



To: Tracey Smith Programme Officer
Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan - Examination

From Helen Wells
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Joint Statement on Matter 4 Green Belt and Green Infrastructure from Save the Countryside (ID 420) & Swindon Parish Council

Save the Countryside and Swindon Parish Council have a very strong interest in the Local Green Space designation at Swindon Village North West Cheltenham. This statement is issued on behalf of both groups.

This area is of huge importance to the community, as we demonstrated in our individual submissions to the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and our comments on the consultation of the Cheltenham Plan in 2018.

Both Parties have worked closely with the Cheltenham Planning department and received support from the team throughout our endeavours in this matter.

We had understood that the matter of the Local Green Space had been finalised and accepted as part of the Cheltenham plan. In fact, we were waiting to hear the next steps regarding the details of ownership, usage and maintenance of the land. To that end we list the following points to answer the questions regarding the main issue Green Infrastructure.

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)?

1) The Local Green Space at Swindon Village is essential for creating a “multifunctional, linked green corridor” since it joins already existing green infrastructure in the South and North of the allocation site.

2 Have all the landowners of sites proposed for LGS been consulted?

2) Landowners have been consulted.

Following discussions with Save the Countryside and Swindon Parish Council, the developers Bloor Homes and Persimmon Homes agreed to a small area of Local Green Space in a Statement of Common Ground with Swindon Parish Council. This document is attached. (StC Swindon Village PC – Bloor Persimmon – NW Cheltenham LGS Statement of common ground.) This statement shows that the Developers Bloor Homes and Persimmon Homes are prepared to give some of their proposed development area to local green space.

Inspector Ord (Joint Core Strategy examination) saw this Statement of Common Ground, but decided to designate a larger area instead (the one indicated in both the JCS and the Cheltenham Local Plan). The other landowners (Zurich and the Brockhampton Road Consortium) also met Swindon Parish Council but did not specify which parts of their area they were willing to allocate to LGS. However, the NPPF is very clear that LGS designation does **not** depend on the agreement of landowners.

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?

3) The report provided by Swindon Parish Council in part 2 of the Local Green Spaces Report clearly lays out the justification for LGS designation with reference to the NPPF, and this was accepted by Inspector Ord who wrote "103. In my judgement, the evidence suggests that the NPPF criteria are met" (in Inspector's Preliminary Findings on Green Belt Release, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations).

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?

4) No

5 Table 8 of the CP proposes significant areas of LGS to be identified at Leckhampton Fields, the North-West Cheltenham Strategic Allocation at Swindon Village, and at the West Cheltenham Strategic Allocation. Is there any evidence that areas of 39.91, 24.5 or 18.25 ha could be considered not to be "an extensive tract of land"?

5) Swindon Parish Council's initial LGS application asked for 47 ha, but Inspector Ord stated that although it was close to the local community and well supported by local people the area was too large Full quote from Inspector Ord: 100. "I consider the original area put forward by the Parish Council, as referred to in the Local Green Space Study Report 109, to be too large (about 47 hectares) and to conflict in part with areas that are justified for development. Nonetheless, it is close to the local community and its designation is well supported by local people." (in Inspector's Preliminary Findings on Green Belt Release, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations.)

Over the course of many negotiations and discussions, the area was subsequently reduced by 48% to 24.5 ha so it would not be considered an extensive tract of land.

The attached documents - Revised Local Green Space Allocation and StC- Swindon Village PC Bloor & Persimmon NW Cheltenham LGS Statement of Common Ground, evidences part of the process of reducing the size of the LGS.



StC - Swindon Village
PC - Bloor & Persimm



revised Local Green
Space Application ver



Local green space
Cheltenham plan.pdf

The Final Local Green Space was publicised by Cheltenham Borough Council as attached (Policy GI1: Swindon Village Fields)

This size is not unprecedented for LGS. For example, Havant Borough Council's Local Plan includes LGS spaces of 61.87ha and 40.6ha.

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?

6)Yes

Cllr Helen Wells

Chair of Save the Countryside & Member of Swindon Parish Council