the study and its transparency, how the study is relevant to the RSS and government policies and the background to the study. The audience were reminded that the findings from the green belt review can be challenged via consultation which will be undertaken during 2007 on the LDF core strategy.

Scope of the study

Steve Baker defined the scope of the study. The review looked at the contribution of green belt land to Cheltenham and an examination of green belt boundaries.

The study also looked in detail of land surrounding Cheltenham's green belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The wider study area mainly looked at areas of Tewksbury, including Bishops Cleeve to the north, the M5 in the west and the A436 south of the borough.

The methodology used was designed to:

1. Establish the context of the study
2. Establish the role of the green belt
3. Rank and analyse the green belt
4. Examine the green belt boundaries

Outputs included:

1. Analysis of green belt policy
2. Scoring of areas
3. Identification of constraints and opportunities
4. Potential green belt amendments
5. Long term vision of green belt boundaries
6. The findings of the final report would be inputted into the Community Strategy.

Consultation

Jed Griffiths outlined the consultation process of the green belt review, this included;

1. Meetings were held with the South West Regional Assembly and Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council
2. A letter was sent out seeking the views of the public. In total 200 letters were despatched and 34 replies were returned. This equated to a 17% response rate.
3. A full day workshops was held with stakeholders
4. A workshop for councillors of Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Gloucester City and Gloucestershire County Council was held.
5. A public forum to outline the green belt review findings and elicit feedback.

Initial findings from the study

Steve Baker outlined the findings from the study process.

Cheltenham's green belt is very small and this is the context in which the study was undertaken.

Existing policies were looked at and were considered to be relevant and consistent with government policies and the draft RSS.

However, AERC were able to identify two weaknesses. PPG2 did not mention sustainability and the green belt settlements criteria needs to be re-examined.

It was suggested that the racecourse should be included within the Green Belt.

The study area was broken down into sub areas. These were described as the building blocks for the study. Each area was scored and those areas that scored the lowest were to the west, north and north west of the town.

Sub areas were divided into three groups based on the points they accumulated.

The inner edge of the green belt, AONB and white land adjoining the green belt did not figure in the highest third. This land could not be used as compensation land as it doesn't score highly. Compensation land would have to come from outside Cheltenham, possibly Tewksbury.

The lowest scoring areas included the Fiddlers Green area, North West of Swindon Village and areas around Prestbury.

Steve Baker emphasised the transparency of the review and that in the final report all the data from the study will be set out together with how the scores were reached.

Constraints to development

Three types of hard constraints to development were identified. These were flood risk zones, AONB and the development exclusion zones around the sewage treatment works.

These areas were plotted for Cheltenham and the adjoining areas. Everywhere to the east is AONB and development exclusion zones exist to the west (edge of Fiddlers Green) and a small area at the northern boundary. These areas affect quite a lot of green belt and the adjoining areas.

Sustainable development opportunities and constraints

Sustainability criteria for development opportunities would include sub areas that had at least two or more facilities, making them appropriate locations and brown field sites.

A plan of this will feature in the final report on the green belt. Areas in the west and north west of Cheltenham have combinations of sustainability criteria.

Steve explained that the other major element of work was to examine the green belt boundaries. Most of the current green belt boundary is defensible. Fairly strong boundaries exist at the northern edge of Cheltenham and one or two areas to the west and south. These boundaries have been in existence for some time. However, other green belt boundaries were difficult to define as there was difficulty linking them up.

Any changes to the green belt will have to be master planned this will enable defensible boundaries can be created. This could be achieved through road construction and design, structural planting to define the urban edge of Cheltenham and good urban element design.

In the long term there may be defined boundaries beyond Cheltenham but these would have to be agreed in collaboration with other authorities.

Conclusions

Changes to the North West will be carried out via joint working with Tewkesbury.

Boundaries beyond the year 2020 cannot be defined. A review after 2020 will have to be carried out to look at the green belt beyond 2026.

Findings of the review will be published; this will be made available via the Council's website

A draft report on the green belt is currently being finalised.

Feedback from this forum, together with any additional comments submitted via letter or email will be considered before the final report is draft and presented to the Council.

Question and Answer session

Paul Ryder – Leckhampton and Warden Hill parish council

Q. What influence would the South West Regional Spatial Strategy have on the green belt review?

A. Tracey Crews – A strategic review of the green belt has been undertaken to inform the Regional Spatial Strategy. The review currently being undertaken by AERC is being prepared within the work already undertaken. The green belt review is a piece of evidence that is independent and is open for debate. The final version will be submitted as evidence to the examination in public to the Regional Spatial Strategy

County Councillor MacDonald

Q. Sort clarification concerning the landscape assessment, whether it had been part of the study.

A. Steve Baker – Landscape has a part to play in the green belt, in that it contributes to the green belt but is not the driving force of green belt policy.

John Oates – Pittville Residents Association

Q. Are other authorities undertaking the same study?

A. Tracey Crews – The council did investigate joint working with Tewkesbury Council. However Cheltenham has been under significant pressure to deliver parts of the LDF by the Government Office of the South West (GOSW). The review therefore needed to be conducted as soon as possible.

Duncan Smith – All local authorities will have to address green belt issues within the LDF. The work that Cheltenham has had carried out may help other authorities with their work.

Steve Baker – No other local authority has carried out this work. Cheltenham is at the forefront of green belt policy. All authorities in the country are playing catch up with Cheltenham.

Councillor Godwin

Q. For a policy to succeed it has to have the confidence of the people of Cheltenham. Up Hatherley and Swindon Village have had land taken out of the green belt. How can we have confidence?

A. Duncan Smith – planning committees will assist in developing this confidence.

Tracey Crews – We should be looking at how to keep Cheltenham special. There has already been a lot of development on brown field sites and these sites are diminishing. We have to think creatively and the RSS has set the gauntlet to do this. The government Inspector has already stated that employment land cannot wait – we need to look at sites which may be green field sites. We have to look creatively at peripheral sites in considering the capacity of Cheltenham. We are living longer and in smaller family units – this is the challenge. To achieve all this, the green belt needs to be relevant in the long term, communities need certainty. By undertaking a transparent green belt review, and thorough public consultation we hope to gain the support of communities. We need a strong position to defend at a future examination.

Duncan Smith – the green belt review can help us defend against regional and national policies.

Tracey Crews – We can create a degree of permanence with the green belt. It is desirable to have agreement between the council and the public as to how these boundaries are defined.

Councillor Melrose

Q. Sort clarification and recommendations on the racecourse.

A. Steve Baker – the racecourse has a fundamental importance to the green belt. Built up areas are linked to the racecourse, which are in turn linked to the surrounding areas. It is an integral part of the green belt. The planning policy needs to be set in green belt. Policies that allow the racecourse to evolve should not be treated separately to the green belt.

Peter Bowman

Q. Questioned the hierarchy that governs planning decisions. How many people do we have to defend against?

A. Jed Griffiths – The planning inspectorate examines LDF's and their soundness. It is important for the green belt to have very sound evidence based policies that are supported by the public and in which the public have confidence in.

Kerry Jones – Councillor Bishops Cleeve

Q. The RSS proposes to extend the green belt to the north and west of Bishops Cleeve. The concern is that green belt will be lost through creeping development in the north of Cheltenham.

A. Duncan Smith – North west of Bishops Cleeve is compensatory green belt.

Jed Griffiths – The gap beyond Bishops Cleeve is outside the scope of the study. Tewksbury Borough Council is aware of this.

Duncan Smith – Tewksbury will need to carry out this work.

Robin Shepperd – CGMS Planning Consultancy

Q. One of the weaknesses of the green belt is sustainable development. What weight is attached to sustainable development verses the green belt – which will carry greater weight?

A. Tracey Crews – Sustainable development has to be at the core of planning policies. If it is not the government Inspector may say policies have been based on unsound judgement. Public consultation will take place on a range of issues and options on where development should be located.

Rick Jarvis – Tenants and Residents Association

Q. If green belt boundaries were shifted outwards into the countryside the purpose of the green belt would be lost. Sustainable development criteria referred to in this view is lacking.

A. Steve Baker – One feature of the green belt is its permanence - there are a number of elements to this. Cheltenham needs to meet requirements for development; however this is at odds with the permanence of the green belt boundary – need to recognise that it is society that is generating this development requirement. The green belt should encourage regeneration, keep settlements separate, prevent urban sprawl, protect countryside character and to protect the setting of historic towns. Green belt designation criteria for sustainable development should be identified in terms of good practice; any review should be based on the principle that sustainable development will be reached.

The green belt review provides an objective, independent and logical analysis. It is up to Cheltenham to decide what it does with the findings.

Rebecca Foulds – Foxley Town Planning

Q. Asked AERC to clarify the findings on Leckhampton white land – applying green belt policies to it although it is not green belt.

A. Steve Baker – The same criteria was used. None of the land scored highly against green belt purposes.

Adrian Bridges

Q. Did you go out on foot and to look at the sites?

A. Steve Baker – Site visits consisted of three stages. There was an initial familiarisation with the areas and initial exercises were desk bound. The methodology was tested on the ground and all sub areas and boundaries were seen. Various areas were visited on three occasions.

Ian Ferguson – Trustees of Battledown Estate

Q. When might we expect development to take place? If it was to start in 2015, completion would probably be 2020. Another review would be required then and it would be difficult to measure the effectiveness of the policies.

A. Tracey Crews – Cannot provide an answer to this. There will be a public examination this year on the RSS. The Community Strategy needs to be prepared in the context of the RSS. Urban capacity work will be continuing. In Spring Cheltenham will hold public consultations, in the summer plans will go on deposit at which time there will be further public consultation.

If the public have any issues they should consult the council's website for information or email planning staff. AERC can be contacted directly.

??

Q. With more employment land Cheltenham will attract people from other places. How low does productive farmland rate with employment land?

A. Tracey Crews – We have to create a balance between jobs and housing, this has already been taken into account via the RSS. Infrastructure is important and careful master planning will be an essential tool in planning the urban form.

Steve Baker – When looking at agricultural land we had to decide if the land assisted in safeguarding the countryside. And this is yes, it does.

Ronald Brickwell – Prestbury Parish Council

Q. Disappointed in comments regarding Leckhampton. Green belt status should have been recommended to the white land south of Cheltenham (Leckhampton).

A. Steve Baker – Leckhampton would not feature as green belt land as it does not score highly. Remit of the study is to look objectively – this is what we have done.

Irene Jones

Q. Warden Hill was established in the late 1950s, early 1960s – people probably objected to this development then as they are doing to development in the green belt now. We need new houses. Will new housing consist of starter homes and housing authority rented homes?

A. Duncan Smith – The RSS is looking at 40% for affordable housing, rented and mixed tenure.

Kit Braunzholtz – LEGLAG

Q. Land close to Leckhampton Hill has landscape, geological, botanical and recreational value and should be given special consideration. Gloucestershire has developed way out from where it used to be since the green belt was established. Suggested defendable boundaries could include Shurdington, Church Lane and Moorend stream. Quite a lot of the land belongs to the county council – is this why it was not included as green belt originally? Three inspectors have recommended that this land should not be developed.

A. Duncan Smith – There is no suggestion that land should be developed.

Jamie Lewis – Hunter Page Planning

Q. Welcomed commitment to review the green belt, however given that the local plan Inspector recommended land being taken out of the green belt which was not supported by the Council what level of support will there be by the Council on the findings of the review?

A. Tracey Crews – This will be looked at in the most transparent way. The findings of the review will inform the LDF core strategy; this will be subject to public consultation. Members have a role to play in making decisions and the public will have opportunities to question these decisions.

Duncan Smith – Evidence gathering is important.

Nick Tucker Brown

Q. Will plans and information about scoring be made available on the council website? Have consultants walked the Honeybourne Line?

A. Tracey Crews – Notes taken at this meeting along with the presentation and maps will be placed on the council website. The full report will be available on the website once the review has been finalised.

Jed Griffiths – Agreed to walk the Honeybourne Line

The public forum came to a close at 6.00pm.