

Cheltenham Borough Council

Local Plan 2011-2031

EXAMINATION

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Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions

Note: in accordance with para 214 of the July 2018 NPPF, all references to the NPPF refer to the March 2012 version which applies in the examination of the Cheltenham Plan.

Matter 1: The evidence base for the submitted Cheltenham Plan and its Vision

Main issue: Have the legal requirements for sustainability appraisal (SA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) been met?

- 1 Has the SA/SEA undertaken an assessment of reasonable alternatives for locally relevant policies and local (non-strategic) site allocations in the Cheltenham Plan? (ref SD017 Appendix VII)*
- 2 Is Natural England (NE) satisfied that the proposals in the CP will have no significant effect on any European sites alone or in combination with other development proposals?*

Main issue: Is the Vision set out as Theme A, B and C positive and justified?

- 1 Is there a clear Vision for economic development and employment within the CP?*
- 2 Is the wording of Vision Theme C para 2.9a) appropriate for Cheltenham?*

Matter 2: Economic development

Main Issue: Do the employment policies of the CP deliver Policy SD1 of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (JCS)?

- 1 The JCS Policy SP1 sets a provision of a minimum of 192 has of B-class employment land for the JCS area. The strategic allocations will provide for some 84 has. How has Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) calculated the appropriate level of employment allocations to provide within the CP?*
- 2 Are Policies EM1 and EM2 in accordance with NPPF paragraph 22?*
- 3 Are all the sites allocated in the CP (Policy EM3) suitable and available for delivery as employment sites?*
- 4 Does the CP provide adequate support for the expansion of existing small/medium sized businesses and provide opportunities for new business start-ups through Policy EM6?*

- 5 *Should any further provision be made for economic development which falls outside B-class uses?*

Matter 3: Housing and mixed use development

Main Issue: Do the proposals for residential and mixed use development in CP Policies H1 and H2 deliver the requirements for residential development in the JCS set out in Policy SP2 and Table SP2a?

- 1 *Table SP2a identifies a supply of 1,011 dwellings to be identified through the Cheltenham Plan. Does the CP identify sufficient land to meet this requirement?*
- 2 *Does the allocation of any of the sites under Policy H1 or H2 affect the soundness of the CP?*
- 3 *To what extent has the trajectory at Table 8 of the CP been agreed with the relevant landowners, developers and agents? Are the sites identified in Policies H1 and H2 likely to deliver 1,011 dwellings by 2031 in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF para 47?*
- 4 *Has sufficient regard been given to the impact of development on historic assets and their settings at the following housing allocations: HD2, HD3, HD4, HD7, HD8?*
- 5 *Would it be appropriate to allocate additional housing sites in the CP in order to provide more choice and help to ensure that the target figure of 1,011 dwellings is met? (NB: this **does not** seek the identification of sites currently omitted from the CP)*
- 6 *Is there adequate justification for the siting of a school within the Leckhampton allocation (MD5)?*

Matter 4: Green Belt and Green Infrastructure

Main Issue: Green Belt

- 1 *Does the CP accord with Policy SD5 of the JCS in relation to the Green Belt?*
- 2 *Are there any exceptional circumstances which would justify a limited review of Green Belt boundaries through the CP?*
- 3 *Are policies GB1 and GB2 clearly worded and in accordance with national policy in paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF?*

Main Issue: Green Infrastructure

- 1 *Policy INF3 of the JCS deals with Green Infrastructure and seeks to deliver a "series of multifunctional, linked green corridors across the JCS area". Does the approach adopted in the CP through Policies G11, G12 and G13 deliver that requirement in a manner consistent with national policy as set*

out in the NPPF paragraphs 76 and 77 and accompanying guidance in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)?

- 2 Have all the landowners of sites proposed for LGS been consulted?*
- 3 To what extent does the Council's Local Green Spaces Study Report parts 1 and 2 provide the justification for the designation of the sites listed in Table 8 of the CP as LGS in accordance with National policy and advice?*
- 4 Are there any sites identified as LGS apart from the sites at Leckhampton Fields and Swindon Village which do not meet the criteria in National policy and advice?*
- 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"?*
- 6 Paragraph 5.4.13 of the JCS refers to a green buffer to be retained at NW Cheltenham near Swindon Village, and the CP will allocate the specific boundaries of the LGS in this area. Does the approach in the CP, which designates the area as LGS, comply with the JCS, and National policy and guidance?*
- 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?*

Matter 5: Health and Environmental Quality

Main Issue: The impact of the CP proposals on air quality

- 1 Has account been taken of the impacts on air quality of the proposals for development in the CP?*
- 2 Would the CP proposals when added to those in the JCS lead to any breach in EU air quality targets or to any deterioration in air quality where any breach has already occurred?*

Main Issue: Flood risk

- 1 Would the proposals in the CP when added to those in the JCS lead to any increase in flood risk bearing in mind the impacts of climate change?*
- 2 In particular, have the implications of the proposals in the CP when added to those in the JCS been assessed for the Cheltenham Flood Alleviation Scheme?*
- 3 Has a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment been carried out to inform the selection of the sites allocated in the CP?*
- 4 The Environment Agency (EA) raises concerns in relation to flood risk at the following sites: MD4, MD5, HD3, HD7, HD8, E4. To what extent have these concerns been addressed and if not, how will they be addressed?*

Main Issue: Wording of Policy SL1

- 1 Are changes necessary to the policy wording in order for it to be sound?*

Matter 6: Historic and built environment

- 1 Will Policy D1 deliver the quality of design and townscape appropriate to Cheltenham?*
- 2 Are policies HE1, HE2 and HE3 clearly worded and in accordance with national policy in paragraphs 126-141 of the NPPF?*
- 3 In CP Table 14, how would the indicator in a) work to provide evidence that the objective is being met?*

Matter 7: Natural environment

- 1 Does the Plan provide sufficient recognition of and protection for important landscapes including the Cotswolds AONB in accordance with national policy in paragraphs 109- 116 of the NPPF??*
- 2 Does the Plan provide sufficient recognition and protection for wildlife and natural features in accordance with national policy in paragraphs 109, 117-120 of the NPPF?*

Matter 8: Transport

- 1 To what extent has the impact of proposals within the CP been assessed in accordance with the package of key transport and highway improvements in both the local and strategic networks proposed to accommodate the proposals in the JCS?*
- 2 Do the proposals for new development in the CP comply with scenario DS7 in the evidence base to the JCS?*
- 3 Does the CP include policies which adequately manage the delivery of development so that severe transport impacts do not arise?*
- 4 Does there need to be any assessment at the time of submission of relevant planning applications to determine how much development may proceed in advance of the JCS highway interventions being in place? If so, does this need to be made clear in any relevant CP policies?*
- 5 Is the safeguarding of the former Honeybourne rail line (Policy TN1 justified?*

Matter 9: Other

- 1 Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople (GTTS)*
 - i Policy GT1 proposes the designation of a site which is located outside any settlement and which is in the AONB to accommodate the needs of GTTS in accordance with the JCS Policy SD13. How does this allocation comply with Government policy for traveller sites?*
 - ii In particular, how easily accessible is the site to health services, local education facilities, and other community services?*
 - iii Does the site have main drainage, and an electricity and water supply?*

iv Para 13.5 of the CP states that it would not be possible for the current occupants of the site to move to other suitable accommodation within the Borough. Can the reason for this statement please be explained?

2 Broadband provision

i Is Policy C14 appropriately worded and how could it make provision to improve existing broadband in those locations where it is currently poor?

3 Terminology

i A number of the policies include a phrase such as "other relevant policies embodied within this Plan". Since the Policies of the JCS also apply to the area of the CP, should reference also be made to the relevant policies of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury JCS?