

Topic of Consultation	The consultation is on the scope of the Cheltenham Plan, and what it should contain. We are looking to involve the public in helping inform plan making at an early stage.
Scope of Consultation	Development within the Cheltenham Borough
Geographical Scope	Cheltenham
To	Aimed at local residents, community groups, businesses and consultants with an interest in the Cheltenham area
Body Responsible for Consultation	Planning Policy Team, Cheltenham Borough Council
Duration	8 Weeks, consultation closes 2 September 2013
Enquiries	localplan@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264328
How to Respond	Please respond via online consultation at : www.cheltenham.gov.uk/localplan Or alternatively you make pick up a paper copy at your local library or the council offices.
Additional ways to become involved	Get involved via twitter and facebook through @cheltenhambc #cheltplan
After the Consultation	A summary of responses will be published on the council website and taken into account when informing the next stage of the Cheltenham Plan.

If you would like a copy of this document in any other format, please contact Cheltenham Borough Council on 01242 264328

CHELTENHAM PLAN SCOPING DOCUMENT

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What is the “Cheltenham Plan”

what is it for and why is the council preparing it now?

The Cheltenham Plan will help to guide development of the borough over the next 15-20 years. It will be used in making decisions on planning applications and will be a key part of “place-shaping” Cheltenham. Planning is often as much about what doesn’t get built as what does. And it’s also about making sure we stay competitive, inclusive and sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms. It’s important therefore that we try to get the balance right between what can often seem to be conflicting or competing objectives. That’s a core function of our development plan.

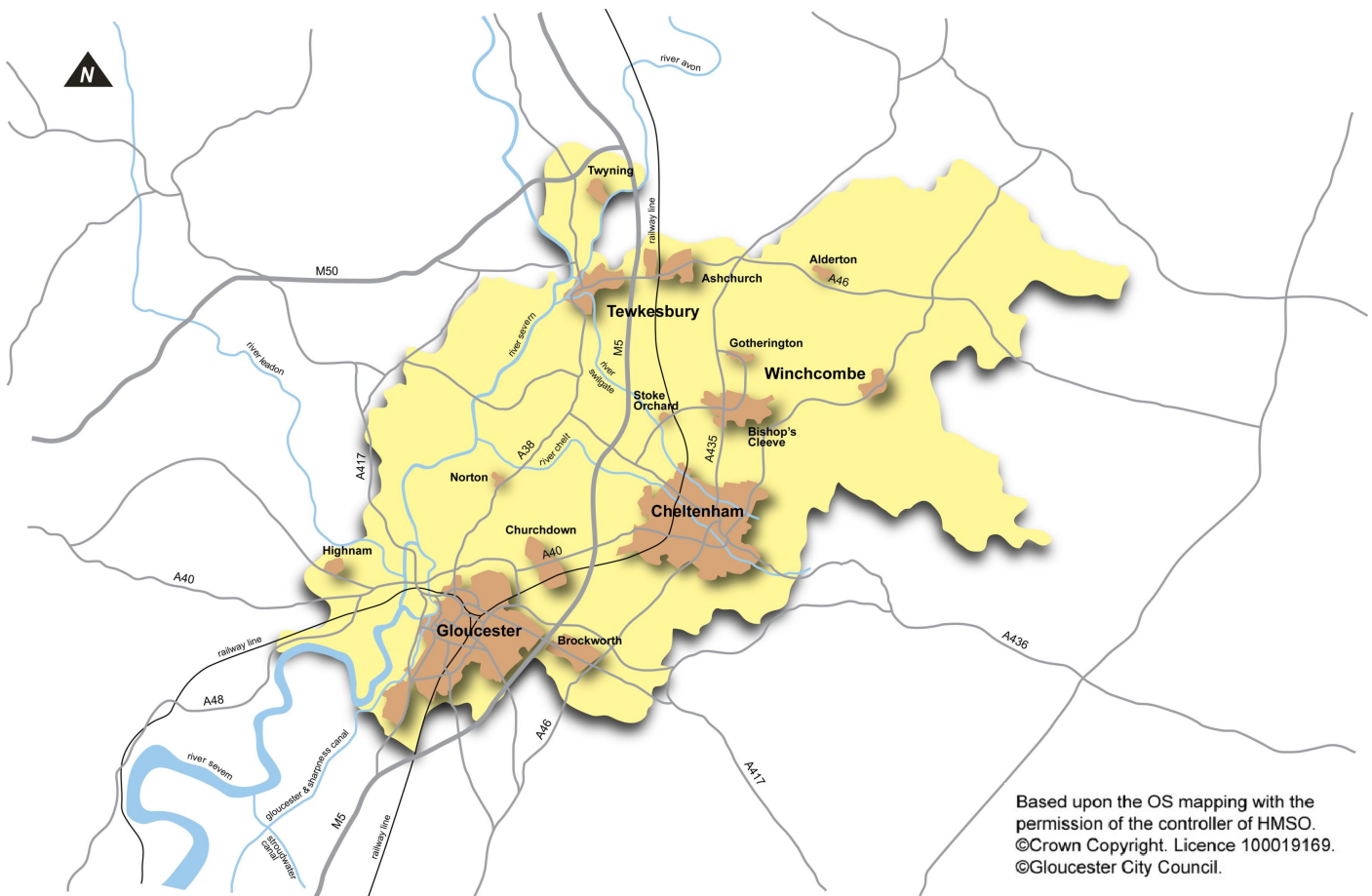


The council is very keen to bring forward the Cheltenham Plan as soon as possible. One reason for this is that the amount of weight that can be attributed to Cheltenham Borough Local Plan Adopted 2006 (saved policies) and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG’s)/ Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s) and Development Briefs varies and, in the most part, will diminish over time. It is therefore essential to produce a new, up to date, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) compliant plan based on objectively assessed evidence to ensure that development within Cheltenham is ‘plan-led’ rather than ‘appeal-led’.

The Cheltenham Plan and the Joint Core Strategy

The council is also involved with Tewkesbury and Gloucester in preparing the Joint Core Strategy – how does that relate to the Cheltenham Plan?

The Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS) deals with strategic-level planning. For example, the JCS will set out how many houses and jobs need to be provided in Cheltenham over the next 15-20 years, identify locations for major development e.g. for development of sites over 450 new homes, to meet that need and set out how and when development will be delivered, including any major infrastructure requirements. See JCS website for more information www.gct-jcs.org/



Map sourced from JCS website (www.gct-jcs.org/Mapping)

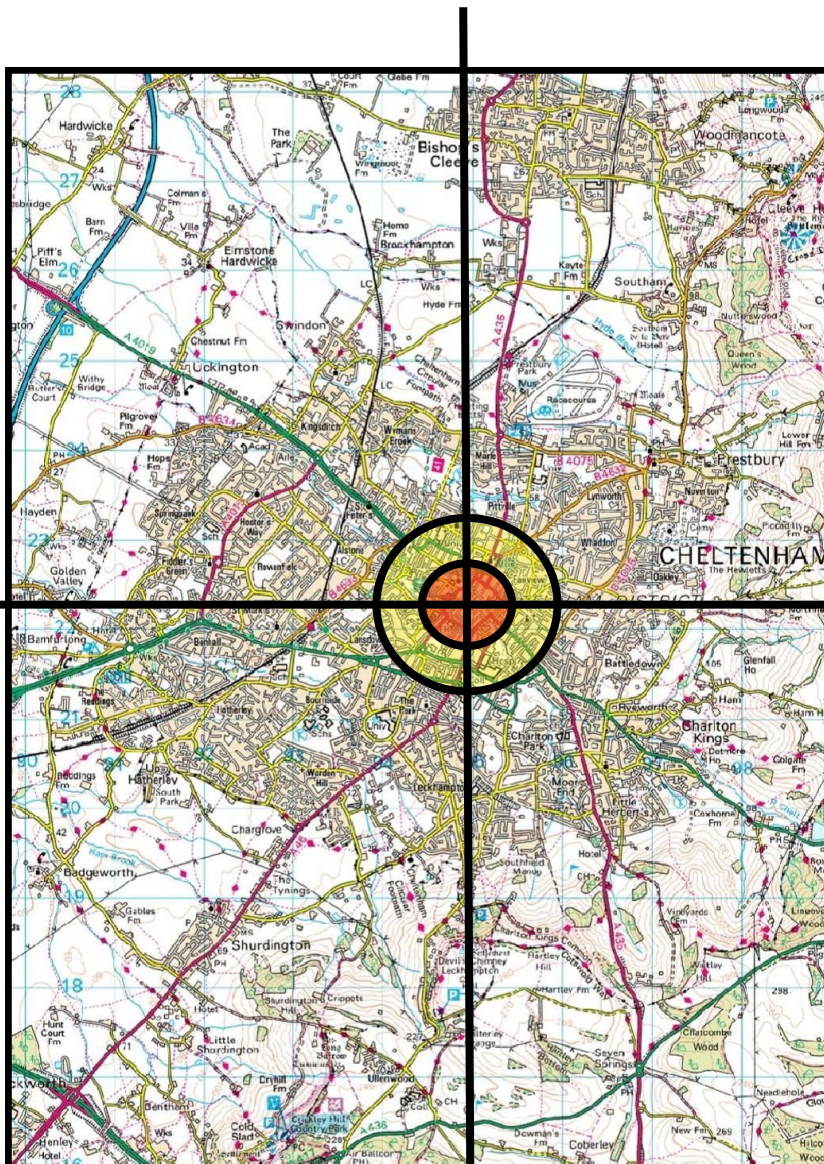
The Cheltenham Plan will complement the JCS by effectively “filling in the details”, it will also be a more locally-focused document dealing with Cheltenham-specific issues such as supporting the work of the Cheltenham Development Task Force and protecting and conserving the town’s built heritage and recognising the importance of our parks and gardens.

The Scope?

What is meant by the “scope” of the plan and why is the council consulting me on it?

The scope of the plan essentially means the planning matters it will cover – housing, jobs and transport for instance. More detail on this is provided later in the document. The council is consulting you on this not only because it is legally required to but because it wants to ensure that the people of Cheltenham have a say in what’s in their development plan.

It’s important to bear in mind though that because this is a development plan it has a very specific remit. In other parts of this note we discuss what issues the plan can (and can’t) address, and explain some of the reasons for that.



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How can I get Involved?

How can I get involved and how will my views be taken into account?

Later on we set out some contact details and related information for you. There's a questionnaire you can fill out and send to us or, if you prefer, there's an online version you can complete at www.cheltenham.gov.uk/localplan or email to localplan@cheltenham.gov.uk. Your views will be taken into account in preparation of the next stage of the plan and your responses, in full or in summary, will be reported to the council as well as being published on the council's website. Planning officers are here to help and they're available during normal office hours to answer any questions you might have about making your views known.

The Cheltenham Plan - Legal & Material Considerations

The Cheltenham Plan – the legal context and “material planning considerations”

Preparation of a development plan is a “statutory process” governed by legislation¹. Consultation on the Cheltenham Plan must accord fully with legislative requirements. These include rules about:

- consulting on the scope of the plan;
- publishing the plan;
- consideration of representations; and
- independent examination of the submitted plan by a Planning Inspector.

If you're interested in knowing more about this you can read the legislation online –

- *Town and Country Planning Act* www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents
- *The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012* www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents/made

The “material planning considerations” that have to be taken into account in preparing a development plan are numerous. “Material” in this context just means that an issue is (a) relevant to planning and (b) is not trivial or inconsequential. Localism is a significant material consideration as is the national planning policy framework and particularly paragraphs 150 -185 which deal specifically with plan-making. These paragraphs include guidance on a range of issues that we will return to several times over the coming months such as:

- using a proportionate evidence base in relation to housing, business, infrastructure, the environment and many other areas;
- ensuring viability and deliverability;
- ensuring that the plan is “positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy” and otherwise sound.

¹ Principal legislation is the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

The Cheltenham Plan – Process and Timetable

The table below outlines the main stages the plan needs to pass through together with a draft timetable.

Scoping consultation	Summer 2013
Cheltenham Plan (draft) consultation	Spring 2014
Cheltenham Plan (submission) consultation	Winter 2014/15
Examination in Public	Spring/Summer 2015
Adoption of the plan by the council	Autumn 2015

Do you have any comments on the timetabling for producing the Cheltenham Plan?
It is important to remember that this is a statutory process as discussed above, so it's not easy to cut corners to save time.

The Cheltenham Plan – Vision and Objectives

The plan needs to have a vision and set of objectives to act as a foundation for its policies and proposals. At present there are two existing vision statements that will need to be taken into account in preparing a vision for the Cheltenham Plan.

The council shares its “corporate” vision for 2010 – 2015 with that of “Our Future, Our Choice: Cheltenham’s Sustainable Community Strategy”:

We want Cheltenham to deliver a sustainable quality of life, where people, families, their communities and businesses thrive; and in a way which cherishes our cultural and natural heritage, reduces our impact on climate change and does not compromise the quality of life of present and future generations



The emerging JCS vision is:

Our vision is to produce a strategy which fosters growth in the local economy and provides sufficient homes, including affordable homes, in sustainable locations, without increasing the risk of flooding, or harming high quality landscape, whilst maintaining and enhancing the separate vitality, identity and character of individual settlements.

As a development plan affecting the town the JCS vision obviously is the most directly relevant to the Cheltenham Plan. Whilst it will not be acceptable for the Cheltenham Plan to contradict the JCS in terms of its vision, objectives, policies or proposals, it is right that the Cheltenham Plan vision reflects more local planning issues and concerns. So we need to strike a balance between, on one hand, conforming with the JCS vision and, on the other, ensuring that our plan vision is more than just an off-the-peg set of platitudes that could apply anywhere in the country. Getting the balance right between strategic and local is quite difficult....!

The Cheltenham Plan – Vision and Objectives

Some councillors from each political group represented on the council have formed a Working Group to guide preparation of the plan. The Group is considering these visions and will be keen to hear your views on which elements, if any, we should incorporate into a vision for the Cheltenham Plan.

We're also beginning to think about whether a vision might be better represented by taking a "themed" approach rather than having an all-encompassing (and perhaps rather bland) statement that is perhaps overambitious in its aspirations. If we focused on three or four key themes each supported by a set of delivery objectives, would that be more realistic? For example, one theme might be something like "increase opportunities for local jobs by seeking to attract a broader range of employers into Cheltenham". The delivery objectives would perhaps include things like having an up-to-date economic strategy accompanied by an "offer" of sites tailored to delivering the outcomes of that strategy that could be allocated in the Cheltenham Plan.



Do you have any comments on the current corporate vision and JCS vision and how they should relate to Cheltenham?

Please tell us *your* vision for Cheltenham

What do you think about the idea of a "themed" vision?

Name one thing in Cheltenham that you like

Name one thing in Cheltenham you think needs to change

The Cheltenham Plan – Vision and Objectives

Whether it's in the form of an all-encompassing statement or a set of interrelated themes, a vision alone is not enough. We need to “unpack” that vision and decide what objectives we need to pursue so that we can move from vision to reality.

Each of the existing visions therefore has an accompanying set of objectives:

Corporate objectives are:

- enhancing and protecting our environment
- strengthening our economy
- strengthening our communities

www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200009/performance_and_improvement/815/performance_management/2

“Our Future, Our Choice” objectives are:

- promoting community safety
- promoting sustainable living
- promoting a strong and sustainable economy
- building healthy communities and supporting older people
- building stronger communities and supporting housing choice
- a focus on children and young people
- investing in environmental quality
- investing in travel and transport

www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3151/sustainable_community_strategy

JCS objectives include:

- allocate strategic development in support of sustainable urban and rural communities and the conservation of strategic open space
- conserve and improve the built environment
- conserve and improve the natural environment
- foster economic growth
- provide for local housing need
- address social inequality, inclusivity and provide for healthier and safer communities
- improve skills and educational attainment
- increase access to jobs/services via sustainable transport modes

www.consult.gct-jcs.org/consult.ti/JCSDPO/consultationHome

The Cheltenham Plan – Vision and Objectives

Whilst it does not set out a vision, the existing Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (adopted 2006) contains thirty six objectives including:

- to achieve a high standard of design in new development
- to reduce crime and the fear of crime
- to make provision for identified development needs
- to create more sustainable patterns of development, with priority use of previously-developed land
- to meet the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities
- to conserve and improve Cheltenham's architectural, townscape and historical heritage
- to conserve and improve Cheltenham's landscape character and green environment
- to prevent the coalescence of Cheltenham with other settlements
- to reduce waste and energy consumption and conserve natural resources
- to maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the borough
- to safeguard land and buildings in existing employment use, or if unoccupied, last in employment use
- to meet housing requirements, including the need for affordable housing
- to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre as a sub-regional shopping centre
- to increase the range of facilities for recreation and leisure
- to encourage provision of a range of facilities and attractions for tourists
- to encourage the retention and provision of a range of community facilities and services
- to promote sustainable transport
- to ensure infrastructure in development is provided to a satisfactory standard

To view all 36 objectives see www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/778/

The feedback form contains a list of objectives compiled from the existing Local Plan. Please indicate how important you think each of these objectives is?
Are there any objectives that you would suggest?
How can we make the objectives more specific to Cheltenham?

The Cheltenham Plan – Potential Policy Areas

Once we have our vision and objectives in place, the next thing we need is a suite of policies and proposals that will enable us to deliver them “on the ground”. In formulating our policies and proposals we need also to remember the legal context and “material planning considerations” outlined above. Many policy areas are common to both the JCS and the Cheltenham Plan – matters such as housing and employment. A critical issue will be to clarify precisely what aspects will be dealt with in the JCS and what will be picked up by the Cheltenham Plan. Also important is what should not be included as it is appropriately dealt with via the National Planning Policy Framework

We think the scope of policy areas we need to cover is:

- **the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development**, as required and defined by the National Planning Policy Framework;
- **economy and employment** – including tourism and leisure uses, non-strategic policy² and site allocations;
- **retail** – town, district and neighbourhood centres – designation of primary and secondary shopping frontages and non-strategic policy and allocations;
- **sustainable transport** – local parking matters, car parks, walking, cycling;
- **communications infrastructure** such as mobile phone masts and adaptability to new technology;
- **housing** – non strategic policy and site allocations (including mix and type of housing), density, house space standards, self-build, (the overarching affordable housing policy will be set out in the JCS)
- **design** – design codes to ensure quality of development;
- **healthy communities** – air quality, green space and community facilities;
- **climate change and flooding** - including renewable energy, energy efficiency and adapting to climate change;
- **natural environment** – any non-strategic policy and land allocations/designations e.g. local nature reserves;
- **historic environment** – any non-strategic policy and allocations/designations
- **local infrastructure** – non-strategic provision including recreational space;
- **deliverability and implementation** – viability appraisal of sites to ensure deliverable
- **monitoring**
- **adopted policies map**

Do you think we have missed anything?

Do you have any suggestions, specific to Cheltenham, for how we should develop these policy areas?

Bear in mind that the JCS will deal with a considerable number of issues – such as major development sites.

²the term “non strategic” refers to matters that primarily are local in nature and not addressed by the Joint Core Strategy or the NPPF

The Cheltenham Plan – Delivery

This is arguably the most critical part of the plan. It's all very well having visions, objectives, policies and proposals but the acid test is whether they deliver on their promises. One of the most important tasks for the Cheltenham Plan is therefore to be realistic about delivery. And this is an issue the government via the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Inspectorate is particularly focused on.

If we have doubts about the deliverability of any aspect of our plan we need to examine the reasons for that as soon as the issue emerges and put it right. If we can't – we need to rethink the objective or policy and be prepared to take a different tack.

One of the most effective ways of understanding the deliverability of a development plan is through viability assessment. We may be expecting a significant amount of high quality infrastructure to come forward in the plan period funded largely by developer contributions. The assessment needs to be undertaken when the plan proposals are beginning to emerge and will need to be done iteratively i.e. in stages so that any adjustments to the plan can be made and then re-tested. It will tell us, for instance, whether we will be endangering the economic viability of a particular site or of the entire suite of plan proposals because the developers will simply not be able to make enough contributions while taking a reasonable profit (on the basis of accepted industry standards).

Other methods of assessing the effectiveness and deliverability of the plan are through monitoring of, say, housing completions or differentials in completions and through annual processes such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA for short) and the Strategic Economic Land Availability Assessment (SELAA).

Thinking about these land assessment processes, it is unlikely that Cheltenham will be able to provide enough sites to meet the “objectively assessed need” for development within the borough³. For it to do so, land will need to be identified in neighbouring authority areas. Whilst the JCS will rightly deal with much of this, it will be expected that as much land within the borough as is reasonable having regard to material planning considerations should be released to contribute to meeting the identified development need. The next phase of the plan – the consultation draft – will put these sites forward for public consideration. But it is likely that most if not all of the sites have already come to the attention of the council through the SHLAA and SELAA processes.

What do you think are the key considerations in ensuring that our plan is deliverable?

³This will be set out in the JCS.

The Cheltenham Plan – so what's next?

Your comments on the proposed scope of the Cheltenham plan will be considered by officers and a response report will be provided on the Council's website, at the offices and at libraries around the town, see below for the full list. The response report will summarise the issues raised as part of the consultation and will provide the council's response.

The comments will be used to inform the preparation of the draft Cheltenham Plan, which will form the second stage of consultation next Spring. This next stage will start to set out the detail on the policies and allocations proposed for Cheltenham and so it will be an important consultation to look out for - www.cheltenham.gov.uk/localplan



The key stages for the Cheltenham plan are summarised below:

Scoping consultation	Summer 2013
Cheltenham Plan (draft) consultation	Spring 2014
Cheltenham Plan (submission) consultation	Winter 2014/15
Examination in Public	Spring/Summer 2015
Adoption of the plan by the council	Autumn 2015

Details of future consultation events, both for the Cheltenham Plan and the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury JCS will be included on the Cheltenham Borough and JCS websites, if you would like to be notified directly of consultations, please contact the Planning Policy team and asked to be added to our database.

How to get involved:

You can respond to this consultation in any of the following ways:

- By using the online questionnaire which will be available via www.cheltenham.gov.uk/localplan
- Picking up a copy of the questionnaire in your local library and delivering or posting it to us at this address: Planning Policy Team, Cheltenham Borough Council, Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham GL50 9SA
- Downloading the feedback form from www.cheltenham.gov.uk/localplan and emailing the completed form to localplan@cheltenham.gov.uk

If you have any queries please call a member of the Planning Policy Team on 01242 264328