1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Status
1.1.1 This brief has been prepared by Cheltenham Borough Council as local planning authority. Following public consultation, it has been adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, which will be taken into account by the Council in the determination of planning applications for development within the area covered by the brief.

1.2 Scope and purpose of the development brief
1.2.1 The brief covers the site of Cheltenham Spa Railway Station and associated land. The site lies between Gloucester Road, Queen’s Road and Kensington Avenue, as shown on the plan. The Gloucester - Birmingham railway passes through the site. Much of the site is in railway-related uses, including car parking, but it also contains some land with no current use.

1.2.2 The purpose of the brief is to set a framework for possible development within the site and to encourage the improvement of operational and passenger facilities within the context of the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan.

1.3 Aims of the development brief
1.3.1 The development brief is intended to achieve the following aims:

- to encourage and facilitate improvements to Cheltenham Spa railway station
- to make best use of land in the interests of sustainable development
- to secure greater integration between all modes of transport
- to enhance the visual appearance of the area through high standards of development and landscaping.

1.4 Responsibilities
1.4.1 Gloucestershire County Council is the strategic planning authority for Gloucestershire. Cheltenham Borough Council is the local planning authority with responsibility for local planning and for determining planning applications within its area.

1.4.2 Gloucestershire County Council is the Highway Authority for Gloucestershire. Cheltenham Borough Council acts as its agent for highway matters within Cheltenham Borough.

1.4.3 Until 31st March 2000, the Council acts as agent for Severn Trent Water.

1.4.4 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to “exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can, to prevent crime and disorder in its area.” The implications of this Act and the ensuing Crime Reduction Strategy will be wide-ranging and will be taken into account in considering any development proposals, together with the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer.
2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Government Guidance

2.1.1 The Government provides Planning Policy Guidance, many aspects of which are relevant to development within this area. In particular:

- PPG1 ('General Policy and Principles') places emphasis on sustainable development, on mixed use development, and on the importance of high quality design
- PPG3 ('Housing') and the subsequent Policy Statement 'Planning for the Communities of the Future' indicate the Government’s determination to raise the national proportion of new homes to be built on previously developed land to 60%, and to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within existing urban areas
- PPG4 ('Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms') seeks to encourage economic development in a way which is compatible with environmental objectives, and places emphasis on mixed uses and the re-use of urban land
- PPG6 ('Town Centres and Retail Development') sets out the principle of a 'sequential test' which gives priority to finding sites within town centres for uses which attract a lot of people, such as retail, offices and leisure
- PPG13 ('Transport') seeks to reduce travel, especially by private car, by fostering development in locations well served by public transport
- PPG15 ('Planning and the Historic Environment') promotes protection of the historic environment.
- PPG16 ('Archaeology and Planning') provides advice on the handling of archaeological matters in the planning process.
- PPG23 ('Planning and Pollution Control') gives advice on such matters as the redevelopment of contaminated land.

2.1.2 The Government also publishes aspects of its policies in Circulars, of which the following are particularly relevant: 5/94 ('Planning Out Crime'), 1/97('Planning Obligations'), and 6/98 ('Planning and Affordable Housing').

2.2 Development Plans

2.2.1 Gloucestershire County Council has now approved the Structure Plan Second Review, which provides the strategic framework for development in Cheltenham. The Second Review recognises Cheltenham as a major urban area with a sub-regional role as an employment, shopping and service centre, and its proposals for development seek to strengthen this role in the interests of sustainability. The plan also places emphasis on retaining the unique historic and environmental character of Cheltenham.
2.2.2 The current local plan is the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in December 1997. Its aims are to:

- conserve and enhance Cheltenham’s environment
- maintain a healthy economy
- help local people to be suitably housed
- create and maintain a high standard of amenity
- provide a safe and effective transport system, with a car restraint emphasis, focused on the protection and enhancement of the town’s environment.

2.2.3 The plan includes a number of detailed policies relating to development which will be relevant to the site covered by this brief, which are included as an appendix. In general, these seek to implement Government requirements for sustainable development and to achieve a high standard of design which complements neighbouring development.

2.2.4 The area covered by the brief is not allocated in the plan for any specific uses.
3.0 THE AREA COVERED BY THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

3.1 Description

3.1.1 The site covered by the development brief has an area of 3.3 hectares. It is bounded by residential areas along Kensington Avenue to the south-east and Gloucester Road to the south-west, and by a local centre to the north-east and north-west. Lansdown Trading Estate lies beyond Gloucester Road to the north-west. The Honeybourne Line cycletrack and walkway runs northwards from the northern side of Queen’s Road.

3.1.2 The south-eastern boundary of the site coincides with the boundary of the Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area, although the site itself lies outside.

3.1.3 Access to the site is primarily from Queen’s Road, which is an unnumbered classified road. There is a subsidiary service access from Gloucester Road, which is a numbered classified road. Both Gloucester Road and Queen’s Road are bus routes, with stops close to the station, and restrictions on kerbside parking. There is also a separate pedestrian-only access into the station from Gloucester Road.

3.1.4 The Gloucester - Birmingham railway line passes through the site and beneath Gloucester Road. Cheltenham Spa railway station, the only station in the town, stands on this line within the site. The station building was designed by S. W. Daukes (architect of Francis Close Hall) and was built about 1840. It was once listed as being of architectural or historic interest, but was de-listed following demolition of its Doric portico in 1961, and is now in a poor state of maintenance. It retains historical and attractive ironwork and canopies on the platforms. There are now no listed buildings within the site.

3.1.5 Land around the station and on both sides on the track is in operational and associated uses, including public car parking. The south-eastern part of the site comprises the track bed of the former Cheltenham - Honeybourne line and is currently unused. This land has an area of about 0.6 hectare. The southern end of the site is occupied by a building providing for Royal Mail transfer operations.

3.1.6 The rail track and disused track bed lie in cuttings at a low level, with ground rising irregularly up to the level of Queen’s Road, Gloucester Road, and Kensington Avenue, with a difference in level of about 6 - 6.5 metres.

3.2 Ownership

3.2.1 The entire site is owned by Railtrack plc. Station facilities are operated by Wales and West.

3.3 Constraints

3.3.1 There are a number of constraints which affect the potential for development in the site. These are:
3.3.2 The remaining track is in active use for the carriage of passenger and freight traffic. Railtrack maintains a 3 metre safety strip alongside the track, generally preserved as a rough, grassy zone with no significant obstructions. Drainage of the track must also be maintained.

3.3.3 In any development, it will be necessary to continue to deter trespass to the track in the interests of safety and to prevent damage.

3.3.4 There may be some contamination, mainly by hydrocarbons, at the level of present and former tracks and sidings. The need for and extent of treatment will depend on the nature of any development.

3.3.5 The site is well located on the highway network, although there are some constraints in the vicinity of the site.

3.3.6 The bridge which carries Queen’s Road over the Honeybourne Line is of restricted width and has a steep gradient up and over it. The footways either side of the road are also narrow. Queen’s Road has a weight limit on it, although this is for environmental reasons.

3.3.7 The junction of Queen’s Road and Gloucester Road is constrained by the bridge over the railway track. In particular the approach to the roundabout from the southern part of Gloucester Road is of restricted width. There are also concerns about the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the sections of Gloucester Road and Queen’s Road adjacent to the site. Any development of the site which generated a material increase in traffic would require works to widen this access to the junction and would also need to address the safety of cyclists and pedestrians in the vicinity of the site travelling to and from it.

3.3.8 The existence of the Honeybourne line walkway and cycletrack is of considerable significance. The route forms part of the designated national cycle network and connections to areas beyond its current extent, including routes through the site, will need to be protected (see local plan policy RC 105).

3.3.9 Gloucestershire County Council has proposals for the construction of a rapid public transport system serving principally the Gloucester/Cheltenham corridor, with the possibility of an extension to Bishop’s Cleeve. The proposed route passes through the site and along the Honeybourne line cycleway. Although the proposals are likely to be long-term in view of the heavy capital investment required, the route must be safeguarded in the interim (see local plan policy TP 131).
**Sewers**

3.3.10 A major surface water sewer crosses the site along the alignment of the Honeybourne line, although its exact location would need to be determined in the event of major development. It is thought to be approximately 900mm x 600mm in size and picks up flows from at least the Malvern Road and Queen’s Road areas, as well as former track drainage from the Honeybourne line. Even though the Royal Mail building is already built over it and it is not an adopted sewer, it will be necessary to ensure this sewer is protected and that it can be maintained to prevent flooding.

**Trees**

3.3.11 The site contains a number of mature trees. These include an oak adjacent to Gloucester Road, 2 chestnuts near the entrance to the station building, and an avenue of limes adjoining Kensington Avenue. There is also an area of substantial greenery along the disused section of the Honeybourne line which passes through the site.
4.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

4.1 General
4.1.1 Any development within the site should not prejudice the future expansion of railway services and facilities, including use of the former Honeybourne line.

4.1.2 Development within the area will be subject to the following land use, transport and environmental considerations.

4.2 Land use
4.2.1 Land uses within the area should be compatible with the long-term aims of this brief.

4.2.2 PPG 1 promotes mixed uses in the interests of sustainable development, particularly in places highly accessible by means of transport other than the private car and in areas of major new development. Any substantial development proposals should therefore include a mix of land uses.

4.2.3 Although the site is outside the town centre, its role as a focus for public transport services - rail, bus, and taxi - makes it a relatively sustainable location, and proposed land uses reflect this.

4.2.4 A number of land uses will be acceptable within the site. B1, retail and leisure uses may be appropriate, subject to environmental and traffic implications, but proposals would be subject to the sequential test set out in PPG6 and local plan policies EM 70, RT 82, and RC 95. Retail use would also be subject to the additional test of need (in relation to the Ministerial statement of 11th February 1999). Retail use would only be acceptable where there was likely to be no harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre or to a local centre, in accordance with local plan policy RT 88, and there may be restrictions on the nature of goods which can be sold. Proposals involving these uses should be able to demonstrate benefits to sustainable development and transport in Cheltenham.

4.2.5 Residential use is acceptable, if a satisfactory environmental context can be provided, in accordance with local plan policy HS 73(a). Subject to the area of the land involved or the numbers of dwellings proposed, an element of affordable housing may be required, but this will be subject to an assessment of demand and site development costs at the time when proposals are being prepared. Residential development must also comply with local plan policy HS 81.

4.2.6 The site is also suitable in principle for a hotel, institutional, medical or other similar uses.

4.3 Transport
4.3.1 Development within the site is likely to generate an increase in the volume of traffic on adjacent roads, the scale depending on the nature and scale of land uses proposed. Local plan policies TP 126, TP 127 and TP 128 may be relevant. A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) will be required in conjunction within any development proposals. The scope will depend on the type and scale of development proposed. As well as considering the
generation of vehicular traffic, the TIA should consider how the design and management of any proposed development could encourage cycling, walking and travel by bus in addition to travel by train.

4.3.2 Parking by rail travellers in the residential streets surrounding the station already causes concern and any development must retain provision for good quality interchange facilities, including car parking, for all rail travellers. These facilities must be sufficient to meet both the existing and projected future passenger demand and should provide for interchange by bus, coach, car (both short-stay and long-stay), taxi, cycle and pedestrian. Facilities should also accommodate the needs of the mobility handicapped.

4.3.3 Car parking for new buildings should be provided in accordance with policy TP 130 and table 17 of the local plan. Measures may also be required to protect nearby residential streets from parking demand from users of both new buildings and the station. Car parking should be designed and managed to ‘Secured Car Park’ standards, encouraging the concept of leaving private vehicles to travel by public transport and encouraging parking securely rather than on street at risk and creating nuisance to local residents. Cheltenham Borough Council will continue to encourage standards of car park design and management which support the principles of ‘Car Parks Are for People’ (leading retailers initiative).

4.3.4 The necessary improvements/or alterations to access arrangements and off-site highway improvements are to be funded as a part of the development of the site, through appropriate planning obligations (these will incorporate any bus infrastructure works, pedestrian access, cycling facilities and wheelchair access).

Location of Access

4.3.5 The existing access on to Queen’s Road is not located in an ideal position, particularly with regard to visibility, and consideration will need to be given to moving this if there is likely to be an intensification of use of the access. The provision of more than one access to the site from each of the roads adjacent to it, i.e. Gloucester Road and Queen’s Road, is unlikely to be considered favourably due to highway safety considerations.

Buses

4.3.6 Two bus stops currently serve the site, one for north- and east-bound buses and one for south- and west-bound buses. The existing facilities for buses need to be improved in several respects. Both bus stops are on the opposite side of the road to the station. This makes accessing buses difficult for those who have to cross Queen’s Road, where there is no pedestrian crossing. Neither bus stop has raised kerbs to allow wheelchair access, nor are there facilities at the bus stops for people to sit down. These issues will need to be addressed to ensure that travelling to and from the station by bus is a viable and attractive alternative to the car. Following the diversion of bus services F and G into the site, there is a need to protect the pick up point for buses from other parked vehicles and for the provision of a raised bus border to facilitate passenger access.
4.3.7 The provision of real time information at the bus stops would also be of great benefit.

**Pedestrian access**

4.3.8 In conjunction with any development, the Council will seek improvements to bus services connecting the station with other parts of the town, and may seek a contribution through a section 106 obligation to achieve this.

4.3.9 Crossing Queen’s Road is currently difficult. Some form of crossing in Queen’s Road adjacent to the station will be required in the event of any development of the site. Safe and convenient pedestrian access to the site and all buildings within it should be provided.

**Cyclists**

4.3.10 Safe and convenient cycle access to the site and all buildings within it should be provided.

4.3.11 As noted in section 3.3.8, it is intended that the national cycle network should be extended through the site from where the Honeybourne line cycle route currently ends at the northern side of Queen’s Road. Provision should be made within development for such an extension and for a link between the railway station and the cycle route. Connections to and detailing of the route should be based on ‘Designing for Security on the National Cycle Network’ (Sustrans) and ‘The National Cycle Network Guidelines and Practical Details’ (Ove Arup and Partners).

4.3.12 A further way of encouraging the use of combined cycle/train trips is to provide improved cycle storage facilities, with theft-proof lockers. In particular, secure overnight storage of bicycles would encourage commuters to use the train and then cycle to work from the station, and provision for this should be made within any development.

**Wheel Chair Access**

4.3.13 In the event of development, provision should be made for wheelchair users to be able to use and access the station and to transfer between the train and buses/taxis/cars easily.

4.4 Environmental considerations

**Existing buildings**

4.4.1 Although not listed, the existing station building, including its platforms and canopies, is of architectural interest. It should be retained and renovated and the demolished portico restored. Any reinstatement work should be of a high standard and should use appropriate traditional materials.

4.4.2 Any features of architectural interest which are removed as a result of development should conserved for re-use, preferably within the site, in accordance with local plan policy GP 5.
**Design**

4.4.3 Development within the site should not detract from the character and appearance of the adjacent Cheltenham (Central) Conservation Area, in accordance with Local Plan policy BE 24.

4.4.4 Any development should be attractive in its own right, and should generally seek to make a positive urban design statement which respects the adjacent local centre and the residential character of adjoining areas. New buildings should respect the character and setting of the existing station building.

4.4.5 The design, layout and landscaping of any development should seek to make crime more difficult to commit, increase the risk of detection, and provide a safer, more secure environment. Developers’ attention is drawn to the provisions of 2.28/30 of the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan and the necessity of taking into account principles of ‘Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design’ to remove opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour at the earliest possible stage in the design process in consultation with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer. The provision of CCTV surveillance should be included within the area in conjunction with development.

4.4.6 The Council will encourage the developer to provide new works of art in accordance with the Arts Council’s ‘Percent for Art’ campaign.

**Landscaping**

4.4.7 Any proposals for development should be prepared within the context of a comprehensive landscaping strategy for the site, in conjunction with local plan policy GE 43. The strategy should include the retention of existing mature trees along road frontages and which are in good health.
### RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

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<th>Policy no.</th>
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<tr>
<td>GP 5</td>
<td>Where appropriate, the Borough Council will only grant planning permission or listed building consent for the demolition or alteration of buildings where materials or artefacts which are to be demolished or removed and for which there is a market are conserved for re-use.</td>
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<td>BE 24</td>
<td>The Borough Council will require development affecting the setting of a conservation area to be designed particularly carefully in order to protect the character or appearance of the nearby conservation area.</td>
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<td>GE 43</td>
<td>The Borough Council will require development to protect and enhance the visual amenity of the locality by retaining an appropriate proportion of the site for landscaped open space and screening purposes.</td>
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<td>EM 66</td>
<td>The Borough Council will only permit the development or change of use of land for employment use where the development: (a) accords with policies BE 10* and HS 77*; and (b) accords with Structure Plan polices E.1* and E.8*; or (c) involves land already in employment use. * in this case, development would not contravene these policies.</td>
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<td>EM 70</td>
<td>Subject to policy EM 71, the Borough Council will permit B1 business use in the Core Commercial Area. Where no suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available in the Core Commercial Area, alternative locations will only be permitted in the following sequence: (a) district or neighbourhood centres; (b) out-of-centre sites accessible by a choice of means of transport.</td>
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<td>EM 71</td>
<td>Subject to the provisions of policies EM 66 and EM 70, the Borough Council will permit B1 business use where: (a) the development will not create any serious traffic or environmental problems or lead to an unacceptable increase in travel by car; and (b) the site is not allocated on the Proposals Map for a use other than B1 development; and (c) the development can be achieved without harming the town’s character and high environmental quality; or a change of use to B1 is necessary and the preferred solution to ensure the renovation of a building of special architectural or historic interest.</td>
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<td>HS 73</td>
<td>The Borough Council will permit housing development, including changes of use, where the proposal: (a) makes best use of the site consistent with the protection of the historic character and high quality environment of Cheltenham; and (b) does not have an adverse impact on the scale, amenity and privacy of other housing in the locality; and (c) does not result in a loss of open space which makes a significant contribution to the character of the locality; and</td>
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(d) does not detract from the green or open character of a conservation area and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of that conservation area (see policies BE 8 and BE 9); and
(e) is consistent with other local plan policies and, in particular, meet the requirements of policy HS 81.

The Borough Council will seek the provision of an element of affordable housing in developments of 15 or more dwellings or sites of 0.5 hectare or greater, and which have easy access to local services and facilities and public transport.

**HS 81**
The Borough Council will only permit residential development which:
(a) respects the character of the site, and the amenities of neighbouring development, in accordance with other local plan policies; and
(b) provides a high standard of layout and design ensuring protection from noise and other forms of pollution, adequate privacy, and a pleasing and safe residential environment for both existing dwellings and newly created units; and
(c) provides play space in accordance with policy RC 102; and
(d) provides an appropriate amount of amenity space; and
(e) provides car parking in accordance with policy TP 130 and the standards set out in Table 17; and
(f) ensures highway and access arrangements, including those for cyclists and pedestrians, are in accordance with policies TP 126, TP 127, TP 128 and TP 129.

**RT 82**
The Borough Council will permit retail development, subject to the availability of suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion, only in the following sequence of locations:
(a) the Central Shopping Area, subject to Policy RT 83;
(b) the Montpellier Shopping Area or the Lower High Street Shopping Area, subject to Policy RT 83;
(c) elsewhere within the Core Commercial Area, subject to Policy RT 83;
(d) district or neighbourhood shopping centres, subject to Policy RT 83;
(e) out-of-centre sites which are accessible by a choice of means of transport, subject to Policy RT 88.

**RT 88**
Subject to policy RT 82, the Borough Council will permit retail development outside defined shopping areas only where the proposals:
(a) are for the sale of carpets, furniture, electrical goods, D.I.Y. maintenance and improvement products for the home, garden and car, and ancillary goods which are part of the usual product mix of a retailer of the foregoing and for no other purpose; and
(b) are for the sale of other goods which, individually or in conjunction with other completed or permitted retail development would not harm the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole or of a district or neighbourhood centre; and
(c) are not on land on the Proposals Map as being for public green space, housing or industrial use; and
(d) will not create any serious traffic or environmental problems, or lead to an unacceptable increase in travel by car.

**RC 95**
The Borough Council will only permit proposals for major leisure or entertainment facilities in the Core Commercial Area, provided there are
no over-riding traffic or environmental objections. Where no suitable sites or buildings for conversion are available, alternative locations will only be permitted in the following sequence:
(a) district or neighbourhood shopping centres;
(e) out-of-centre sites accessible by a choice of means of transport.

RC 102 The Borough Council will require provision to be made in residential development for play space in accordance with the standard of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 population.

RC 105 The Borough Council will not permit development which would prevent extension of the Honeybourne line footpath/cycleway south of Queen’s Road or north of Wyman’s Brook.

TP 126 The Borough Council will require adequate provision to be made in development for motorists, pedestrians, public transport, cyclists and people with physical disabilities.

TP 127 The Borough Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will not permit development where this would, directly or indirectly, create new accesses or increase use of existing highway access on to the main highway network, or at other points where it would be hazardous to road users, unless a satisfactory highway improvement has been carried out.

TP 128 The Borough Council will only permit development where adequate provision has been made for the infrastructure necessary for the development to proceed.

TP 130 The Borough Council will only permit development which makes provision for car, bicycle and lorry parking/servicing (or commuted payments if appropriate) in accordance with the standards in table 17.

TP 131 The Borough Council will not permit development which would prevent the provision of a rapid passenger transport system based on the Honeybourne Line.