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COTSWOLD
District Council

LOCAL PLAN 2026 – 2043





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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Cotswold Local Plan 2026–2043: an ambitious, evidence-led plan for our district.

The Cotswold district is a special place. Our towns, villages, countryside, heritage and communities give it a character people rightly value and want to protect. But we also face significant challenges: a need for affordable homes and infrastructure, the effects of climate change, and the need for a sustainable local economy.

This Plan is our locally shaped response. It is about using growth positively to create healthy communities, provide homes local people can afford, deliver infrastructure, and protect the Cotswolds’ distinctive landscape and heritage.

It has been shaped by three major public consultations, generating more than 14,000 comments and representations. We heard clear calls for smaller and more affordable homes, infrastructure alongside development, stronger environmental protections, and action on flooding and wastewater. Those priorities have been translated into clear policies.



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At its heart, the Plan makes three commitments.

First, it will help deliver the homes local people need. Qualifying developments must provide 40 per cent affordable housing, with a strong emphasis on social rent. The Plan supports more two- and three-bedroom properties and establishes a framework to meet the district’s identified need for around 5,600 affordable homes. New homes must meet national space standards, and at least half must be accessible and adaptable.

Second, it will deliver homes and places fit for the future. New buildings must be net zero carbon in operation: warmer, more efficient and less exposed to volatile energy costs. A Plan that is “Green to the Core” will also support nature recovery, manage flood risk and protect our landscapes and heritage.

Third, it puts infrastructure at the heart of development. New and expanded schools, local centres, employment land, transport connections, community facilities, utility improvements and green spaces will be planned alongside new homes and secured through masterplans, phasing and legal agreements. This is the difference between counting houses and creating places where people can live well.

The Plan is ambitious, evidence-led and realistic about delivery. Its stepped approach allows strategic sites and their infrastructure to come forward in a coordinated and achievable way.

Together, we can shape a positive future: affordable and social rented homes, well-planned infrastructure, a thriving economy, connected communities, and a natural and historic environment that remains protected and cherished.

Councillor Juliet Layton
Deputy Leader and
Cabinet Member for
Housing and Planning





Chapter one

Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Cotswold District Local Plan sets out policies and proposals to meet the challenges facing the area over the period 2026-2043. The Local Plan will guide future decisions on the use and development of land in the District. Plans need to be kept up-to-date, and it is anticipated that this plan will be reviewed every five years.
- 1.2 The Plan is informed by national policy, as well as local research, evidence and consultation that underpins its strategy, policies and allocations. The evidence that has informed the Plan includes population projections, economic forecasts, information about existing planning consents and land supply as well as technical work on matters such as infrastructure requirements to support new development and environmental considerations, such as flood risk, landscape and heritage. This information is available to view on the Council's website¹.
- 1.3 The new Cotswold District Local Plan will ensure growth is planned, coordinated and delivered in line with up-to-date evidence and local priorities. One of the key benefits of a plan-led system is that infrastructure can be planned for and delivered

coherently, efficiently and comprehensively. Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the area will be more vulnerable to speculative planning applications that could lead to more development coming forward, in less sustainable locations, and in a way that can undermine infrastructure planning, community confidence and environmental objectives. The new Local Plan directs new housing and employment development to the most sustainable locations while balancing the environmental and landscape constraints and continuing to protect the Cotswold District's distinctive character.

- 1.4 A key priority for this Local Plan is an increased emphasis on addressing the social, environmental and economic impacts of climate change. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency, and in 2020 an Ecological Emergency, and revised its Corporate Plan accordingly. A founding principle of the Local Plan has been to make the strategy, policies and proposals "Green to the Core".
- 1.5 Protecting and enhancing Cotswold District's Landscape, including the area designated as part of the Cotswold National Landscape, alongside its historic settlements and wider natural and built environment also remain a core priority of the Local Plan. Development will aim to conserve and, where possible, enhance local character, landscape and sense of place.
- 1.6 The plan will also ensure that new development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and services, helping to create resilient, well-connected

¹ Cotswold District Local Plan (Cotswold District Council); <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan2026-2043/>

communities. It will promote inclusive, healthy and affordable housing, support a low-carbon local economy and encourage sustainable transport choices.

- 1.7 To demonstrate the sustainability of the Plan’s strategy, an Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment) has been carried out at each stage of plan preparation, alongside a Habitats Regulations Assessment and these are published with the other Local Plan evidence documents².
- 1.8 The Local Plan is accompanied by a District-wide Policies Map together with a Policies Map inset for Main, Principal, and Non-Principal Settlements and for any location that is subject to a site-specific policy. The settlement policies, shown by our Area Strategy Chapters, identify specific land allocations, for example for housing and employment, as well as local infrastructure. The land allocations, development boundary and any other relevant land use planning designations are all indicated on the inset maps. These are available on the Council website³.
- 1.9 Councils and other public bodies are expected to work together across administrative boundaries to plan for the housing, employment, transport and infrastructure that local people need. The Gloucestershire Local Planning Authorities are

working together to ensure that new development plan documents properly address strategic planning and cross-boundary issues and includes partnership working with Gloucestershire County Council. Cotswold District is part of the Gloucestershire Strategic Housing and Economic Market Area, and the Gloucestershire authorities have worked together on various evidence base documents, including the Housing and Economic Needs Evidence for Gloucestershire⁴, which has informed the Cotswold Housing Needs Evidence⁵ and the Cotswold Employment Land Review⁶.

- 1.10 National policy provides a mandatory starting point for calculating the Local Plan housing need (known as the Standard Method), although the amount of housing the Local Plan needs to plan for, known as the ‘housing requirement’, can be lower, or higher, than the Standard Method figure, depending on local circumstances. For example, constraints such as the Cotswolds National Landscape limit land availability to deliver the number of homes needed, and this may justify the requirement for the District being lower than the need derived by the Standard Method. However, as the extent of land available for development outside of any designated areas is sufficient to meet the identified need in full, this Local Plan does seek to meet the full housing need for Cotswold District of 17,918 homes over the Plan period (2026 to 2043). This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 4: the Spatial Strategy**.

² Cotswold District Local Plan (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan2026-2043/>
³ Cotswold District Local Plan (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan2026-2043/>
⁴ Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2026): awaiting publication.
⁵ Housing Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>
⁶ Employment Land Review (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

The Development Plan

- 1.11 The Local Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the District, which is the main basis and starting point for making decisions on planning applications. Decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. It therefore gives local communities, developers and investors greater certainty about whether planning applications are likely to be approved. The Development Plan for Cotswold District is shown by **Figure 1**.
- 1.12 The Development Plan for Cotswold District comprises several documents which together will form the basis for planning decisions. Alongside this Local Plan, it includes any adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans, the Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan and the Gloucestershire Waste Core Strategy, prepared by Gloucestershire County Council. The Policies Map supports these documents by showing where policies apply spatially.
- 1.13 The Gloucestershire authorities are currently working together on planning for the future of the area ahead of the Planning and Infrastructure Act coming into force. Whilst the final geography and arrangements for preparing a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), to include Gloucestershire, are not finalised at the time of preparing this Local Plan, and that an SDS is not expected to be adopted prior to the adoption of the Local Plan, once in place, the SDS will form part of the Development Plan for the area. A future review of the Local Plan will need to ensure conformity with the adopted

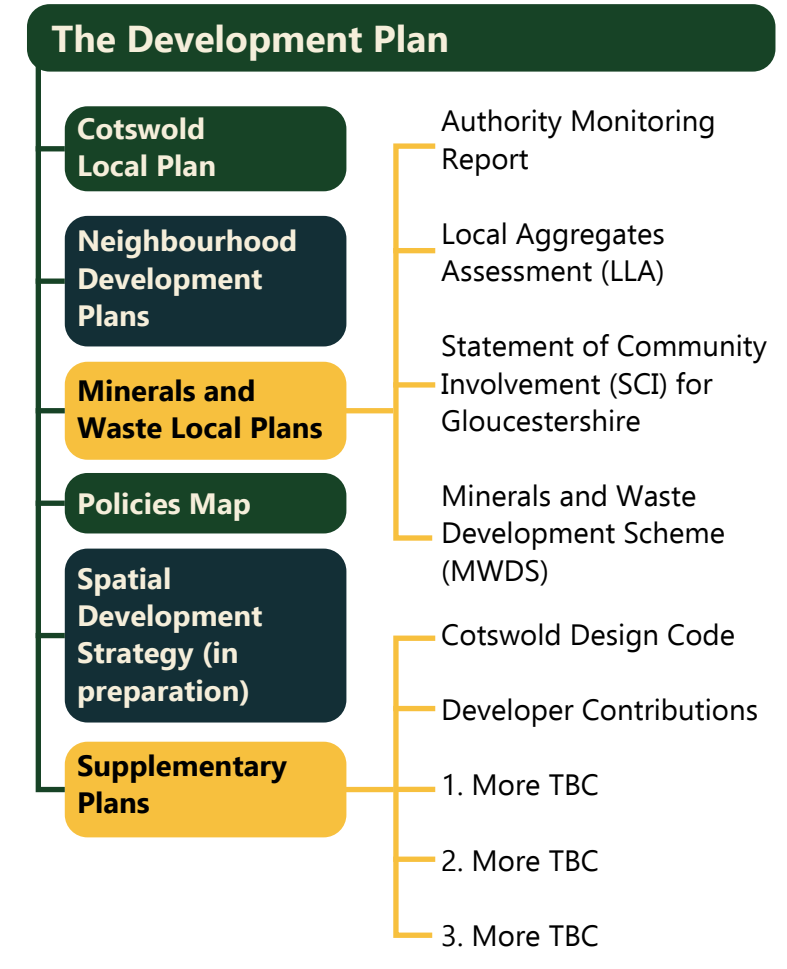


Figure 1: Development Plan for Cotswold District.

- SDS. The ongoing process of Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire may influence future governance arrangements for strategic planning, but the commitment to coordinated, cross boundary plan making will remain central to addressing development needs across the county.
- 1.14 In preparing the Local Plan, the Council has worked with neighbouring authorities, statutory bodies and other key partners in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate⁷. This close co-operation is documented through our Statements of Common Ground, which set out areas of agreement and ongoing collaboration on strategic cross boundary matters. An Effective Close Co-operation Topic Paper and supporting evidence, including the Statements of Common Ground, are published alongside the Local Plan, on the Council's website⁸.
- 1.15 Neighbourhood Development Plans, when made, also form part of the Development Plan. They are prepared by local communities and must be in line with national planning policy and the currently adopted Local Plan. Neighbourhood Development Plans are published on the Council's website⁹. The made Neighbourhood Plans in Cotswold District currently consist of the parishes of:
- **Down Ampney**
 - **Fairford**
 - **Kemble and Ewen**
 - **Lechlade on Thames**
 - **Northleach with Easington**
 - **Preston**
 - **Somerford Keynes and Shorncote**
 - **South Cerney**
 - **Stow-on-the-Wold and the Swells, and**
 - **Tetbury and Tetbury Upton.**
- 1.16 Other Development Plan Documents, or Supplementary Plans, may be produced when necessary to cover specific topics, sites, or to provide more detailed guidance. These too will be considered in any planning decisions. For example, the Mineral and Waste Local Plan documents, monitoring reports and supporting evidence are published on Gloucestershire County Council's website¹⁰. All other relevant planning policy documents can be viewed at the Council offices and online at the following webpage¹¹.

⁷ Whilst the Duty to Cooperate has been abolished, this Local Plan is being examined under the 2024 NPPF and Govt. has made clear, in the Written Ministerial Statement November 2025 that close cooperation is expected to continue.

⁸ Policy Documentation and Monitoring (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/policy-documentation-and-monitoring/>

⁹ Neighbourhood planning (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

¹⁰ Policy monitoring, SCI and scheduling (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/policy-monitoring-sci-and-scheduling/>

¹¹ Planning policy (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.17 The NPPF is the National Planning Policy Framework for planning and sets the context within which the system operates. It covers, at a strategic level, matters including housing, the economy, transport, the natural environment and other key issues. Local plans are required to be consistent with it and should not repeat or reiterate its policies. It consequently is important in preparing planning proposals, or in reaching decisions on them, that the provisions of the NPPF are considered alongside the policies of the Local Plan. The NPPF is also a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.18 The NPPF has been subject to updates during the preparation of this Local Plan. Transitional arrangements set out by the Government confirm that plans at an advanced stage must be assessed for conformity with the NPPF published in December 2024. Accordingly, this Local Plan has been prepared and will be considered having regard to the policies and requirements of the December 2024 NPPF. It is expected that work across Gloucestershire will commence on new Local Plans quickly after the Local Government Reorganisation process (April 2028) and that will provide any updates necessary to reflect latest national policy.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 1.19 Planning Practice Guidance sets out detailed planning guidance on a wide range of topics. It provides supporting detail to the NPPF and is also a material planning consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- 1.20 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is scheduled to take effect in Gloucestershire in 2028, and will result in Cotswold District Council merging with several other Gloucestershire councils to become a new unitary authority. As this Local Plan is expected to be adopted before LGR takes place, it will transfer to the new authority and will continue to form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area following reorganisation. The policies and proposals within this Local Plan will therefore remain in force until they are replaced by a new Local Plan prepared by the new unitary authority. The Council will continue to work proactively during the transition to ensure that plan-making remains seamless, coordinated and aligned with the wider strategic planning arrangements emerging across the county.



Using the Local Plan

- 1.21 The policies within this Local Plan are structured to reflect the distinction between strategic and non-strategic policies, in accordance with national planning policy. The **Core Policies** set out the strategic approach for the District, addressing the overall **Spatial Strategy** and key strategic matters such as housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental protection. The **Development Policies** are non-strategic which provide more detailed criteria to guide decision-making and to support the delivery and implementation of the strategic **Core Policies** when determining planning applications.
- 1.22 The Local Plan must be read as a whole. Policies are not free-standing, and proposals will only be supported where they comply with all relevant Local Plan policies, other Development Plan Documents (such as Neighbourhood Plans and the Spatial Development Strategy), and material planning considerations, including national policy.

What Happens Next?

- 1.23 Following the Regulation 19 Publication (six weeks consultation), the Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2026 for independent examination during 2027. A Planning Inspector will be appointed to assess whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal requirements and whether it is sound. If found sound before LGR in April 2028, the Council will proceed to adopt the Local Plan, subject to any modification where necessary, at which point it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the District, alternatively, the Plan may become the responsibility of its successor authority.



Chapter two Spatial Portrait

Introduction

2.1 This Chapter provides an overview of the geographic and policy context of the District, which has shaped the preparation of this Local Plan and summarises some of the key challenges and opportunities that the Local Plan will help to address. The main challenge facing Cotswold District is to plan for future development requirements in the most sustainable way possible, making provision for homes (particularly for people with a local connection), jobs and community facilities, while protecting the area's outstanding natural and built environment. The strategic imperative to make the Local Plan "Green to the Core" is a key unifying factor in all those issues. These challenges and opportunities inform the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** set out in Chapter 3, and the policies that follow.

Regional Context

2.2 Cotswold District is located in the eastern part of Gloucestershire and covers a predominantly rural area characterised by villages, historic market towns and open countryside. The District shares boundaries with the Gloucestershire Local Planning Authorities of Cheltenham, South Gloucestershire, Stroud and Tewkesbury, as well

as Stratford-on-Avon, Swindon, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Wychavon. These neighbouring areas share several strategic planning matters with Cotswold District, including housing provision, transport connectivity, economic development, environmental assets and the protection of landscape character.

2.3 Cotswold District operates within a three tier local authority structure. Gloucestershire County Council acts as the strategic authority, with responsibility for services including highways and transport, education, social care and minerals and waste planning. Cotswold District Council functions as the Local Planning Authority, with responsibilities including development management and preparation of the Local Plan. A network of town and parish councils operates at the local level, representing communities across the District and playing an important role in neighbourhood planning, local service provision and community engagement.

2.4 The District benefits from its position within the wider regional context of central southern England, although is within the South-West region, and maintains strong functional relationships with surrounding urban centres, including Cheltenham and Gloucester to the west, Oxford to the east and Swindon to the south. These centres provide significant employment opportunities and access to a wide range of retail, education, health and transport services. They play an important role in shaping commuting patterns, economic activity and service use for residents and businesses within Cotswold District.

2.5 A number of important strategic transport connections support the relationships between the Cotswold District and the surrounding urban centres, with the A40 providing an important east-west route linking Oxford with Cheltenham and Gloucester, the A417/A419(T) forming a key connection between the M4 and M5 motorways via Cirencester, and the A429 providing a north-south route through the heart of the District and the A419 also forming a key connection from Cirencester to Swindon. Rail accessibility is provided by the Cotswold Line, serving stations including Moreton-in-Marsh offering direct services to Oxford and London, complemented by the Golden Valley line between Swindon (with connections to Bristol and London) and Gloucester (with connections to Worcester and Hereford) with the station at Kemble in Cotswold District.

2.6 Much of the District lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which is a nationally designated landscape of significant environmental and scenic value. This has a strong influence on settlement patterns, landscape character, environmental protection and the capacity for new development. The District's spatial and regional context is illustrated in **Figure 2.1**.

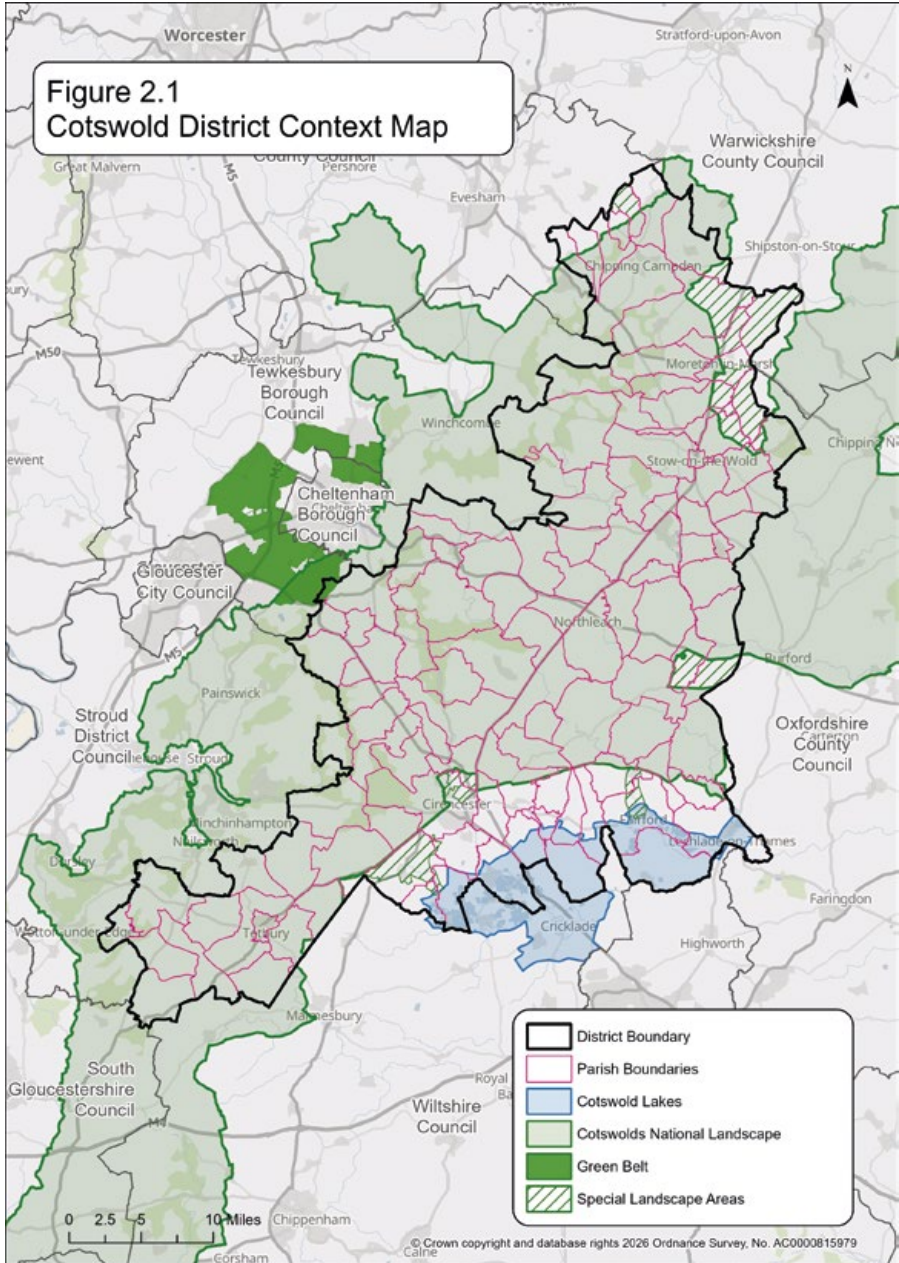


Figure 2.1: Cotswold District Context Map.

Natural and Historic Environment

2.6 The Cotswolds is internationally renowned for its natural beauty. The distinctive local building stone, used in the construction of the many magnificent historic buildings, is a hugely important part of the character that makes the Cotswolds an internationally famous tourist destination. The interplay between the built and natural environment is a defining characteristic throughout the District, especially within the Cotswolds National Landscape (shown by **Figure 2.1**).

2.7 The distinctive heritage includes its numerous market towns and villages and their settings, as well as individual heritage assets.

2.8 The quality of the District's built and natural environment is reflected in the high number of environmental and heritage assets (both designated and non-designated). These include:

- 80% of the District is within the Cotswolds National Landscape
- 144 Conservation Areas
- 5,002 entries on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural and historic interest
- 234 Scheduled Monuments
- 33 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- 1 Registered Battlefield
- 37 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and
- 274 Local Wildlife Sites.

2.9 In the south of the District, beyond the National Landscape, the Cotswold Lakes (formerly known as Cotswold Water Park) is a large area of man-made lakes, covering an area of 40 sq. miles (33 sq. miles in Cotswold District). Much of this area has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because the lakes are nationally important for their biodiversity, particularly wintering and breeding waterbirds, and rare aquatic plants. The Lakes have evolved from major sand and gravel extraction of the upper Thames valley, which is on-going and likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The area is also a major resource for tourism, notably water recreation.

2.10 A small area of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Green Belt spills over into the District at Ullenwood in Coberley parish (shown by **Figure 2.1**). This area is also within the Cotswolds National Landscape designation.

2.11 The Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (GLNRS) is as an essential tool for steering nature recovery in the county. It is a guide for developers and planners to support decision making on scheme design, master and strategic planning for green and blue infrastructure including the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain. The LNRS does not inhibit development, however local plans and planning decisions should "have regard" to the LNRS¹².

¹² Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/ecology-and-landscape/gloucestershire-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- conserving and enhancing, wherever possible, the Cotswolds National Landscape, particularly within areas of high historic, landscape or nature conservation importance
- ensuring that new development is well-designed; respects biodiversity and green infrastructure; and does not lead to the coalescence of settlements
- harnessing the District's sensitive natural and historic assets to economic advantage by managing tourism, agricultural diversification, renewable energy, and other changes to rural areas in a sustainable and non-intrusive manner
- meeting housing and economic needs sustainably
- much of the District is within the Thames Water Catchment that has been designated as 'seriously water stressed' by the Environment Agency, due to a combination of growing population, climate change, and dwindling water supply, and
- designing and locating future housing, employment, renewable energy and other development suitably to minimise visual and other impacts on the Cotswold landscape, built heritage and the natural environment.

Climate Change

- 2.12 Climate change is a key priority for the District. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and ecological emergency in 2020 with a series of commitments set out in the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy¹³ and Ecological Emergency Action Plan¹⁴.
- 2.13 Parts of the District are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including an increased incidence of flooding from various sources. The greatest flood risk arises from the River Churn through Cirencester, Siddington and South Cerney, alongside fluvial risk from the River Thames and River Coln along the southern boundary. Several settlements such as Bourton-on-the-Water and Moreton-in-Marsh are also at risk from surface water flooding, which is expected to increase in extent, depth and hazard due to climate change. The flooding experienced in the District in 2007, late 2012, early 2013 and late 2020 highlighted the additional risk to both existing and new properties of sewer flooding.

¹³ Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 – 2030 (Cotswold District Council, 2020): https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/8d8eab9716634de/cdc-climate-emergency-strategy-adopted-2020_09_23.pdf
¹⁴ Ecological Emergency Action Plan (Cotswold District Council, 2020): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/au2c514i/ecological-emergency-action-plan-update.pdf>

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- considering the impact of climate change in planning all new development, both in terms of location and design
- mitigating the increasing risk of flooding from fluvial, surface water and sewer sources, particularly in vulnerable settlements
- ensuring that new development is appropriately located and designed to avoid areas at highest flood risk and to remain resilient to future climate impacts
- increasing energy and water efficiency in new and existing developments, alongside water storage measures and sustainable drainage systems
- balancing the need for large-scale renewable energy generation, including solar and wind development, with the protection of the District's rich built heritage and National Landscape, and
- responding to the declared climate emergency through coordinated action that reduces carbon emissions while enhancing environmental resilience.

¹⁵ Cotswold (E07000079) Local indicators (Office for National Statistics, 2026): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E07000079-cotswold/indicators>
¹⁶ How the population changed in Cotswold: Census 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2022): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000079/>
¹⁷ Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2022): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021>
¹⁸ How life has changed in Cotswold: Census, 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2023): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000079/>

Population and Housing

- 2.14 Cotswold District had a population of about 91,660 in 2024¹⁵ spread over an area of 450 sq. miles (1,165km²)¹⁶. However, despite this growth in population, the District remains mostly rural in nature. It has a low population density of 78 people per square kilometre, comparing with the England average being 434¹⁷. Although very rural, the District lies in close proximity to large urban areas, notably Swindon, Gloucester and Cheltenham and, further afield, Oxford, Bristol, Bath, Birmingham and Coventry.
- 2.15 The District has a high proportion of elderly people and a low proportion of children and young people. Between 2011 and 2021, the number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by around 2,900 (an increase of 30.7%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by around 1,800 (10.3% decrease)¹⁸. This ageing demographic profile will increase demand for accessible, adaptable and well-located homes that can support independent living and respond to residents' changing mobility and care needs over time.
- 2.16 While most residents in the District enjoy a good quality of life, many live in places that lack good access to services, facilities, training and education. This presents problems for those who rely on public transport, particularly young and elderly people. Pockets of deprivation persist across the

- District, where lower incomes and limited access to opportunities can exacerbate social and economic inequalities.
- 2.17 The average property price for all dwelling types in Cotswold District was £557,110 in 2025. This is higher than within England (£356,508) and higher than the average within Gloucestershire (£375,728)¹⁹. Despite these high property values, the median earned income of full-time employees in the Cotswold District in 2025 was £41,267, compared to Gloucestershire's median income of £38,713²⁰. However, the median income of all employees (both full-time and part-time employees) is £32,927, which is among the lowest of all districts in Gloucestershire in 2025²¹. Consequently, significant sections of the community experience social and financial deprivation, particularly in access to housing. The problem is exacerbated by private sector rents rising faster than earnings across the county. The affordability of homes has worsened since the previous Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment was published in 2020²², while the ratio of house price to earnings in the District worsened from 11.66 in 2009 to 13.43 in 2025²³.
- 2.18 The attractiveness of the area has inevitably brought pressures for housing growth. In the north of the District these have been driven, since the 1960s, by commuting to the West Midlands. However, movement out of London and the south-east has also made the Cotswolds attractive for retirement and holiday or second homes. Some of these properties are occupied only at weekends, or for occasional holidays. The 2021 Census indicated that there were 3,660 vacant dwellings and 1,260 second homes in the Cotswold District (with no usual residents)²⁴. At the end of July 2024, there were 864 long-term empty properties registered, of which 446 were classed as being empty in excess of 2 years²⁵.
- 2.19 Delivering an appropriate mix of housing that meets the District's needs, including the requirements of people on middle/ lower incomes and first-time buyers, is a major challenge. Failure to provide an appropriate mix of housing has led to more economically-active people, particularly the young, being forced to look elsewhere for somewhere to live. This is likely to exacerbate the adverse economic, social and commuting consequences for the District. The District's high second home

¹⁹ Local Insight Summary Report Cotswold District (Inform Gloucestershire, 2025): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/gruls304/local-insight-cotswold-district-summary-report.pdf>

²⁰ Earnings and hours worked, place of residence by local authority: ASHE Table 8. Dataset (Office for National Statistics, 2025): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofresidencebylocalauthorityashtable8>

²¹ Earnings and hours worked, place of residence by local authority: ASHE Table 8. Dataset (Office for National Statistics, 2025): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofresidencebylocalauthorityashtable8>

²² Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 (Opinion Research Services, 2020): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/4njfk541/a3-1-10-gloucestershire-local-housing-needs-assessment-sept-2020.pdf>

²³ House price to workplace-based earnings ratio. Dataset. Table 5c (Office for National Statistics, 2026): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

²⁴ Number of vacant dwellings and second homes (with no usual residents) Dataset. Table 1a. Office for National Statistics, 2023 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/numberofvacantdwellingsandsecondhomeswithnousualresidents>

²⁵ Long Term Empty Property Strategy 2024 – 2029 (Cotswold District Council, 2024): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/sjsf1whf/long-term-empty-property-strategy-2024-2029.pdf>

ownership can also adversely affect housing affordability.

- 2.20 The relatively large and growing elderly population, coupled with a reduction in the numbers of young people, have implications for the structure of communities, and places demands on health and public services.
- 2.21 For the above reasons, it is clear that planning for more appropriate housing should be a priority for the District, particularly more affordable homes that meet local needs.

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- addressing the impacts of a growing and ageing population, including the need for accessible and adaptable homes and increased demand for health and care services
- delivering an appropriate mix of housing, particularly more smaller and more affordable homes for local people, younger households and first-time buyers, together with the requisite service provision
- responding to high house prices and worsening affordability, including the effects of second homes, short-term rental properties and long-term vacant properties
- supporting rural communities where access to services, facilities, education and public transport is limited, particularly for young and elderly residents
- ensuring new housing development is well located and supported by infrastructure, helping to reduce the need to travel and reliance on private cars, and
- retaining a balanced and economically active population, reducing the out-migration of younger households and key workers due to affordability pressures.

Local Economy

- 2.22 Cotswold District Council is part of the wider Gloucestershire economy, which is world renowned for its natural beauty and rich culture, and widely recognised for its strong heritage of research and innovation, agriculture, manufacturing, and aviation excellence.
- 2.23 The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (2024-2034)²⁶ sets out the county's approach to supporting sustainable economic growth over the next decade. The strategy focuses on improving productivity, attracting investment and strengthening the local labour market and highlights several employment related strategic objectives for the District (**Figure 2.2**).
- 2.24 The key employment sectors across Gloucestershire include:
- Cyber Tech and Cybersecurity – Gloucestershire has one of the world's best ecosystems in this sector
 - GVA – Manufacturing (14.9%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (13.8%), and Real Estate activities (12.9%) account for over 40% of Gloucestershire's GVA
 - Visitor Economy and Tourism – Gloucestershire has a high proportion of employment in Accommodation and Food Service activities compared to its neighbours, which is predicted to continue growing

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical – activities accounted for the largest proportion of total enterprises (16.3%), followed by Construction (13.5%) and Wholesale and Retail Trade (13.2%), and
- Accommodation and Food service – activities are projected to see the greatest growth in GVA in Gloucestershire between 2021 and 2050.

Focusing growth on Cirencester whilst supporting employment opportunities in other areas within the District

Growing and strengthening key employment sectors

Focusing on the creation of high value, high skill, low environmental impact job

Delivering thriving town centres which function as 'community hubs, designed around health, education, culture, housing, leisure, arts and crafts and some shops'

Figure 2.2: Employment Related Strategic Objectives Identified by the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy (2024-2034).

²⁶ Gloucestershire's Economic Strategy 2024 – 2034 (Gloucestershire County Council, 2024): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/d0glpm5n/gloucestershires-economic-strategy-2024-2034-strategy.pdf>

- 2.25 A major upgrade to the A417, known as the A417 Missing Link, is due to be completed in 2027. The scheme will replace a longstanding single carriageway bottleneck between Brockworth and Cowley (east of Cheltenham) with a continuous dual carriageway, improving journey times and reliability on this key route between the M4 and M5. It is expected to deliver substantial economic benefits through enhanced connectivity, supporting business growth, improving access to jobs and labour markets, and increasing the attractiveness of the Cotswold District as a location for investment, especially along this corridor in locations such as Cirencester.
- 2.26 The Cotswold National Landscape is one of the most recognised brands across England, generating a significant tourism industry in its own right, with the area also containing an important tourist sector, separate to and outside the National Landscape. However, the National Landscape attracts an estimated 5.3 million visitors daily in 2024 and an estimated business turnover of £425 million, it is a significant contributor to the wider Gloucestershire economy²⁷. If not properly managed, it could have adverse impacts on the District's environment and the daily life of local people. The challenge is to enable and manage sustainable tourism, which will safeguard the countryside, heritage and culture for future generations while providing benefits to the local economy.
- 2.27 Cirencester, known as the 'Capital of the Cotswolds', is the main administrative and service centre in Cotswold District. It is located to the east of the county, to the south of the District, and close to the border with Wiltshire and on the edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape area. The town is the dominant centre, home to approximately 22% of the District's population and over 35% of jobs (around 13,500) based in the town. This is the principal location for business services, finance, retail and public services in the District.
- 2.28 Each of the remaining larger Cotswold towns have a unique, strong and distinctive role. Moreton-in-Marsh is regarded by many as the main centre for the north Cotswolds, while Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Fairford, Lechlade, Northleach, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury perform the role of service centres for surrounding rural areas. Smaller local service centres exist at Andoversford, Blockley, Down Ampney, Kemble, Mickleton, South Cerney and Willersey. Elsewhere, rural services are relatively sparse and generally declining. Many of these historic market towns and larger villages have developed at points along the Fosse Way, a major route running between the south-west and the north of the District that have developed into key services centres across the District, which serve a significant catchment of smaller settlements.

²⁷ The Economic Impact of Gloucestershire's Visitor Economy 2024 (The South West Research Company, 2025): https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/cotswolds/Gloucestershire_districts_2024_ad1ad4c1-14dc-4cac-9964-92b4259f9b7d.pdf

- 2.29 There is a range of employment land and premises in most of the larger market towns and villages, although provision at Lechlade, Northleach and Stow-on-the-Wold is limited.
- 2.30 The impact of online retailing remains a threat to town centres, particularly those that are heavily reliant on that sector. Another threat to high street land uses as well as to employment uses is the ability to change from Class E (shops, cafes, restaurants, offices, financial and professional services, and various other uses) to Class C3 (dwelling houses) as permitted development (subject to the prior approval process).
- 2.31 According to 2021 Census data, 39% of the Cotswold population work mainly at or from home. This is substantially higher than both the South-West average (30%) and the England average (31.5%)²⁸. This is partly due to the rural nature of the District and a highly skilled and entrepreneurial workforce.
- 2.32 Cotswold has an above average proportion of residents working in agriculture, forestry and fishing, accommodation and food services, and professional, scientific and technical activities. The service sector accounts for the largest proportion of local jobs, with tourism being a major and growing part of the local economy²⁹.

- 2.33 The economically active population is, however, declining across the District, and the labour market is considered tight by local businesses with labour supply issues, particularly in the professional, skilled trades and engineering sectors, potentially impacting on economic growth³⁰. Evidence indicates that over the plan period to 2043, the population aged 65+ is expected to grow by 44%, with an increase of 11,600 people accounting for around a third of overall population growth. Currently 15% of the population have a disability, with 28% of households including someone with a disability and this can be expected to grow with the increasing older population over the plan period. The evidence projects an increase of 2,350 people (rounded) with mobility problems as well as growth in those with autism, learning disabilities and dementia. The District has a largely sufficient supply of housing with support (e.g. sheltered/retirement housing) in both market and affordable sectors, a need for both market and affordable housing for housing with car (e.g. extra care) and a modest current shortfall for housing with nursing and residential care³¹.
- 2.34 The District's economy has been resilient, even during times of recession, and it is forecast to continue growing. However, Cotswold District imports labour to support its growth and experiences problems recruiting suitably skilled staff, particularly in the professional, skilled trades and engineering

28 2021 Census Area Profile: Cotswold Local Authority, South-West Region and England Country (Office for National Statistics, 2021): https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report?compare=E07000079,E12000009,E92000001

29 Green Economic Growth Strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2025): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/mzldjpqc/cotswold-green-economic-strategy-2025.pdf>

30 Green Economic Growth Strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2025): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/mzldjpqc/cotswold-green-economic-strategy-2025.pdf>

31 Cotswold Housing Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

sectors. A well-skilled and accessible workforce is necessary to support the growth of existing and new employers³².

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- supporting sustainable economic growth as part of the wider Gloucestershire economy, while responding to local strengths and constraints
- maintaining and enhancing a supply of employment land, particularly in locations with limited provisions
- strengthening and diversifying key sectors, including tourism, professional services, agricultural, advanced manufacturing and food science
- managing the growth of the tourism economy associated with the National Landscape in a way that protects the environment and local communities
- reinforcing the role of Cirencester as the District's principal employment and service centre, while supporting smaller towns and rural services, and
- supporting small businesses and rural enterprises, including addressing infrastructure constraints and changing retail landscapes.

32 Green Economic Growth Strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2025): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/mzldjpqc/cotswold-green-economic-strategy-2025.pdf>

33 Origin-destination data explorer - Workplace flow data (Office for National Statistics, 2023): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusorigindestination/>

34 Distance travelled to work – Census Maps (Office for National Statistics, 2021): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/work/distance-travelled-to-work/workplace-travel-4a/less-than-10km?lad=E07000079>

Social and Transport Infrastructure

- 2.35 The flows of transport into, within, and out of the Cotswold District reflect its rural character and connections to surrounding economic centres. Movement and access to employment and services are closely linked to the availability and capacity of transport infrastructure, particularly road and rail services. Commuting habits have important implications for accessibility, sustainability, congestion, parking provision and the District's response to climate change.
- 2.36 At the time of 2021 Census, 46,903 people worked in Cotswold District. Of these, 34,664 lived and worked within the District, of which 23,432 worked from home or had no fixed place of work, and 11,232 people travelled within the District to their workplace. The remaining 12,239 people travelled from another area into the District. The main inflows of workers came from Stroud, Swindon and Wiltshire, with Cirencester having the highest workday population³³.
- 2.37 Given the rural nature of the area, average travel-to-work distances are also longer than in most other parts of the country³⁴. However, much of the District does have good road links, with easy access to the motorway network via A-class routes, although this does not apply to the northernmost parishes. The District is served by two railway stations, at Kemble

(on the Swindon-Gloucester line) and Moreton-in-Marsh (on the Oxford-Worcester line). Kingham and Honeybourne stations lie just outside the District boundary to the east and north respectively.

- 2.38 The historic loss of village shops, post offices, schools and pubs has meant that the retention of rural services and facilities has become a key issue throughout much of the District³⁵. A challenge for the Local Plan will be to resist the loss of village facilities, wherever possible, while supporting the delivery of new ones alongside the delivery of new homes and thus enabling the provision of better access to local service centres for residents living in rural areas.
- 2.39 Overall educational attainment within the District is relatively strong. 82.5% of the population have achieved GCSE's in both English and Maths, exceeding the UK average of 73.1%, while 6.9% of residents have no qualifications, broadly in line with the national average of 6.6%. This reflects a generally well-qualified population, although participation in post-16 and further education remains lower than the national average³⁶. There are 44 state primary schools and 6 secondary schools in the District,

all of which are Academy Converters. Two of the secondary schools (The Cotswold Academy and Chipping Campden School) also provide sixth-forms. With the exception of Cirencester College and the Royal Agricultural University, access to higher and further education is located outside the District.

- 2.40 At the time of the 2021 Census, 53.6% of Cotswold District residents described their health as "very good", compared to 47% nationally³⁷. Life expectancy within the District is also higher than the national average. Based on Public Health England data, life expectancy in Cotswold District is higher than the national average, at 82.5 years for men (80.2 nationally) and 85.1 years for women (83.8 nationally)³⁸. Despite this, there are variations in health and wellbeing within the District. Life expectancy for men in the most deprived areas of Cotswold District is 2.7 years lower than in the least deprived areas, highlighting underlying inequalities linked to deprivation³⁹.

35 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Update (Cotswold District Council, 2021): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/zk0jvndw/a2-2-4-strategic-housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment-review-oct-2021.pdf>;
Economy and Employment Land Update (Cotswold District Council, 2016): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1xqgqkvj/4106-economy-and-employment-land-update-apr-2016.pdf>;
English Indices of Deprivation (Office for National Statistics, 2010): <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2010>

36 Cotswold (E07000079) – Explore Local Statistics (Office for National Statistics): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E07000079-cotswold/indicators#education%20and%20skills>

37 How life has changed in Cotswold: Census 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2023): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E07000079/>

38 Cotswold Local Authority Health Profile (Public Health England, 2020): <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/E07000079.html?area-name=Cotswold>

39 Cotswold Local Authority Health Profile (Public Health England, 2020): <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/E07000079.html?area-name=Cotswold>

Key Challenges and Opportunities:

- focusing new development in sustainable locations, or locations that can be made more sustainable, particularly where there is good access to employment, services and sustainable transport
- timely infrastructure delivery alongside new development
- supporting a transition to more sustainable travel choices in line with climate change objectives
- maximising opportunities to improve sustainable travel choices, including enhanced bus services and increased walking and cycling provision, including Cirencester as a key employment hub
- linking existing settlements with active travel routes where appropriate, particularly in and around Cirencester and surrounding villages
- integrating and joining up the cycle network so it is safe and away from busy roads
- managing high levels of in and out commuting and addressing longer than average distances to work by providing alternatives to single car commuting
- reducing the District's strong dependence on the private car, particularly where sustainable transport options are limited
- managing parking pressures at key employment locations and rail stations, including Cirencester, Kemble and Moreton-in-Marsh
- supporting and encouraging access and attainment to education and skills, including further and higher education, while recognising that many opportunities lie outside the District
- supporting healthy communities by promoting access to healthcare facilities, green space and active travel, and
- protecting and enhancing existing social and community infrastructure, including education, healthcare, cultural and community facilities, while facilitating the provision of new and improved infrastructure to meet the needs of growing and changing communities, ensuring it is delivered in accessible and sustainable locations that support inclusive, healthy and resilient places.



Chapter three

Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

Spatial Vision

3.1 Our **Spatial Vision** describes the future we are seeking to create for Cotswold District by 2043. It provides a clear vision for the District's future and aims to provide a sustainable pattern of growth, underpinned by the Council's ambition to remain 'Green to the Core', address the challenge of climate change and the ecological emergencies, support a strong and resilient local economy, protect the environment, respect the District's heritage, and support local communities and businesses.

3.2 The **Spatial Vision** has been influenced by many factors including the issues and needs of our places, evidence we have gathered, and what our local communities, stakeholders and businesses have told us. It responds directly to the key challenges identified in the Spatial Portrait, including an ageing population, housing affordability pressures, rural accessibility issues, environmental constraints, and the need to support a more balanced and economically active population.



Spatial Vision

By 2043, Cotswold District will be a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking rural district that has responded to the climate crisis and ecological emergency, conserved and enhanced the Cotswolds National Landscape, delivered sustainable communities, and enabled a vibrant, low-carbon economy. Development will have been guided by a Spatial Strategy that prioritises environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic vitality, while respecting the District's unique landscape, heritage, and character. The roles of the District's settlements will be reinforced, with Cirencester continuing to function as the principal centre, supported by a network of market towns and villages that serve their rural hinterlands.

The Local Plan will have delivered a diverse range of housing, including a significant increase in socially rented and smaller and more affordable homes, enabling residents of all ages and backgrounds to live securely and sustainably. This will include homes that respond to the needs of an ageing population, support younger people and key workers to remain in the District, and provide a mix of sizes and tenures that improve affordability and maintain a balanced community. New development sites will have matured into thriving communities, offering high-quality homes, employment opportunities, and essential services, all supported by integrated infrastructure and sustainable transport networks.

The District will have transitioned to zero-carbon development, with new buildings and infrastructure designed to minimise energy and water use and maximise renewable energy generation. Biodiversity Net Gain will be embedded across all larger development, contributing to a richer natural environment and improved ecological resilience. Water resources will be carefully managed, with development responding to water stress, flood risk and the need to protect and enhance water quality.

The Local Plan will have helped to reduce transport emissions through investment in active travel infrastructure, public transport, and strategic growth focused around transport nodes and ensuring local services and facilities are close enough to access by walking, wheeling or cycling, and/ or other sustainable transport modes. Communities will be healthier, more connected, and better supported by local services, green spaces, and digital infrastructure.

Cotswold District will continue to be 'Green to the Core', with planning decisions consistently reflecting the long-term interests of people, place, and planet.

Strategic Objectives

3.3 The following **Strategic Objectives** will help to deliver the **Spatial Vision** and guide development throughout the District over the period to 2043.

SO1: Ensure infrastructure and services support sustainable communities

- Help to deliver infrastructure, services, and facilities that meet the needs of residents and businesses.
- Ensure the required infrastructure and services, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, are delivered in a timely manner.

SO2: Respond to the climate crisis through adaptation and mitigation

- Require new housing development to be zero-carbon and climate-resilient.
- Support the provision of renewable energy schemes and promote community owned renewables initiatives.
- Locate development away from flood-prone areas, treat rainwater as a resource and promote water and energy efficiency.

SO3: Conserve and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment

- Preserve the high quality, local distinctiveness, and diversity of the natural and historic environment.
- Support the sympathetic retrofit of historic buildings.
- Conserve and enhance the distinct character of the Cotswolds National Landscape, open countryside and water quality.
- Promote high-quality, sustainable design and green infrastructure that supports health and wellbeing and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

SO4: Deliver inclusive, healthy, and affordable housing

- Provide a diverse mix of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of all sections of the community, with a focus on socially rented homes and smaller and more affordable homes.
- Ensure development supports positive health outcomes and embeds local health and wellbeing strategies.

SO5: Enable a vibrant, low-carbon local economy

- Support the transition to a low-carbon economy and promote local employment.
- Encourage the vitality and viability of town and village centres as places that support a range of activities and uses such as shopping, leisure, cultural and community activities; as well as providing access to affordable homes.
- Promote sustainable tourism.
- Maintain Cirencester’s role as a key employment and service centre.

SO6: Promote sustainable transport use and connectivity

- Reduce transport emissions by encouraging walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport and supporting the shift to electric vehicles, whilst recognising the rural nature of the area and that private vehicles will remain a necessity for some parts of the District.
- Focus development at accessible locations where local services and facilities are close enough to access by walking, wheeling or cycling and where there are good public transport links such as access to the Expressbus network.
- Create multimodal transport hubs to improve access to sustainable transport choices, aid health outcomes and reduce emissions and pollution.



Chapter four Spatial Strategy

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter sets out the **Spatial Strategy** for the District, establishing how and where sustainable growth will be delivered over the period 2026–2043. It provides the overarching framework for locating new development in a way that responds to the District’s distinctive environmental and heritage assets, its settlement pattern, and the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change, housing need, infrastructure capacity and economic growth.
- 4.2 The **Spatial Strategy** integrates national policy requirements with the District’s local evidence base and incorporates the outcomes of public participation to ensure that new homes, jobs and infrastructure are planned in a coordinated and deliverable manner. It focuses growth in the most sustainable settlements, directs development away from the most sensitive landscapes, and places climate and ecological action at the heart of decision-making.
- 4.3 Together, the policies in this chapter, covering climate change, housing and employment needs, and the settlement hierarchy form the foundation of the Local Plan. They ensure that development supports resilient communities, protects the District’s unique character, and delivers a balanced and achievable strategy for meeting needs over the Plan period.
- 4.4 Our **Spatial Strategy** for Cotswold is shown by **Figures 4.1** and **4.2**.

4.5 The **Spatial Strategy** is underpinned by six Core (strategic) policies:

- **Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change**
Sets out criteria for developments to ensure they respond to the challenge of climate change appropriately
- **Core Policy 2: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District: Strategic Sites**
Specifies the scale and location of new strategic housing
- **Core Policy 2a: Stepped Housing Trajectory**
Sets out the level of housing delivery for different parts of the Plan Period to ensure annual housing delivery is realistic and achievable
- **Core Policy 3: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District: Non-Strategic Sites**
Specifies the scale and location of non-strategic housing
- **Core Policy 4: Settlement Hierarchy**
Classifies the settlements in Cotswold according to their role and service function as well as ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations
- **Core Policy 5: Meeting Business and Employment Needs in Cotswold District**
Specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across Cotswold in appropriate locations
- **Core Policy 6: Infrastructure Delivery**
Ensures that new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

Area Strategies

4.6 We have also developed three Area Strategies, which ensure we plan appropriately for different parts of the District, taking account of what makes them locally distinctive and focusing on their individual needs. These are set out in **Chapter 5 to 7**. The Area Strategies are for:

- Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy, which covers Cirencester, Preston and Siddington
- South Cotswold Area Strategy, which includes Andoversford, Fairford, Kemble, Lechlade, Northleach, South Cerney and Tetbury, and
- North Cotswold Area Strategy, which includes Bourton-on-the Water, Chipping Campden, Mickleton, Moreton-in-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold.

District-Wide Policies

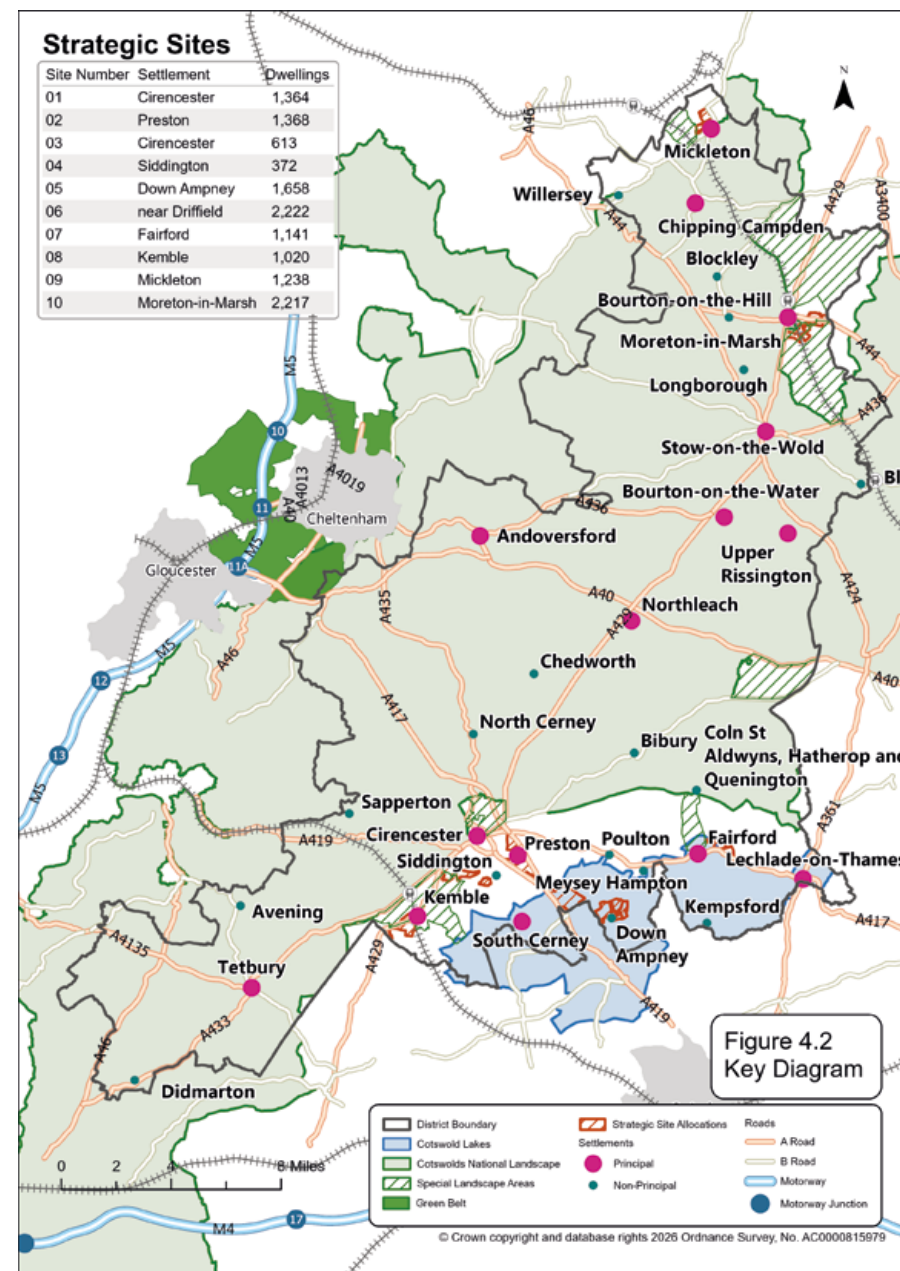
4.7 Finally, we have developed some District-wide policies that apply to Cotswold as a whole and these are set out in **Chapters 8 to 15**. These policies are needed to complement the **Spatial Strategy** and **Area Strategies** to help ensure the **Spatial Vision** and **Strategic Objectives** can be delivered successfully. These policies are locally specific and are important to help us meet the Plan's objectives.

4.8 Policies from the previous Cotswold Local Plan have been replaced and updated by the policies set out in this Plan, with two exceptions. These can be found in **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3**.



Figure 4.1: Cotswold Local Plan 2026 – 2043: Spatial Strategy.

Cirencester and Surrounding Villages - Strategy Area • Cirencester is identified as the District’s Main Settlement to reflect its status as the largest town within the District, where the majority of services and facilities are provided, along with the widest range of retail. It serves a wide hinterland of surrounding villages that rely upon it for day-to-day needs such as for shopping and leisure • growth through strategic extensions in Cirencester will complement the existing settlement, forming high-quality sustainable development that provides appropriate services and facilities; with strong active travel connections linking the new neighbourhoods to Cirencester Town Centre, local schools, the National Cycle Network, and wider footpath routes. Sustainable travel connections will also link to nearby Kemble Railway Station, which will be strengthened through careful infrastructure planning • growth through strategic extensions in and near the settlements of Siddington and Preston will be designed so the settlements retain their distinct identities separate from Cirencester while at the same time creating strong active travel connections between the development, Cirencester Town Centre and other nearby new developments in the South Cotswold Strategy area, and • a new secondary school will be provided, covering both the need of new development in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area as well as the need arising from development in the surrounding South Cotswold Strategy Area.	South Cotswold - Strategy Area • four Strategic Site Allocations at Down Ampney, Fairford, Kemble and a new settlement south of Driffield form the basis of long-term growth in the Strategy Area, supported by 12 non-strategic site allocations across other towns and villages • growth at Down Ampney, Fairford and Kemble will deliver well-planned, connected extensions that provide new homes, community infrastructure, and strong active travel links to existing settlements and key destinations, including Kemble Station • the new settlement to the south of Driffield will provide a sustainable new community of strategic scale, delivering homes, employment land, community facilities, transport connections and a comprehensive network of green and blue infrastructure • 12 non-strategic smaller-scale allocations across other settlements will support rural communities, while protecting and enhancing the area’s historic environment, biodiversity and key assets including the Cotswold Lakes and River Thames corridors • Tetbury, Fairford and Lechlade are recognised for their important role as the main service centres providing a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities for surrounding communities. Kemble is also recognised for its distinctive strategic function due to its railway station on the Swindon–Gloucester (Golden Valley) line, and • it is especially important that growth in South Cotswold is high quality, sustainable and sensitive to landscape and environmental matters, so that it responds sensitively to the Cotswolds National Landscape and Special Landscape Areas, and the area’s strong rural character.	North Cotswold - Strategy Area • two Strategic Site Allocations in Moreton-in-Marsh and Mickleton form the basis of long-term growth in the Strategy Area. A further 15 non-strategic smaller scale site allocations are spread across other towns and villages • it is important that growth within these settlements is high quality and sustainable, but also supports the delivery of new services, facilities and infrastructure, including green and blue infrastructure, to benefit the existing communities and new residents • Moreton-in-Marsh is recognised as an important settlement due to the role it plays within Cotswold District as the third largest settlement with one of only two railway stations in the District • growth in Moreton-in-Marsh will complement the existing settlement, forming high-quality sustainable development, provide appropriate services and facilities with strong active travel connections linking the new neighbourhoods to the town centre (including providing for a new street through the development), the National Cycle Network, wider footpath routes, primary schools (existing and new) and a new secondary school. Growth should consider the Cotswolds National Landscape and Special Landscape Areas • growth in Mickleton will reflect local character, and landscape context, supporting high quality place making for both new and existing residents and creating safe, direct and attractive walking and cycling routes linking the site to Mickleton village centre, schools, services and the surrounding countryside (including nearby Honeybourne Railway Station), and • development in Mickleton will also establish a strong and enduring western edge to Mickleton, with development contained by a substantial landscape framework. The setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the adjoining Special Landscape Area will be safeguarded through generous buffers, sensitive layout, green and blue infrastructure and appropriate density.
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Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergencies

- 4.9 There is overwhelming scientific consensus that we are experiencing significant climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. It highlights the urgency for action and has generated a high level of concern. The UK's national commitment is set by the Climate Change Act 2008, updated in 2019, and legislates that the UK must be net zero carbon by 2050. It has settled to the development of a series of carbon budgets to ensure that the UK does not emit more than its allowance between now and 2050. This legal requirement is underpinned by the Climate Change Committee's (CCC) report 'Net Zero: The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming'⁴⁰. In July 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and in 2020, an ecological emergency and it seeks to ensure the new Local Plan adequately reflects the measures and interventions required to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045⁴¹.
- 4.10 The planning system, and the development that it manages, has an important role to play in getting to net zero. The Local Plan policies collectively seek to reduce carbon emissions over time. This now includes a suite of new and revised policies which address, for example, building fabrics and energy performance (**Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings**), renewable energy (**Core Policy 28: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission**) and the provision of infrastructure to support active travel and public transport (**Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity**).

⁴⁰ Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming (Climate Change Committee): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>

⁴¹ Cotswold climate and ecological emergencies (Cotswold District Council): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/cotswold-climate-and-ecological-emergencies/>

- 4.11 There is also growing concern over the cost of fuel and increasing fuel poverty. The planning process can influence the use of energy through policy controls over energy use and space heating standards in new buildings. Increasing 'fabric energy efficiency' and overall energy efficiency to as high a level as possible and then requiring the residual energy needs to be met from renewable sources, goes a long way towards the achievement of lower energy costs.
- 4.12 The Local Plan requires that new buildings are designed and built to be low energy, do not use fossil fuel for on site for heating, hot water or cooking, and generate renewable energy on-site to at least match annual energy use. Without these requirements we are risking adding to the problem of retrofitting buildings in the future to meet the carbon emissions targets. We also need to reduce buildings 'embodied carbon' during construction and their long-term environmental impact, for example, how building materials are sourced and re-used.
- 4.13 While acknowledging the need to meet housing demands and accommodate development of infrastructure, it is crucial to recognise the significant pressures that new development imposes onto biodiversity. The expansion of urban areas, infrastructure projects, and land use changes associated with development threatens biodiversity through habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, and consequently poses a substantial risk to local ecosystems. Therefore, it is imperative that new development not only prioritises the conservation of biodiversity but also takes proactive steps to enhance and restore ecosystems. By incorporating measures to mitigate these pressures and actively promote the restoration and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure, development can play a vital role in improving biodiversity and contributing positively to ecological resilience.
- 4.14 The final main component of climate change impact is transport, particularly by the private car. The Local Plan places emphasis on the need to reduce this, to support public transport and to encourage new and connected walking and cycling routes. In these ways settlements and new development become more sustainable. The Sustainable Travel policy (**Core Policy 33**) is designed to encourage use of non-car modes of travel wherever possible. The design of new development layouts will require convenient walking routes to facilities in the area around new housing and/or workplaces. It is acknowledged that with the existing rural settlement pattern across the District, use of the car will continue but the Plan aims to increase and to promote a greater element of travel choice.
- 4.15 The Local Plan sets out a clear vision for net zero and nature recovery and it introduces new and updated policies that will place a commitment on development to deliver a net zero carbon and nature recovery future. This will help to ensure climate change considerations are appropriately weighed in the planning balance.

Figure 4.2: Key Diagram – Cotswolds Spatial Strategy.

- 4.16 To ensure a comprehensive approach to sustainability, applicants must submit a Sustainability Statement that addresses all climate change policy requirements. The Sustainability Statement should cover the details listed in the Council's Sustainability Statement Requirements Table (**Appendix 1**) with the level of detail proportionate to the scale and type of development. For outline proposals, a reduced level of detail is expected but the application should still include an outline Sustainability Statement demonstrating that these issues are being planned for from the outline stage.

There will be a requirement for these issues to be satisfactorily addressed through reserved matters. Householder applications are not required to submit a completed checklist. However, applicants are encouraged to consider relevant parts of the checklist and submit either a completed checklist or include within their application evidence information to demonstrate how climate change and biodiversity issues have been taken into consideration.



Core Policy 1: Addressing Climate Change

Development proposals must demonstrate how they will mitigate, adapt and be resilient to the impacts of climate change and support an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The following measures should be demonstrated to have been incorporated into design as appropriate to the size and type of development:

- locating and laying out development to reduce the need to travel and to promote the use of public transport and active travel (walking and cycling) by creating or connecting to public or active travel routes and by clustering trip origins and destinations between homes, jobs and services
- providing high quality sustainable travel infrastructure and coordinating between contiguous and other development sites in the vicinity to address cumulative impacts and achieve connectivity of sustainable transport mode routes
- locating electric vehicle charging points to maximise ease of access and safety when in public areas
- promoting sustainable design and construction, and the re-use of materials and reduction in wastewhenver possible in a 'circular economy' approach to development
- implement the cooling hierarchy into building design and show how building design is resilient to current and future climate impacts, e.g. balancing winter solar gain and summer cooling using natural methods such as shading and natural ventilation, to avoid a need for active air conditioning
- accelerating the deployment of renewable and low carbon energy generation within the District (with reference to **Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings** and **Core Policies 28 to 31**: relating to Renewable Energy)
- promoting the efficient use of natural resources (e.g. water and soil) including surface water management systems such as SUDs and water efficiency measures in buildings (with

- reference to **Core Policy 63: Managing Flood Risk** and **Core Policy 64: Water Management Infrastructure**)
- ensuring that new developments are provided with recycling and waste disposal infrastructure, and
 - promoting and maintaining a network of connected, accessible and multi-functional green spaces to include biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery as appropriate and encouraging tree and hedgerow planting.

All applications for new development of one or more dwellings or greater than 100sqm of non- residential floorspace, and all major refurbishment and major change of use, are expected to demonstrate the above by submitting a Climate Change and Sustainability Statement covering the topics and level of detail proportionate to the scale and type of development as per **Appendix 1**.

Residential development over ten units and non-residential development over 1000sqm or 0.5ha will be required to cover more detail and a wider range of topics in the Climate Change and Sustainability Statement, setting out their approach towards health and wellbeing, as well as how their proposals reflect adaptation to and help to address climate change issues in relation to net zero carbon development, sustainable transport, nature and green infrastructure, energy, water and construction methods.

For outline proposals, a reduced level of detail is expected but the application should still include an Outline Climate Change and Sustainability Statement demonstrating that these issues are being Planned for from the outline stage. There will be a requirement for these issues to be satisfactorily addressed through reserved matters.

Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District

- 4.17

The Local plan seeks to meet housing needs; to provide homes and access to the housing market, to deliver affordable housing for those priced out of and unable to access housing at market prices. It also seeks to provide a mix and type of housing that will meet the needs of the whole community.
- 4.18

With these aims, the plan makes provision for at least 18,877 new homes to be delivered during the Plan period (2026 to 2043) as set out in **Core Policy 2: Meeting our Housing Needs**. This is in excess of the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing for the Cotswold District up to 2043, as identified in the updated Local Housing Need Assessment of 17,918.
- 4.19

The Plan makes provision for a supply of housing in excess of the requirement in order to provide for flexibility and contingency and to help ensure the Plan can achieve and maintain a five-year housing land supply, as required by national policy.
- 4.20

A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the Plan period. These will include:

• housing completions (in the period from April 2026 to March 2027)

• existing planning permissions

• strategic allocations made within this Plan (sites of 350 homes or more dwellings)
- non-strategic allocations (sites of 349 or fewer dwellings), and

• sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in this Local Plan. These are sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.
- 4.21

The strategic allocations listed in **Core Policy 2** and outlined in more detail within the **Area Strategies** are central to the delivery of the Local Plan and our Strategic Objectives for Cotswold.
- 4.22

To identify the strategic allocations, the Council has followed a comprehensive selection process, which began with an assessment of land at each of our most sustainable settlements (shown by our updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – HELAA)⁴². This approach helped to identify the broad locations that offered the most suitable locations for development, which were then comprehensively tested, including by the Sustainability Appraisal, Viability Study, Landscape Sensitivity Study and a number of other technical evidence studies including on heritage.
- 4.23

The scale of development at the identified strategic allocations will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.
- 4.24

The Council has adopted a stepped housing requirement (**Core Policy 2a**) to reflect the anticipated lead-in times associated with the

42 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Update (CDC, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

delivery of strategic site allocations, infrastructure provision and the establishment of new communities. This approach ensures that the housing requirement is realistic and deliverable whilst maintaining a sufficient supply of housing throughout the Plan period.

- 4.25
- The stepped housing requirement reflects the expected pattern of housing delivery identified in the housing trajectory. Housing delivery will be monitored annually against the relevant stepped requirement. The stepped requirement will also be used to calculate the District’s five-year housing land supply position and to monitor housing delivery through the Housing Delivery Test.

Core Policy 2: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District – Strategic Allocations

The housing requirement for the Cotswold District is for 17,918 homes to be delivered in the Plan period between 2026 and 2043.

The Plan makes provision for at least 18,877 dwellings by 2043 in the interest of providing for some flexibility and contingency.

Around 11,302 dwellings will be delivered through ten new strategic allocations and one Local Plan 2011-2031 Saved Allocation. Additionally, a further 1,434 dwellings will be delivered through non-strategic allocations (shown by **Core Policy 3**). Additional dwellings will also be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process (including windfalls). The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown by the following table:

Table 4.1: Cotswold Housing Requirement and Housing Supply 2026 to 2043

Category		Number of dwellings
Housing requirement for the full Plan period (April 2026 to March 2043)		17,918
Housing Completions		0*
Housing Supply	Known commitments	1,570**
	Strategic Allocations	11,302
	Non-Strategic Allocations	1,434
	Saved Allocations	2,282
Windfalls		2,289
TOTAL		18,877

Note: Figures have a 1 April 2026 base date.
*Updated Housing completions for the 2026 to 2027 year may be available around May 2027, to inform the Plan before adoption, expected in early 2028.
**Updated Housing commitments for the 2026 to 2027 year may be available around May 2027 to inform the Plan before adoption, expected in early 2028.

The residual requirement will be updated annually to take account of net housing completions.

Strategic Allocations

Development will be supported at strategic allocations where it (a) meets the requirements set out within the Development Site Frameworks shown by **Appendix B** and (b) is in accordance with the Development Plan take as a whole.

Strategic allocations must be planned and delivered comprehensively through a comprehensive masterplan, infrastructure delivery strategy and phasing plan. All landowners and developers are expected to work collaboratively to prepare these documents which must be agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to a grant of permission and following consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. Where an allocation is in multiple ownerships planning applications must be supported by a delivery agreement. This agreement must demonstrate how infrastructure will be funded and delivered, how costs and benefits will be shared, and how development parcels will contribute fairly to site-wide requirements. Development proposals must demonstrate that they are consistent with the approved masterplan, infrastructure delivery strategy and any approved equalisation or land value sharing mechanism, and that they will not undermine the delivery of infrastructure or development on the remainder of the allocation. Any development proposals which would prejudice the comprehensive delivery of the strategic site allocation will be refused.

The following tables shows how the level of housing required through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 4.2: Strategic Allocations for Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Cirencester*	To the south of The Steadings	585	779
	To the east of Kingshill Lane	613	0
Preston*	To the south of Preston	1,368	0
Siddington*	To the south-west of Siddington	372	0
TOTAL		2,938	779

* Located in Cirencester, Preston and Siddington parishes but will functionally grow the settlement of Cirencester

Table 4.3: Saved Strategic Allocation for Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Cirencester	South of Chesterton (The Steadings) (Saved Allocation S2) (see Appendix 2)	2,282	0

Table 4.4: Strategic Allocations Identified for South Cotswold Area

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Down Ampney	Strategic extension to the north, east and south of Down Ampney	1,658	0
Fairford	Strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford	1,141	0
Kemble	Strategic extension to the south-west of Kemble	1,020	0
New settlement	New settlement to the south of Driffield	1,090	1,132
TOTAL		4,909	1,132

Table 4.5: Strategic Allocations Identified for North Cotswold Area

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Mickleton	Strategic extension to the north and west of Mickleton	1,238	0
Moreton-in-Marsh	Strategic extension to the South and East of Moreton-in-Marsh	2,217	0
TOTAL		3,455	0



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Core Policy 2a: Stepped Housing Trajectory

To deliver the overall housing requirement of 17,918 dwellings between 2026 and 2043, the Council will apply the following stepped housing requirement:

- 2026/27 to 2030/31: 420 dwellings per annum
- 2031/32 to 2035/36: 1,030 dwellings per annum, and
- 2036/37 to 2042/43: 1,525 dwellings per annum.

Housing delivery will be monitored against the stepped housing requirement and the housing trajectory. The residual requirement will be updated annually to take account of net housing completions. The stepped requirement will be used to calculate the five-year housing land supply and Housing Delivery Test measurement in accordance with national policy.



Core Policy 3: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District – Non-Strategic Allocations

In addition to the Strategic Allocations identified in **Core Policy 2**, development will also be supported at Principal and Non-Principal Settlements on a series of non-strategic allocations, where it (a) meets the requirements set out within the Development Site Templates shown by **Appendix C** and (b) is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. A collaborative and comprehensive masterplanned approach will be expected with consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. The following tables show how the level of housing required through non-strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 4.6: Non-Strategic Allocations Identified for Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area

Settlement	Site name	Number of dwellings
Cirencester	Land adjacent to Donside, off Barn Way	10
	Land west of Gardner Way	31
Siddington	Plummers Farm, east of Ashton Road	35
	Land east of Siddington Road and west of Bluebell Drive	5
	Land between disused canal and disused railway line, north of Park Way	22
TOTAL		103

Table 4.7: Non-Strategic Allocations Identified for South Cotswold Area

Settlement	Site name	Number of dwellings
Andoversford	Land to rear of Templefields and Crossfields	52
Fairford	Land west of Terminus Cottage and Station Cottage	30
	Land at Totterdown Hill, Horcott	150
Hatherop	Glebe Farm Yard	12
Kempsford	Land to rear of the Knoll, Whelford Road	149
Lechlade	Land south of Butler’s Court	15
	Land south of Ferrers Park	150
Moreton-in-Marsh	Land south of North Cotswold Hospital	44
Poulton	Land north of London Road	10
Quenington	Former Godwin Pumps factory Springfield Road	47
Tetbury	Land adjacent to Blind Lane	44
	Land north-west of Highfield Cottage	50
TOTAL		567

Table 4.8: Non-Strategic Allocations Identified for North Cotswold Area

Settlement	Site name	Number of dwellings
Blockley	Former allotments, Station Road	40
	The Limes, Station Road	8
Bourton-on-the-Water	Land off Mallard Crescent	53
Chipping Campden	Land north-west of Aston Road	10
	Land north-east of Aston Road	150
Mickleton	Land east of former Meon Hill Nurseries	40
	Land between Summerville Ltd. and Stratford Road	33
	Land east of Stratford Road	76
Moreton-in-Marsh	Land west of Aldi	20
	Land south of North Cotswold Hospital	44
Stow-on-the-Wold	Land adjacent Griffin Court / Playing Field	10
	Land adjoining Tall Trees, Oddington Road	8
	The Hollies, Lower Swell Road	35
Willersey	Land between Colin Lane and future Heritage Railway	40
TOTAL		567

Settlement Hierarchy

Purpose of the Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.26 The Settlement Hierarchy provides the strategic framework for distributing growth across the District. It categorises settlements into four tiers based on their role and function, including their level of services and facilities provision and public transport accessibility. This ensures development is directed to the most appropriate locations, supporting long term social, economic and environmental wellbeing.
- 4.27 The approach ensures that the majority of development is directed to Cirencester, as the Main Settlement, and our Principal Settlements. This helps to:
 - enhance service viability by supporting shops, schools, health facilities and public transport
 - reduces car dependency by placing development near services, jobs and sustainable transport, or in locations where new development can provide the most effective improvements in sustainable modes of travel
 - supports efficient public service and infrastructure delivery (education, health, emergency services and transport), and
 - promotes healthy outcomes by encouraging active lifestyles, improving access to green infrastructure and health services and creating environments that support physical and mental wellbeing.

Influence of the Cotswolds National Landscape and Other Constraints

- 4.28 While the hierarchy provides a robust framework, distribution cannot be determined by hierarchy alone. A significant proportion of the District lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape and contains numerous other nationally important environmental and heritage assets (e.g. Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Registered Parks and Gardens, flood risk areas and irreplaceable habitats). These designations require the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, heritage significance and environmental character. On this basis, consideration will be given to:
 - some Principal Settlements, despite strong service provision, are highly constrained by landscape sensitivity, heritage settings or environmental designations, limiting capacity for larger scale growth without unacceptable harm, and
 - conversely, some Non Principal Settlements may contain less sensitive, more deliverable land and can therefore accommodate a greater share of growth than the hierarchy alone would suggest.
- 4.29 This approach directs growth not only to the most sustainable settlements in principle, but also to the most deliverable and environmentally appropriate locations in practice.

Role of Development Boundaries and Open Countryside

- 4.30 The Development Boundaries define the existing built-up areas of Main and Principal Settlements including sites that: are under construction, and have been granted planning permission.
- 4.31 On this basis, the Development Boundaries:
 - help maintain a sustainable development strategy by focusing most development towards the District’s most sustainable settlements, and
 - protects more rural settlements and the open countryside from development, which is more appropriately located in the Main, Principal and Non-Principal Settlements, where there is better access to services, facilities, employment opportunities, and transport links.
- 4.32 Development can still occur outside Development Boundaries, but only as windfall schemes where consistent with the relevant exception or national policies, unless specifically allocated in the Local Plan or a Made Neighbourhood Development Plan. This may include Rural Exception Sites to deliver affordable housing, or other proposals that accord with the relevant planning policies for the Open Countryside. Such developments can help sustain essential rural services. However, the overall strategy remains that Main, Principal, and Non-Principal Settlements are the primary focus for meeting the Local Plan’s development needs.

- 4.33 Most of the Main, Principal and Non-Principal Settlements have Conservation Areas and historic buildings, while Cirencester in particular has large areas covered by scheduled archaeological sites. These make important contributions towards the area’s heritage, for which the Cotswolds are internationally renowned. Inappropriate development can cause irreparable damage to the sensitive historic environment. In some instances, this has resulted from poorly designed development while, in others, infilling of visually important spaces has harmed the traditional character of settlements. A settlement’s historic, incremental pattern of development should not be materially harmed by incongruous, out-of-scale, or inappropriate development.
- 4.34 To meet future housing and employment needs in the most sustainable locations, some larger-scale allocations are necessary, as set out in this Plan. In such cases, direct impact on designated heritage and/or landscape assets should be minimised as far as possible. Good design principles will be important in helping to ensure that new development assimilates well with existing settlements.
- 4.35 Open spaces, such as gardens, gaps, ‘green wedges’ and ‘green corridors’, as well as green infrastructure, all make important contributions to the built and natural environment and character of the District’s settlements, as well as to people’s experience of them. They can provide settings for buildings, variety in the street scene, vistas, and buffers between developed areas. Cotswold settlements derive much of their character from open spaces within the built-

up area and it is important that they are protected from harmful development. Care should be taken that such development, which could include minor infilling, does not harm open spaces or gaps that make a positive contribution to the character of the settlement, including views and vistas.

Core Policy 4: Settlement Hierarchy

Settlement Structure

Development will be managed in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and Settlement Classifications (**Table 4.9**): Main Settlement, Principal Settlements, Non Principal Settlements, and Open Countryside.

Spatial Focus

- **Main Settlement:** Cirencester – the District’s largest settlement with the widest range of services, facilities, employment, educational and health opportunities and public transport access is the primary focus for sustainable patterns of living. It is the place best equipped to accommodate growth that reduces the need to travel and supports sustainable living.
- **Principal Settlements:** Principal Settlements are towns and larger villages with a strong service base and good accessibility. They provide the next most sustainable locations for growth after Cirencester. Focusing development here helps consolidate and enhance existing services and fosters more balanced communities across the District.

- **Non Principal Settlements:** Villages with a modest but meaningful level of services, local employment and public transport, providing the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside Cirencester and the Principal Settlements.
- **Open Countryside:** Locations with very limited or no services, facilities, employment or public transport. These are intrinsically unsustainable for most forms of development.

Environmental Capacity Adjustment

The Settlement Hierarchy will be applied alongside consideration of the Cotswolds National Landscape and other nationally important environmental and heritage constraints. Where such constraints significantly limit the capacity of a Main or Principal Settlements to accommodate growth without unacceptable harm, development will be directed towards locations that present lower environmental sensitivity and demonstrably suitable, available and achievable sites. Any such redistribution will maintain sustainable patterns of development, and will be infrastructure-led.

Table 4.9: Settlement Classifications

Classification	Settlement	Type of development
Main Settlement	Cirencester	• Within the Development Boundaries indicated on the Policies Maps, applications for development will be permissible in principle • Development outside the Development Boundaries indicated on the Policies Maps will only be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan or has been allocated within a Made Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Principal Settlement	Andoversford; Bourton-on-the-Water; Chipping Campden; Fairford; Kemble; Lechlade-on-Thames; Mickleton; Moreton-in-Marsh; Northleach; Preston; South Cerney; Stow-on-the-Wold; Tetbury; Upper Rissington; new settlement to the south of Driffield	
Non-Principal Settlement	Avening; Bibury; Bledington; Blockley; Bourton-on-the-Hill; Chedworth; Didmarton; Down Ampney; Kempsford; Longborough; Meysey Hampton; North Cerney; Poulton; Sapperton; Siddington; Willersey; The Village Cluster of Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington	• Within the Non-Principal Settlement, applications for development will be permissible in principle • Development outside the Development Boundaries indicated on the Policies Maps will only be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan or has been allocated within a Made Neighbourhood Development Plan.
Open Countryside	Those villages and settlements not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the Open Countryside.	Development in Open Countryside will not be permitted unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

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Meeting Business and Employment Needs in Cotswold District

Context and Economic Role of Cotswold District

- 4.36 Cotswold District accommodates a wide range of employment activity, including advanced engineering and manufacturing, professional services, agri-tech and land based industries, tourism, and a substantial micro-enterprise base. The District's economy is strongly influenced by the A417/A419 transport corridor and its proximity to key economic centres across Gloucestershire, supporting both local firms and businesses serving wider regional markets.
- 4.37 Analysis from the Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)⁴³ highlights that Cotswold experiences tight industrial supply and strong demand across a range of unit sizes, particularly in locations with strong strategic road access. It also identifies a significant rural economy shaped by agriculture, visitor spending, small enterprises and home based businesses, and persistent affordability challenges that affect labour and business retention.
- 4.38 Despite some rural parts of the District still experiencing poor broadband coverage and unreliable connectivity, Cotswolds boasts a higher number of local businesses (6,075 businesses and 6,750 local units in 2025) than the regional and national benchmarks. This

is the highest metric results seen in any Local Planning Authority across England outside of the London boroughs and the Isles of Scilly⁴⁴. These businesses make a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the District, offer local employment opportunities, and have made the area resilient to fluctuations in the national and global economies.

- 4.39 However, there are only a modest number of large local business, employing over 250 people or more, making up only 0.2% of all businesses⁴⁵. Some of the large businesses within the District include Campden BRI, St. James's Place, the Fire Service College, and educational institutions, notably the Royal Agricultural University, which offer opportunities for higher value growth.
- 4.40 Overall, the Cotswold economy is driven by the following main factors:
- advanced engineering, manufacturing and logistics activity along the A417/A419 corridor
 - high skill professional and knowledge based services, concentrated around Cirencester and linked to hybrid working patterns
 - a nationally significant visitor economy centred on the Cotswolds National Landscape
 - a diverse and evolving rural economy, including agricultural diversification and small-scale enterprises, and
 - growth and innovation in green technology, agri tech and low carbon development.

43 Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>
44 Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>
45 Cotswold Employment Land Review (Iceni 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

Scale of Employment Land Need

- 4.41 The Cotswold Employment Land Review (ELR)⁴⁶ identifies a requirement for 68.5 hectares of employment land over 2025–2043, comprising 8.3ha of Office/R&D and 60.2ha of industrial uses. Existing commitments, allocations and pending applications equate to 35.8ha, leaving a residual requirement of 32.7ha to be allocated through the Local Plan up to 2043.
- 4.42 Alongside the ELR, the Council has also had regard to the Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)⁴⁷, which provides strategic, county-level economic forecasts over a slightly longer period (2024–2046). While the HENA identifies higher long term industrial needs, the ELR provides the most proportionate and locally specific basis for setting the Local Plan requirement. The HENA remains an important strategic context and will inform cross boundary discussions and future plan reviews.
- 4.43 The vacancy rate in Cotswold District is much lower when compared to Gloucestershire, the South-West and England. As of November 2025, the vacancy rate in Cotswold was 3.5%, below the Gloucestershire average of 5.7% and significantly below the wider region at 6.9% and national rate of 8.2%⁴⁸. Office demand is strongly concentrated at the smaller end of the market within sub-500sqm units, with limited

demand for larger office premises. This is echoed by agent engagement which highlighted that the office market demand in the District is strongly focused towards flexible space for small businesses⁴⁹.

- 4.44 The identified needs exceed historic delivery rates and reflect both suppressed existing demand and expected growth driven by infrastructure investment, supply chain clustering, and demographic growth across Gloucestershire. **Core Policy 5** therefore seeks to allocate sufficient land to meet the identified employment requirement, with a focus on industrial and logistics uses in locations with strong access to the A417/A419 corridor and the wider strategic network. In particular, these include:
- office and R&D uses in and around Cirencester and the Principal Settlements, and
 - flexible space for SMEs, micro businesses and home based enterprises supported by high quality digital infrastructure.
- 4.45 This approach ensures that the Local Plan provides a resilient and adaptable supply of employment land, supports the District's economic strengths, and aligns with both local evidence and the wider Gloucestershire economic strategy.
- 4.46 Key employers in the District with major land considerations are also supported through a Special Policy Area approach which is set out in the

46 Cotswold Employment Land Review (Iceni 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>
47 Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>
48 Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>
49 Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>

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Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy (Chapter 5) for the Royal Agricultural College, and the North Cotswold Area Strategy, Campden BRI, at Chipping Campden and Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh (Chapter 7).

Core Policy 5: Meeting Employment Needs in Cotswold District

Over the Plan period (2026 to 2043) the land requirement for Office and Research & Development is 8.3ha and for industrial development is 60.2ha, resulting in an overall need for 68.5ha of employment land. In order to meet this requirement, a further 32.7ha is needed beyond known completions and commitments. Employment land will be delivered for a mix of office, research and development, and industrial uses.

A total of 31.8ha is identified for future development at the following strategic allocations:

Table 4.10: Cotswold Employment Requirement and Supply 2026 to 2043

Category		Employment land (Ha)
Employment land requirements for the full Plan period (April 2026 to March 2043)		68.5
Employment Completions		0
Employment Supply	Known Commitments	13.7
	Strategic Allocations	31.8
	Saved Allocations	16.7
	Pending Applications	5.4
Total Employment Land Supply		67.6

Notes: Figures have a 1 April 2026 base date. Updated employment completions and commitments for the 2026 to 2027 year may be available to inform the Plan before adoption, expected around May 2027, which may alter these figures.

Table 4.11: Local Plan Strategic Employment Allocations

Site name	Type of site/ use class	Available development land (ha)
Cirencester & surrounding villages area		
Steadings southern extension	B2, B8 and E(g)	2.5
Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston	B2, B8 and E(g)	5.6
South Cotswold Area		
Strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford	B2, B8 and E(g)	4.2
Strategic extension to the south-west of Kemble	B2, B8 and E(g)	8.6
New settlement to the south of Driffield	B2, B8 and E(g)	10.9
TOTAL		31.8

Table 4.12: Saved Employment Allocations

Site name	Type of site/ use class	Available development land (ha)
Cirencester & surrounding villages area		
The Steadings	B2, B8 and E(g)	9.1
North Cotswold Area		
Land north of Bourton Industrial Park	B2, B8 and E(g)	4.9
Land west of Battlebrook Drive, Station Road	B2, B8 and E(g)	0.7
Land north of B4632 and east of employment estate	B2, B8 and E(g)	2.0
TOTAL		16.7

Planning applications for employment and business development will be supported at the allocated sites where they meet the requirements set out within the Site Development Frameworks shown by Appendix B, and in accordance with the Area Strategies.

Additional development will be supported either through windfall development in accordance with Core Policy 46: New Employment Development or where supported by Made Neighbourhood Plans.

The new and saved employment sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with Core Policies 46 and 47.

Infrastructure Delivery

- 4.47

The Local Plan reflects the Council’s ambition for an ‘infrastructure-led’ approach wherever practicable, recognising that timely provision of supporting services and facilities is essential to deliver sustainable growth. There are two fundamental aspects of infrastructure delivery: identifying what infrastructure is required (including where and when); and identifying how that requirement is to be met.
- 4.48

The Local Plan’s growth proposals are underpinned by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁵⁰, which has been developed iteratively in consultation and co-operation with infrastructure providers and other partner organisations. It identifies what infrastructure is required to support planned growth, the broad cost of it by sector, who is responsible for its delivery and related matters. Development of allocated sites is expected to contribute meaningfully to the delivery of identified infrastructure, supporting the principle of delivering infrastructure as early as is feasible in the development lifecycle.
- 4.49

Given the large number of projects and organisations involved in delivering infrastructure, infrastructure planning should be seen as an iterative and ongoing process with the IDP being updated periodically to reflect changes that may occur.
- 4.50

Some development in the District will arise as “windfall” sites. The Local Plan policy therefore needs to reflect their potential impact on local infrastructure. Where additional infrastructure or service needs are expected, or where existing provision may be affected, appropriate and proportionate infrastructure contributions will be sought, including:

- climate change mitigation/adaptation
 - early years and education provision
 - community facilities
 - sport and play facilities
 - health and well-being facilities
 - improvements to the highway network, traffic management, sustainable transport and disabled people’s access
 - protection of cultural and heritage assets and the potential for their enhancement
 - protection of environmental assets and the potential for their enhancement
 - provision of Green Infrastructure including open space
 - public realm
 - safety and security including emergency services
 - broadband infrastructure
 - flood risk management infrastructure and/or
 - water and wastewater management infrastructure.
- 4.51

The Planning Act 2008 and associated regulations enable Local Planning Authorities to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on new development to help fund district-wide

50 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Prior+Partners, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Infrastructure>

- infrastructure. CIL provides a simple and transparent way of securing contributions, supporting the delivery of facilities such as schools, transport improvements, green infrastructure and community services. It is charged on all new dwellings, not just major developments, and on certain types of non-residential development. The Council is updating its CIL charging schedule alongside the Local Plan. CIL will form a key mechanism for supporting timely and ‘infrastructure first’ delivery across the District.
- 4.52

Planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are used to mitigate harm that may be caused by a development. Obligations are negotiated as part of the planning application process, either as unilateral undertakings or as agreements. The Act enables Local Planning Authorities and developers to negotiate a range of obligations, which can be linked to financial contributions, be restrictive in nature, or require specific works or actions to take place. The Council will seek S106 contributions for major schemes, affordable housing, public open space, and for site specific measures (such as education, flood risk mitigation, sustainable transport and highways, etc).
- 4.53

The Government requires the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to plan positively for growth and to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development in its planning policies. In this context, it is important to take account of the financial
- viability of development in terms of its capacity to deliver against identified infrastructure requirements. There is also an expectation on site promoters “to engage in plan making, take into account any costs including their own profit expectations and risks, and ensure that proposals for development are policy compliant”. And the national guidance also emphasises that “The price paid for land is not a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan. Landowners and site purchasers should consider this when agreeing land transactions”⁵¹.
- 4.54

In prioritising infrastructure, the three broad categories set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan are:

- **Critical Infrastructure (Priority 1):** infrastructure fundamental to delivery of the Development Strategy and wider plan objectives for the area without which the Local Plan cannot deliver its intended growth. It is most likely to be needed before a development can commence such as upgrades to sewage treatment works, new school provision and highways improvements associated with strategic sites.
 - **Essential Infrastructure (Priority 2):** infrastructure necessary to meet the needs arising from development and to support the overall development strategy for the area. The identified infrastructure is necessary to support new development but the precise timing and phasing

51 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Paragraph 002, Reference ID: 10-002-20251216 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability#viability-and-plan-making>

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is less critical than Priority 1 infrastructure, and development can commence ahead of provision. In some cases the development will be needed to justify and support the facilities and so will have to occur in advance. This typically relates to sustainable transport projects or provision of healthcare infrastructure such as GP surgeries, and

- **Important Infrastructure (Priority 3):** infrastructure that would secure the achievement of higher sustainability standards and higher quality that may contribute towards longer-term aspirations of the area. Items are those that add to the quality, either in terms of functionality or attractiveness, as a place to live. These typically include recreation and sports facilities and the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces.



Core Policy 6: Infrastructure Delivery

All new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to collaborate on the provision of infrastructure which is needed to serve more than one site. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all relevant policies in this Plan.

In line with the Council's 'infrastructure-led' ambition, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how infrastructure needs arising from their proposals can be addressed at the earliest reasonable stage, unless evidence shows that later delivery is more appropriate. In ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

If infrastructure requirements would render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council (or the successor of these councils following Local Government Re-organisation) and funded by the developer. This will involve an open book approach. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence the Council will:

- prioritise developer contributions for critical, essential and then important infrastructure in line with the definitions as set out in paragraph 6.54 and the detail of the requirements outlined in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and/or
- use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, or
- as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements taking into account reasonable contributions from elsewhere including CIL.

The Council's Delivering Infrastructure Strategy will include both a CIL Charging Schedule and a Supplementary Plan for Section 106 agreements that will provide more detail about its approach to securing developer contributions.

CIL will be used to pool developer contributions towards a wide range of new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development. Where not covered by the CIL Charging Schedule, infrastructure and services, including provision for their maintenance, should be delivered directly by the developer through the development management process.

Infrastructure and services will be sought through the negotiation of planning obligations, conditions, levy, undertaking and/or other agreement as secured through planning permission, to mitigate the direct impacts of development and secure its implementation.



Chapter five

Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy

Introduction

5.1 The Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area encompasses the parishes of Cirencester, Preston and Siddington, forming a cohesive area focused around the District's Main town of Cirencester and its immediate rural setting. The area occupies a broad, gently undulating limestone landscape, shaped by the River Churn valley and the long evolution of Cirencester as a regional centre of commerce, culture and connectivity. While much of the surrounding countryside retains a rural and agricultural character, the Strategy Area is defined by its close functional relationship with Cirencester and the important role this plays in shaping development patterns, infrastructure needs and landscape sensitivities.

5.2 Cirencester, often referred to as the 'Capital of the Cotswolds', serves as the District's largest settlement and its main focus for employment, education, retail, health and cultural activity. Its historic town centre, Roman heritage, and extensive green and blue infrastructure, including the River Churn corridor, Bathurst Estate parkland (known as Cirencester Park), Abbey Home Farm, locally known as the 'Green Wedge', which includes the Abbey grounds, and the network of accessible natural spaces, contribute significantly to local character and identity. The town's strategic location on the A417/A419 corridor and its proximity to the A40 and M4/M5 networks provides strong regional connectivity, supporting its role as the primary hub for services and growth within the District.

5.3 The adjacent villages of Preston and Siddington each have distinctive identities shaped by their historic form, verdant settings and close ties to Cirencester. Their proximity to Cirencester creates both opportunities and sensitivities: opportunities for sustainable movement, active travel and access to services; and sensitivities in ensuring that growth respects settlement separation, landscape character and local distinctiveness.

5.4 The Strategy Area contains a varied landscape with pockets of high sensitivity, including key views, river corridor features and areas of ecological value. The rural edges around Preston and Siddington, together with the open land framing the approaches to Cirencester, play an important role in maintaining settlement identity and managing the transition

between town and countryside. From the fields to the south of Preston glimpsed views of the Grade II* listed All Saints Church can also be seen. These qualities underpin the approach taken in this Area Strategy to guiding future development.

5.5 This chapter sets out the strategic framework for planning and managing growth across the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area. It identifies the role of Cirencester as the District's primary service centre, the complementary function of its adjoining villages, and the locations where development may be appropriately accommodated while safeguarding the environmental, historic and landscape qualities that define the area.

5.6 This Chapter contains the following policies:

- **Core Policy 7: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy**
- **Core Policy 8: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategic Infrastructure**
- **Core Policy 9: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area**
- **Core Policy 10: Cirencester Central Area Strategy**
- **Core Policy 11: Special Policy Area – Royal Agricultural University.**

Housing and Economic Development

5.7 The housing and economic strategy for the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages, principally Preston and Siddington, Strategy Area focuses growth in the most sustainable locations, where development can support existing settlements, deliver new infrastructure, and respond positively to the area's environmental and heritage constraints. The approach seeks to meet identified housing and employment needs while protecting the distinctive landscape character, historic environment and ecological assets that define the area.

5.8 Most new development will be delivered through four Strategic Site Allocations and supported by five non-strategic allocations. There is also one strategic allocation saved from the 2011 to 2031 Local Plan. The approach enables growth to be planned comprehensively, with development brought forward in a coordinated and infrastructure-led way, including the provision of new schools, community facilities, employment land, green and blue infrastructure and improved transport connections. Smaller allocations play a complementary role by supporting local services, meeting local housing needs and reinforcing settlement patterns.

5.9 The overall approach to housing and employment delivery in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area is set out in **Core Policy 7: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy**, which should be read alongside the relevant District-wide policies.

Strategic Site Allocations in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area

5.10 Four Strategic Site Allocations form the basis for long-term growth in the Strategy Area, which are:

- Strategic extension to the south of The Steadings, Cirencester (1,364 dwellings)
- Strategic extension to the east of Kingshill Lane, Cirencester (613 dwellings)
- Strategic extension to the south of Preston (1,368 dwellings), and
- Strategic extension to the south-west of Siddington (372 dwellings).

5.11 There is also one strategic allocation saved from the 2011-2031 Local Plan:

- Strategic extension south of Chesterton (The Steadings) (Saved 2011-2031 Local Plan Allocation; 2,282 dwellings) where planning permission is granted and is being built out (and forms part of the commitments for this new Local Plan).

5.12 These allocations are also shown by **Figure 5.1** and represent the main focus for new homes, employment land, community facilities and green and blue infrastructure to 2043, within this area, thus helping to also enable the coordinated delivery of infrastructure-led development.

5.13 Each strategic site allocation is supported by a Site

Development Framework, set out in **Appendix B**. The Frameworks provide a comprehensive and coordinated master-planning approach for each site, establishing the overarching development principles and policy requirements to guide future proposals. This includes matters such as the scale and mix of development, movement and access, green and blue infrastructure, landscape and heritage integration, infrastructure delivery, and phasing. The Site Development Frameworks are intended to ensure that strategic sites are planned holistically, deliver necessary infrastructure in a timely manner, respond positively to their context, and achieve high quality, inclusive, energy efficient and climate responsive development. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies, including the Cotswold Design Code.

Non-strategic Site Allocations in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy

5.14 Non-strategic site allocations play an important role in delivering an appropriate scale and distribution of development across the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy. These small and medium sized sites support the role of Cirencester as the District's main service centre and help meet the needs of nearby villages including Siddington. They provide opportunities to reinforce settlement form, broaden housing choice, including affordable housing, and enable development that responds sensitively to local character, landscape setting and heritage considerations. In all, there are five

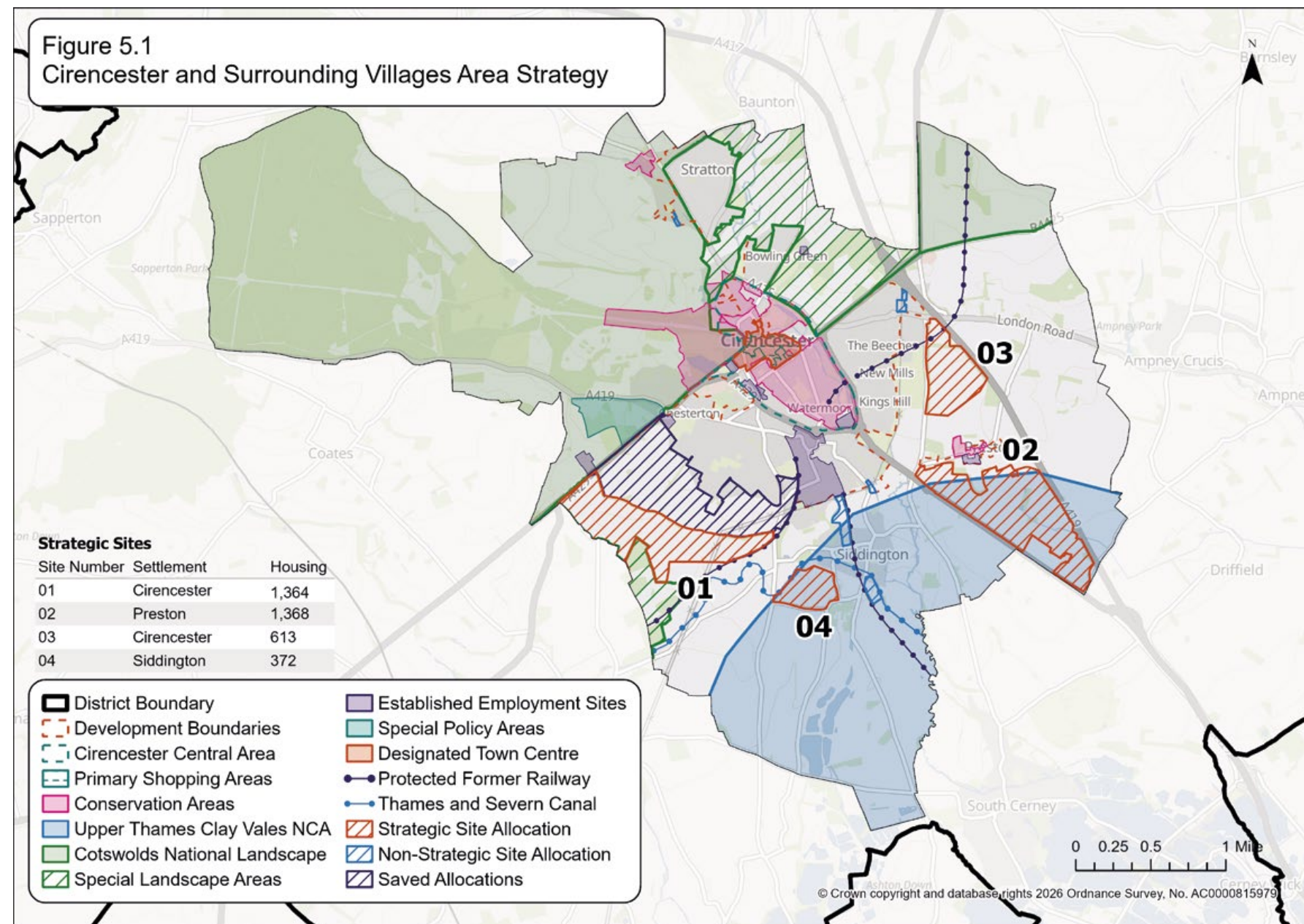


Figure 5.1: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy Map.

non-strategic sites, that support the delivery of 103 dwellings in this area.

- 5.15 Each allocation is accompanied by a site-specific Site Development Template, set out in **Appendix C**. The Templates establish the detailed and specific policy requirements, including design principles for matters such as layout, access, landscape integration and environmental performance. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies, including the Cotswold Design Code.

How the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area Will Change by 2043

- 5.16 By 2043, the Area will strengthen Cirencester's role in the District and facilitate growth, with Siddington and Preston remaining distinct settlements. Strategic development will have been sensitively integrated with existing settlements, supported by substantial improvements to infrastructure, community facilities, transport networks and green and blue infrastructure. Historic character, landscape settings and biodiversity will have been protected.

- 5.17 By 2043, the four Strategic Site Allocations (with the exception of the Steadings southern extension, which will continue to deliver after 2043) will have delivered coordinated, infrastructure-led growth across the Strategy Area, including:

- a total of 5,323 new homes with a range of different housing types and tenures to meet the Strategy Area's housing needs

- 8.1ha of new B2, B8 and E(g) employment land
- new mix-use local centres to provide retail, community and service uses on The Steadings Southern Extension, Land east of Kingshill Lane and Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston
- new 2FE primary schools on The Steadings Southern Extension, Land east of Kingshill Lane and Land south-east of Cirencester and South of Preston
- one new 6FE secondary school on Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston
- extensive new green and blue infrastructure across all four Strategic Site Allocations
- approximately 25ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at The Steadings Southern Extension
- approximately 23ha of Alternative Natural Recreation Greenspace (ANRG) at Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston
- extensive active travel network improvements across all four Strategic Site Allocations, linking the new residential neighbourhoods, employment, retail, community uses and greenspace to Cirencester and the surrounding villages, and
- a comprehensive, connected network of segregated and low-traffic walking and cycling routes, linking all strategic sites to Cirencester town centre, local schools, employment areas and key services, alongside extensive green and blue infrastructure. By 2043, the majority of trips within Cirencester and to nearby settlements will be capable of being undertaken safely and conveniently without reliance on the private car.

Core Policy 7: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategy

Our over-arching priorities for the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area are to secure the delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure required through sustainable development; improve self-sufficiency for each settlement by enhancing its vitality and viability; as well as maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices. Development in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 4**.

Housing Delivery

Around 5,323 dwellings will be delivered through a combination of four strategic site allocations, one saved strategic allocation from the 2011-2031 Local Plan, five non-strategic site allocations. Other development may come forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans and the Development Management process, often referred to as windfalls. **Tables 5.1, 5.2** and **5.3** show how the level of planned housing within the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area, through strategic and non-strategic development sites will be distributed:

Table 5.1: Cirencester, Preston and Siddington Area Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Cirencester	To the south of The Steadings	585	779*
	To the east of Kingshill Lane	613	0
Preston	To the south of Preston	1,368	0
Siddington	To the south-west of Siddington	372	0
TOTAL		2,938	779

*approximate figures are provided for the longer-term potential for development at the extension to the Steadings to continue to deliver some housing beyond 2043.

Table 5.2: Cirencester, Preston and Siddington Area Strategic Housing Saved Allocations from the 2011-2031 Local Plan

Settlement	Strategic extension	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate)
Cirencester	South of Chesterton (The Steadings) (Saved Allocation S2) (see Appendix 2)	2,282	0

Table 5.3: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Non-Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Site name	No. of dwellings
Cirencester	Land adjacent to Donside, off Barn Way	10
	Land west of Gardner Way	31
Siddington	Plummers Farm, east of Ashton Road	35
	Land east of Siddington Road and west of Bluebell Drive	5
	Land between disused canal and disused railway line, north of Park Way	22
TOTAL		103

Employment Delivery

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 5: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** in Cotswold District. A total of 8.1ha of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on two strategic site allocations. **Table 5.4** shows how the level of planned employment growth within the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area will be distributed:

Table 5.3: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area Employment Allocations

Settlement	Site name	Total employment land (ha)
Cirencester	Steadings southern extension (part of the mixed-use allocation also including housing)	2.5
Siddington	Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston (part of the mixed-use allocation also including housing)	5.6
TOTAL		8.1

Development will be supported at the strategic and non-strategic site allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and Site Development Templates (**Appendix C**) and is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.



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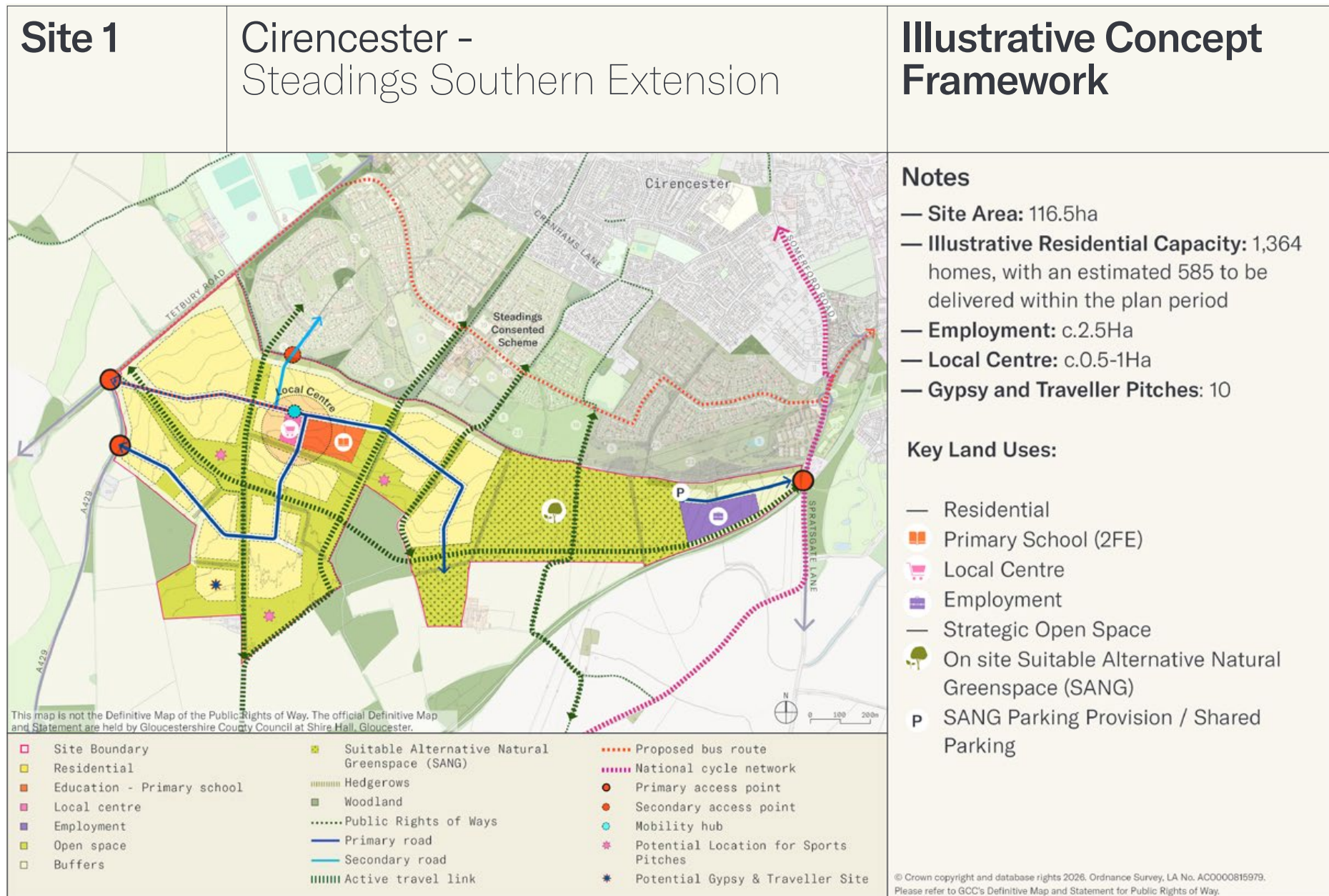


Figure 5.2: Indicative Masterplan Framework South of the Steadings (south Cirencester) Strategic Allocation.

Strategic Extension to the South of The Steadings (south Cirencester)

5.18 The strategic extension to the south of the Steadings will deliver a sustainable extension to Cirencester of 1,364 dwellings, with around 585 dwellings expected to be delivered up to 2043 that is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors. The development will provide a well connected new neighbourhood including new homes, community facilities, significant new public green spaces and transport connectivity. Key considerations for planning for this site are set out in the Site Development Framework in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 1,364 new homes, including affordable housing, with 585 delivered within the plan period and the remainder beyond, unless higher delivery rates are demonstrated through evidence and design standards
- a new primary school and a local centre providing essential day to day services, community space and supporting community life and the needs of new residents
- a minimum of 2.5ha of employment land for B2, B8 and E(g) uses, which is well connected to the highways network to serve the needs of prospective occupiers
- extensive multifunctional green infrastructure, including green corridors, retained habitats, new planting, public open space, and naturalistic SuDS features integrated into the landscape framework

- an approach that integrates high value habitats, delivers biodiversity net gain, sensitively manages relationships with nearby heritage assets, and relates positively to The Steadings development and is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors
- inclusive, attractive and direct active travel connections linking the new neighbourhood to Cirencester town centre, Kemble Railway Station, local schools, the National Cycle Network, and wider footpath routes, as far as possible, these routes should be segregated and separate from roads
- establishment of a walking and cycling route through Orchard Fields connecting Siddington to the Steadings
- enhanced public transport connections between the Steadings Southern Extension, to Cirencester Town Centre via the Steadings
- highway upgrades to A419 Swindon Road/ Silver Street Junctions, the A429/ Cheltenham Land Junction and the Stroud Road north of Tetbury Roundabout, and
- comprehensive masterplanning, ensuring development is brought forward in coordinated phases, with early delivery of key infrastructure and careful integration of homes, landscape, transport and community facilities.

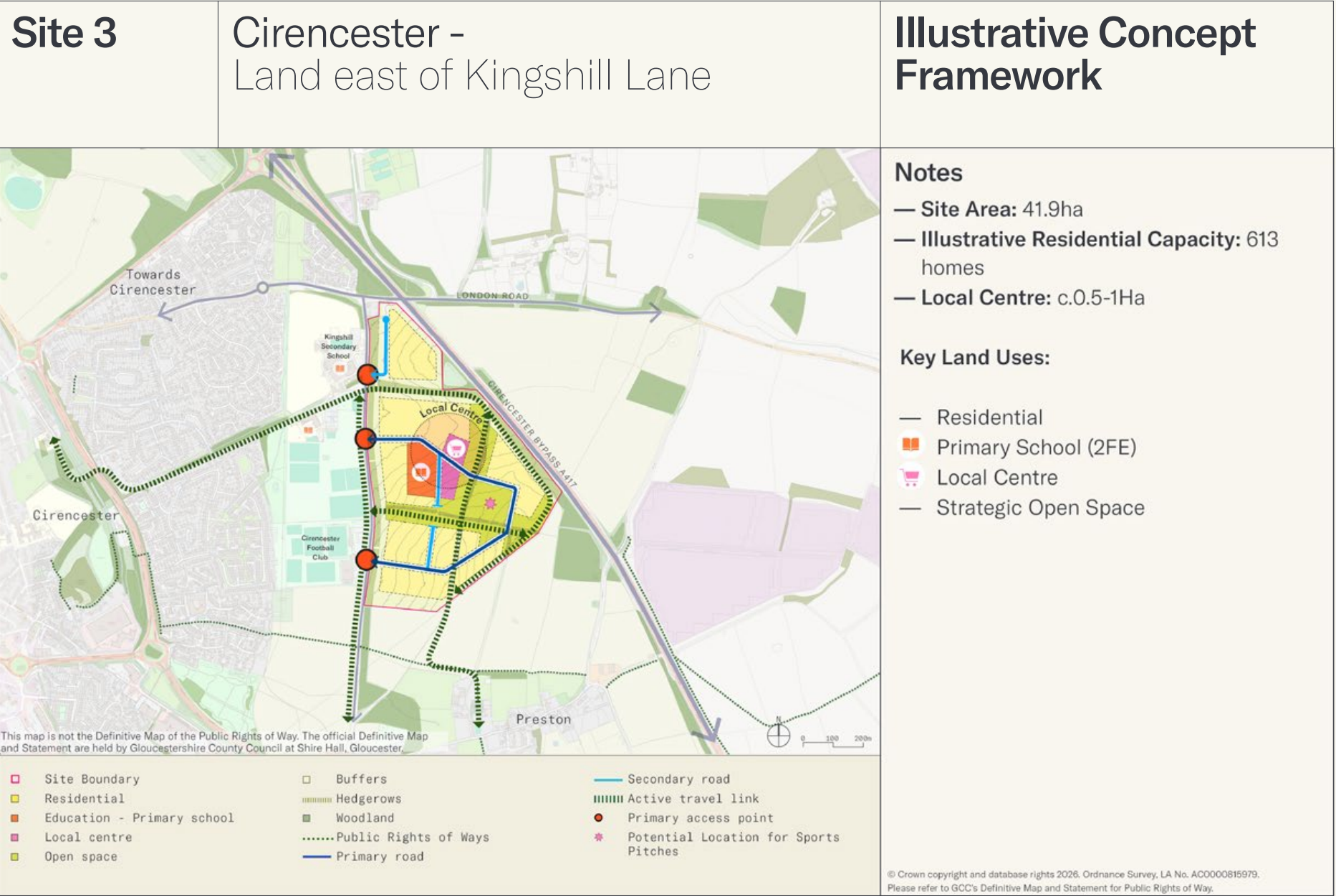


Figure 5.3: Indicative Masterplan Framework East of Kingshill Lane Strategic Allocation.

Strategic Extension to the East of Kingshill Lane

5.19 The strategic extension to the east of Kingshill Lane will deliver a sustainable extension to Cirencester of 613 dwellings that is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors. The development will provide a well connected new neighbourhood including new homes, community facilities, significant new public green spaces and transport connectivity. Key considerations for planning for this site are set out in the Site Development Framework set out in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 613 new homes, including affordable housing, all delivered within the Plan period
- a new 2FE primary school and a local centre providing essential day to day services, community space and supporting community life and the needs of new residents
- extensive multifunctional green infrastructure, including green corridors, retained habitats, new planting, public open space, and naturalistic SuDS features integrated into the landscape framework
- an approach that integrates high value habitats and delivers biodiversity net gain and is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors
- inclusive, attractive and direct active travel connections linking the new neighbourhood to Cirencester town centre, local schools, the National Cycle Network, and wider footpath routes

- enhanced public transport connections between the new development and Cirencester Town Centre
- highway upgrades to the Kingshill Road/ London Road junction and Kingshill Road/ Cirencester Road junction, and
- comprehensive masterplanning, ensuring development is brought forward in coordinated phases, with early delivery of key infrastructure and careful integration of homes, landscape, transport and community facilities.

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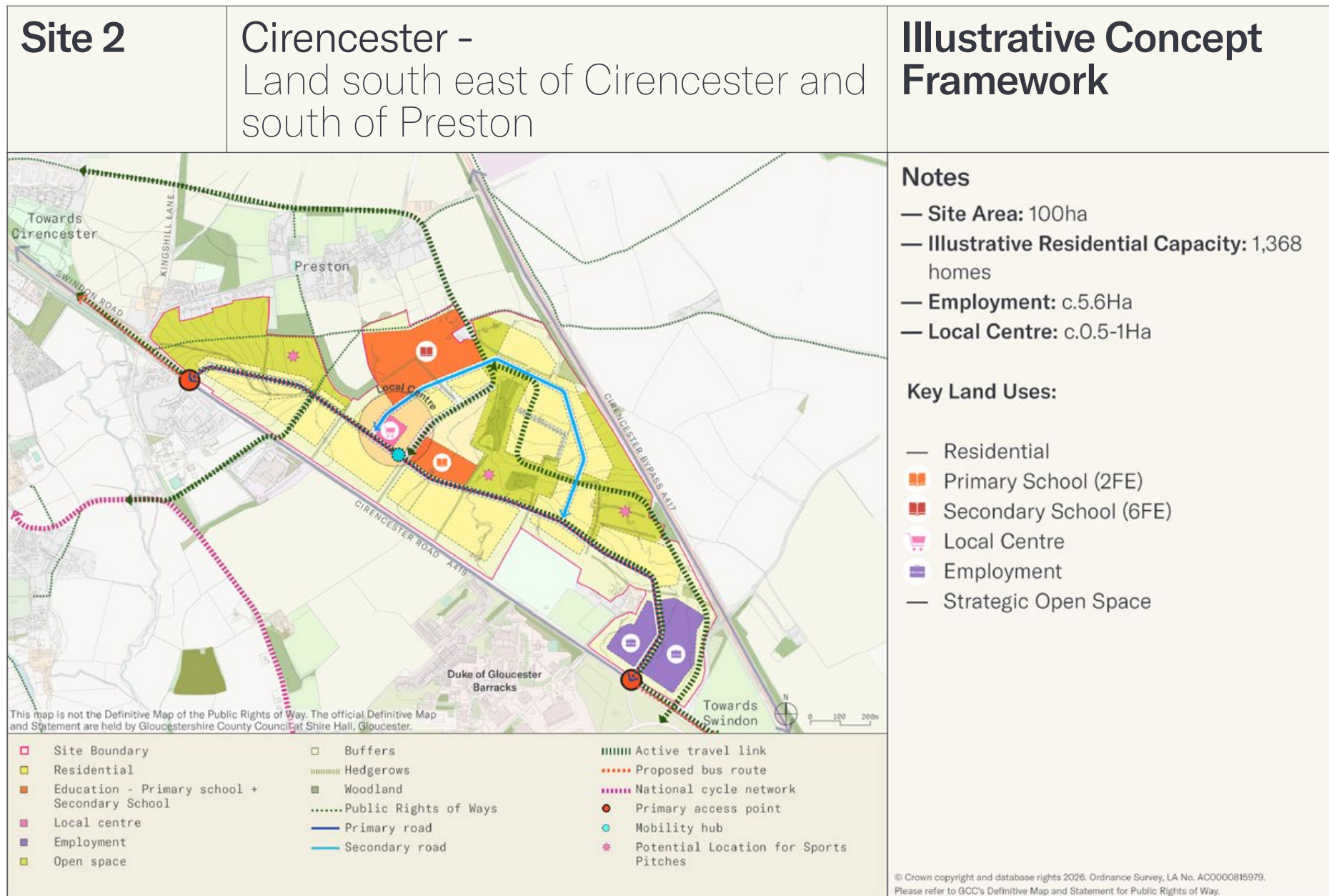


Figure 5.4: Indicative Masterplan Framework South of Preston Strategic Allocation.

Strategic Extension to the South of Preston

5.20 The strategic extension to the south of Preston will deliver a sustainable extension to Cirencester of 1,368 dwellings that is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors. The development will provide a well connected new neighbourhood including new homes, community facilities, significant new public green spaces and transport connectivity. Key considerations for planning for this site are set out in the Site Development Framework in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 1,368 new homes, including affordable housing, with all expected to be delivered within the plan period
- new 2FE primary and 6FE secondary schools, a local centre providing essential day to day services, community space and supporting community life and the needs of new residents
- a minimum of 5.6ha of employment land for B2, B8 and E(g) uses that is accessed of Cirencester Road
- extensive multifunctional green infrastructure, including green corridors, retained habitats, new planting, public open space, and naturalistic SuDS features integrated into the landscape framework
- an approach that integrates high value habitats and delivers biodiversity net gain and is sensitive to landscape and environmental factors
- inclusive, attractive and direct active travel connections linking the new neighbourhood to Cirencester town centre, the National Cycle Network, and wider footpath routes

- enhanced public transport connections between the residential neighbourhoods, schools, employment areas, and Cirencester Town Centre
- highway upgrades to the A419 Stroud Road/ Trewsbury Road junction, and
- comprehensive masterplanning, ensuring development is brought forward in coordinated phases, with early delivery of key infrastructure and careful integration of homes, landscape, transport and community facilities.

5.24 Delivery of the site has seen approximately a three-year delay, mainly due to the S106 agreement for the outline planning permission taking longer than expected to finalise; infrastructure provision taking longer to agree and install, it taking longer than expected to agree the design of Parcel 1A, all of which were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a delay to agreeing the Detailed Design Code for sub phases 2A, 2B and 2C. The Council has taken various steps to ensure such delays do not affect future allocations and these are summarised by the Councils Housing Delivery Paper⁵³.

5.25 The saved allocation is expected to deliver approximately 2,282 homes across the plan period up to 2043.

Strategic Infrastructure Delivery

5.26 The delivery of strategic infrastructure is essential to supporting sustainable growth across and between the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area. This includes major transport improvements, new secondary school provision, enhanced green and blue infrastructure networks, active travel corridors linking sites into Cirencester Town Centre, along with key services such as education, health, employment and retail destinations, surface water management infrastructure and utilities upgrades. Strategic Site Allocations will deliver the bulk of these improvements, along with on-site improvements, supported by non-strategic allocations. Strategic Infrastructure requirements across the Strategy Area include:

- new and expanded secondary school at Land south-east of Cirencester and south of Preston
- enhancements to the strategic road network (including improved junctions, link roads, and movement corridors)
- upgraded public transport services and interchange improvements, particularly connecting to Kemble Station. This may include dedicated infrastructure for buses
- new strategic cycling and walking routes, including improvements to Cirencester town centre, and connections between Cirencester & Kemble, Down Ampney–Driffield–Cirencester and Preston–Cirencester (via Kingshill), and
- Landscape scale green and blue infrastructure, including SuDS networks, riverside access improvements and biodiversity enhancement areas.

5.27 Delivery will be phased in line with each strategic allocation’s masterplan and Site Development Framework (**Appendix B**).

5.28 Taken together, the strategic infrastructure and site-specific interventions will help to ensure the development proposals provide sufficient green, blue and social infrastructure close to new residential development, enable realistic alternatives to the car in line with the transport hierarchy and proportionately mitigate additional pressure on the highway network.

53 Housing Density and Optimising Housing Delivery Technical Paper (CDC, July 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

Core Policy 8: Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area Strategic Infrastructure

To deliver the growth in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area in accordance with the Vision and Objectives of the Plan, strategic infrastructure has been identified which is required to secure a viable and sustainable future for the area and to mitigate the impact of planned growth.

The strategic infrastructure requirements for the area include:

- a. Strategic Cycle Links: Cirencester – Kemble; Down Ampney – Driffield – Cirencester; Preston – Cirencester (via Kingshill)
- b. Transport Hub(s); Cirencester – Kemble Bus link
- c. Secondary School provision at Land south east of Cirencester and south of Preston
- d. Primary School provision at Steadings southern extension, Land south east of Cirencester and south of Preston and Land east of Kingshill Lane
- e. Land to support a new GP surgery at Steadings southern extension and Land East of Kingshill Lane
- f. A requirement for 41.55ha of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) across the strategic allocations
- g. Highways improvements and mitigation on the Cirencester Road (A419), Kingshill Lane, A429, Siddington Road, London Road, Somerford Road and Chesterton Lane and Tetbury Road (A433).

The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Gloucestershire County Council.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area

5.29 Delivery of the strategic infrastructure improvements within the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area will require land to be safeguarded to facilitate the delivery of highways improvements, improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and delivery

of recreational mitigation. This is set out in **Core Policy 8: Cirencester and Surround Villages Area Strategic Infrastructure Delivery**.

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Core Policy 9: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Area

Land is safeguarded to support the future delivery of the following schemes as listed:

- Strategic Cycle Links: Cirencester – Kemble; Down Ampney – Driffield – Cirencester; Preston – Cirencester (via Kingshill), and
- Highways improvements and mitigation on the Cirencester Road (A419), Kingshill Lane, A429, Siddington Road, London Road, Somerford Road, Chesterton Lane and Tetbury Road (A433).

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified schemes (as shown by maps in **Appendix 8** and the Policies Map)* would need to demonstrate the proposal would not harm its delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the scheme listed. If necessary, the Council, working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council and relevant neighbouring authorities, will use Compulsory Purchase Powers to enable delivery and bring forward the identified transport schemes, to support delivery of the Cotswold District Local Plan.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 8** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with landowners, National Highways, Gloucestershire County Council and other relevant parties.

Cirencester Central Area Strategy

- 5.30

As a prosperous market town, Cirencester is the District’s main settlement and is celebrated as the “Capital of the Cotswolds”. The town is the service centre for a wide catchment of Cotswold residents and a significant tourist destination.
- 5.31

Unlike many town centres across the country, Cirencester has not to date been badly affected
- 5.32

The main aims of **Core Policy 10: Cirencester Central Area Strategy** include:
- by the switch to online shopping from high street retailing. But in common with other towns, it has experienced loss of national multiples (including town centre convenience retailing). Recent studies confirm the relative ‘health’ of the town centre and this is something in policy terms that the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance⁵⁴.

54 Cotswold Retail and Town Centre Study (Nexus Planning, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>

- encouraging modal shift in movement, the delivery of a mobility hub, and possible provision of a park & ride/stride facility on the edge of the centre
- addressing the changing nature of the high street by encouraging diversification, adaptability and flexibility
- broadening the user profile to spread activity over a longer period of the day/evening and strengthen the economic base of the centre and increase vitality
- improving legibility, wayfinding and permeability through the town centre and adjacent areas
- provision of affordable and market housing
- unambiguously reconnecting the town with its nationally significant historic past and further strengthening its cultural and tourism offer, and
- bringing the green areas on the periphery of the centre into closer contact with it and providing greener spaces within the town centre.

5.33 The Vision for Cirencester Town Centre is to regenerate and improve several sites across the Town Centre, focusing on sustainable growth, adaptable development and active travel. Building on Cirencester’s unique character and rich history and embracing the social buzz and diversity of the town, to create a thriving urban community with placemaking at its heart.

5.34 To achieve this vision, the Cirencester Central Area Strategy has 12 Strategic Objectives, which provide a framework for steering sustainable development in opportunity areas within the town. The Strategic Objectives of the strategy are set out below:

- Accessible Gateways: strengthen gateways into the town with a sense of arrival
- Hierarchy of Streets and Places: coherent

- relationship between streets and places
- Accessible Nodes: welcoming and memorable nodes and clearer wayfinding to assist people to orientate themselves
- Scalability: suitable scaling between residential blocks, active frontages and adjacent retail units
- Walkability: promoting walking and the principles of the 15-minute city to reduce the demand for private car ownership
- Mixed-use: activated ground floor facades with uses that compliment, and do not compete, with the Square
- Shared Spaces: integrate a network of pedestrian and cycle paths promoting active travel between safe and shared spaces
- Green Infrastructure: high quality landscaping to soften the public realm and buildings, introducing biodiversity and sustainable drainage
- Sustainable Development: delivering a new zero carbon, climate resilient development with the potential to incorporate an on-site energy hub
- Good Transition: a positive sense of passage between public and private spaces
- Adaptable Spaces: adaptable spaces with flexible layouts which can sustain a variety of uses and help buildings to change over time, and
- Permeable Connections: activating north-south and east-west connections to improve orientation for people during the day and night.

5.35 The placemaking objectives are supplemented by strategic principles that development proposals will be required to be consistent with. The placemaking principles are set out in **Core Policy 10: Cirencester Central Area Strategy**.

Core Policy 10: Cirencester Central Area Strategy

Development proposals within the Cirencester Central Area, as shown on the Policies Map (and **Appendix 5**), will be supported where they:

- contribute to the delivery of the Strategy having regard to their scope, scale and proposed use(s) as listed below. Site Development Briefs will be requested for proposals in strategically important or complex areas
- accord with the Strategic Objectives listed in the supporting text and other relevant policies of the Local Plan, and
- can demonstrate consistency with the Placemaking Principles listed in this policy.

Placemaking Principles:

Access and Movement

- making provision to enable modal shift in transport and movement around the Cirencester Central Area and to the rest of the town including provision of a public transport hub, and discouraging the dominance of motor vehicles
- the use of land must be optimised
- providing off-street public vehicle parking at edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations
- providing new or enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes to and through the Cirencester Central Area, activated through a series of new spaces to form a new route, encouraging active travel
- enhancing permeability and connectivity within the Cirencester Central Area and to the wider town including to the amphitheatre, and
- ensuring that new development connects sympathetically with existing and neighbouring buildings, streets and spaces to enhance the Cirencester Central Area’s characteristic sense of place.

Land Use and Placemaking

- a mixture of housing typologies, including mews houses, townhouses, and apartments, to create a distinct character and sense of place
- providing greater access to green and blue infrastructure, such as new pocket parks
- encouraging a greater mix of main town centre uses (as defined by the NPPF and the Glossary) alongside retail, including residential uses and amenity spaces
- encouraging a mix of main town centre uses that are compatible with each other and avoid giving rise to conflicts
- diversifying the uses so that temporal peaks and troughs are evened out and a variety of activities can take place throughout the day and evening which enhance vibrancy and vitality,
- strengthening the “arrival experience”, building upon and enhancing the town’s historic arrival points, and
- increased heights at key junctions to create ‘landmark’ buildings to aid wayfinding.

Historic Environment

- in townscape bringing out the different character of parts of the centre, revealing hidden or obscured character areas and enhancing views to key buildings and landmarks
- respecting the historic environment while purposely raising its profile and presence as an important aspect of the Cirencester Central Area’s identity
- ensuring that the arrangement of new buildings and spaces reflects the historic grain of the Cirencester Central Area’s streets and lanes
- encouraging a high quality contemporary architectural interpretation of Cirencester character, materials and building form rather than pastiche representation, and
- ensuring that development safeguards, conserves and protects the above- and below-ground historic environment.

Special Policy Areas – Royal Agricultural University

5.36 Due to the significance of their contribution to the Cotswold economy, three areas are subject to dedicated ‘Special Policy Area’ policies including one within the Cirencester and Surrounding Villages Strategy Area; for the Royal Agricultural University (RAU). The approach set out in **Core Policy 11** provides clarity to help ensure that a holistic and long-term approach is taken to planning for this site.

5.37 Master Plans should be prepared for the RAU site, to inform a Planning Application process, to help ensure a comprehensive approach is taken to any development. The Master Plan will be prepared with an appropriate level of community participation, as described in the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement.

Royal Agricultural University

5.38 The RAU is a key economic asset both for Cirencester and the South-West region. Its future success and continued growth aspirations are supported where they are in line with planning policy.

5.39 The RAU is a single planning unit as shown on the Policies Map.

5.40 The expansion of the existing campus, including redevelopment for educational, training, business and research development, student accommodation and other ancillary operational floorspace and uses

- defined within the policy, will support the RAU's vision to become an international contributor to the global strategy for sustainable food supply, land management and the built environment.
- 5.41 Facilitating new, improved facilities and associated development will help the RAU's long-term growth strategy and this would be supported by the production of a comprehensive Master Plan to guide future development. The Master Plan will need to clearly identify these needs and aspirations balanced against the site's sensitive parkland setting, location within the Cotswolds National Landscape, heritage constraints and the ambitious de-carbonisation strategy of the University.
- 5.42 Part of the RAU site, known as the Triangle Site, is proposed to be an Innovation Village⁵⁵. This would comprise a cluster development that will accommodate organisations and expertise from academia, industry and policy-making. The Innovation Village will be of national and international significance, leveraging the support of the RAU's established network of global partners.
- 5.43 Following allocation in the previous Local Plan, adopted in 2018, a strategic scale mixed-use development, including 9.1ha of employment land has been granted planning permission (Ref: 16/00054/OUT) on a neighbouring site to the south of Chesterton (known as the Steadings). Further
- land is allocated to the south of The Steadings in this Local Plan. Any updated Master Plans for the RAU site should aim to develop a strategy to maximise opportunities for shared infrastructure and the potential for a complementary relationship between the research at the University and related spin-off business at the adjoining strategic sites. The commercialisation of research opportunities would support the productivity and growth aspirations set out in the Strategic Economic Plan.
- 5.44 The RAU indicates that, as of September 2023, the University has around 1,055 students studying at the Cirencester campus. These are predominantly undergraduates with a postgraduate community of around 160 students. The University Strategy 2028⁵⁶ outlines the University's aim to grow student numbers, which would result in a year-on-year growth of 4% of students studying at the Cirencester campus, up to 2028. Projected forward at the same 4% year-on-year growth rate, the total number of students studying at the RAU's Cirencester campus could increase by around 1,250 students by 2043 (growing to a total of around 2,300 students)⁵⁷.
- 5.45 There are 324 beds of purpose-built student accommodation at the RAU campus and a further 24 beds at Watermoor Point. These are mainly for first year students. Second- and third-year students are almost entirely accommodated in private sector housing, albeit some live at home or commute in

⁵⁵ In May 2026, the Council has resolved to grant Outline planning permission to a 'mixed-use development associated with the RAU comprising up to 24,012 sqm of floorspace for office, research and development, education, conferencing, and café uses...', subject to completing a S106 legal agreement (ref: 24/01143/OUT)

⁵⁶ Our Strategy, 2023-2028 (Royal Agricultural University): <https://www.rau.ac.uk/about-rau/sustainability/policies-strategy-plans>

⁵⁷ Housing Need Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

- from elsewhere. Assuming an occupancy rate of 3.6 students per dwelling, the projected growth in the student population would require around 360 further dwellings if no additional purpose built student accommodation is provided.
- 5.46 The Outline planning permission for the Steadings development, includes 100 units of student accommodation. The student accommodation will be delivered in the final phase of this development, which based on current evidence is expected to be delivered towards the end of the plan period
- 5.47 The impact of the RAU student accommodation is already a factor for Cirencester's private rented market and, with the planned growth of the RAU, it is set to have an even larger impact. For example, it has a bearing on the demand for private rented stock locally, as it reduces the available pool of family sized homes for rent. Higher demand is also likely to increase rental prices, which runs counter to the Council's strategy to tackle housing affordability. High concentrations of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) can also create localised issues within the community. New purpose-built student
- accommodation will therefore be required to house any additional student population resulting from growth of the RAU. Refurbishment, renewal and expansion of the existing purpose-built student accommodation will also be supported, especially where this will be used by students who would otherwise be housed in HMOs.
- 5.48 Additional purpose-built student accommodation may be delivered on the RAU site or at an alternative location in Cirencester that is accessible to the RAU campus within a 20-minute walk. Flexibility will be provided to enable several incremental developments or expansion of the student population to occur before additional student accommodation is required (e.g. the expansion of the student population by up to 75 additional students before additional purpose-built student accommodation is required). However, subsequent to a reasonable level of additional growth in the student population, further expansion of the RAU will not be supported until the student accommodation is completed.

Core Policy 11: Special Policy Area – Royal Agricultural University

Proposals for development within the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) Special Policy Area (as defined on the Policies Map and shown in **Appendix 7**) will be supported where they demonstrate a comprehensive and master-planned approach, considering the wider land holding (i.e. the whole planning unit) and support the long-term future and academic operations of the RAU as a nationally important education establishment.

Proposals for the expansion of the existing University campus, including associated development for educational, training, business and research development, student accommodation and other ancillary operational floorspace, will be permitted provided that:

- a) it is demonstrated why the proposal is necessary in the Cotswolds National Landscape and why the proposal is required to be sited at the RAU
- b) the parkland character and built heritage of the site and this important gateways to Cirencester is maintained through the design and layout of the proposals
- c) they are supported by a movement strategy that addresses transport and access issues, including sustainable connectivity to the town centre, including inclusive, attractive and direct walking and cycling routes for all and should demonstrate that walking, cycling and public transport within and to the site are prioritised
- d) they demonstrate that the development supports the vitality and viability of Cirencester Town Centre
- e) they ensure that there is no net loss of playing pitch provision and other outdoor sporting facilities, and
- f) subject to landscape and heritage constraints, purpose-built student accommodation is commensurate with the increased accommodation needs of additional student population growth.

Applications should be supported by a Masterplan that is produced in consultation with the local community that demonstrates how the proposals integrate the RAU with the surrounding community and maximise opportunities for future development to be design and faced to ensure maximum integration with the different uses within or near to the site such as Deer Park School, Cirencester College and the Steadings southern extension.



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Chapter six

South Cotswold Strategy Area

Introduction

- 6.1 The South Cotswolds Strategy Area broadly encompasses the parishes lying south of the A40, excluding Cirencester, Siddington and Preston. It contains the Principal Settlements of Andoversford, Fairford, Kemble, Lechlade-on-Thames, Northleach, South Cerney and Tetbury, which function as the main service centres for the area. Alongside these, the Strategy Area includes a diverse range of Non Principal Settlements, including Avening, Bibury, Chedworth, Didmarton, Down Ampney, Kempsford, Meysey Hampton, North Cerney, Poulton and Sapperton, as well as the village cluster of Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington. This Area Strategy establishes the spatial context for planning and managing change across this part of the District, with policies for the wider rural area addressed elsewhere in the Plan.
- 6.2 Across the Strategy Area (**Figure 6.1**), the landscape plays a defining role in shaping settlement pattern and development capacity. Part of the area lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape and also includes some areas designated as Special

Landscape Areas. The presence of the Cotswold Lakes (formerly the Cotswold Water Park) creates a distinctive recreational and ecological environment of national significance. Together, these environmental assets form a highly sensitive spatial framework that influences the scale, form and location of development.

- 6.3 The South Cotswolds Strategy Area also contains an extensive concentration of heritage assets, including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and historic parks. These assets, often closely interrelated with the landscape designations that cover parts of the area, make a significant contribution to local character and identity. The historic environment is therefore also a key consideration in shaping development across the Strategy Area.
- 6.4 Tetbury is the largest Principal Settlement in the South Cotswolds Strategy Area. A historic market town with a well preserved medieval core and extensive Conservation Area, Tetbury contains a rich collection of listed buildings and a distinctive Cotswold stone townscape. It provides a broad range of services and facilities, including retail, health provision, education, sport and employment opportunities, and performs an important role as a service centre for surrounding rural communities.
- 6.5 To the east of the Strategy Area, Fairford is an important Principal Settlement with a strong historic identity. The town's Conservation Area is centred on its medieval core and the River Coln,

and encompasses a high concentration of heritage assets, including Fairford Parish Church. Fairford provides a range of services and facilities, including secondary and primary education, community uses and a traditional town centre that supports both residents and visitors.

- 6.6 Lechlade, located at the south eastern edge of the District alongside the River Thames, is a Principal Settlement with a notable tourism and recreation role. Its attractive historic core, Conservation Area and numerous listed buildings contribute to a strong sense of place, while its riverside setting and proximity to the Cotswold Lakes reinforce its recreational and visitor function. Lechlade acts as an important local service centre within a particularly sensitive landscape context.
- 6.7 Although smaller in scale, Kemble performs a distinctive strategic function due to its railway station on the Swindon–Gloucester (Golden Valley) line. This provides an important rail connection within the Strategy Area and supports sustainable travel patterns, although it is important that development contributes to delivering improvements to the station including for access and its facilities. The village is closely associated with its landscape setting and heritage assets, including conservation areas, which strongly influence its character.
- 6.8 A number of smaller settlements also contribute to the character, identity and overall functioning of the Strategy Area. Settlements such as Avening, Kempsford, Meysey Hampton and Poulton provide

a range of local services and facilities that support surrounding rural areas. The village cluster of Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington, along with settlements including Bibury, Chedworth, Didmarton, North Cerney and Sapperton, are characterised by a strong landscape setting and a high-quality historic environment, contributing to the distinctive rural character of the South Cotswolds.

- 6.9 Taken together, the Principal and Non Principal Settlements within the South Cotswolds Strategy Area form a dispersed but interrelated network of communities. The Principal Settlements provide the widest range of services and facilities, while smaller settlements play an important role in meeting local needs and sustaining rural communities. The spatial strategy for the area reflects this settlement hierarchy and the significant environmental and heritage constraints that shape patterns of development.
- 6.10 This Chapter contains the following policies:
- **Core Policy 12: South Cotswold Area Strategy**
 - **Core Policy 13: South Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery**
 - **Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the South Cotswold Area**
 - **Core Policy 15: Cotswold Airport**
 - **Core Policy 16: Thames and Severn Canal**
 - **Core Policy 17: The River Thames**
 - **Core Policy 18: Cotswold Lakes: Post-Mineral Extraction After Use.**

Housing and Economic Development

- 6.11 The housing and economic strategy for the South Cotswolds Strategy Area focuses growth in the most sustainable locations, where development can support existing settlements, deliver new infrastructure, and respond positively to the area's extensive environmental and heritage constraints. The approach seeks to meet identified housing and employment needs while protecting the distinctive landscape character, historic environment and ecological assets that define the area.
- 6.12 The majority of new development will be delivered through four Strategic Site Allocations, supported by a range of non-strategic allocations within Principal and Non Principal Settlements. This enables growth to be planned comprehensively, with development brought forward in a coordinated and infrastructure-led way, including the provision of new schools, community facilities, employment land, green and blue infrastructure and improved transport connections. Smaller allocations play a complementary role by supporting local services, meeting local housing needs and reinforcing settlement patterns.
- 6.13 The overall approach to housing and employment delivery in the South Cotswolds Strategy Area is set out in **Core Policy 12: South Cotswold Area Strategy**, which should be read alongside the relevant District-wide policies.

Strategic Site allocations in the South Cotswold Area Strategy

- 6.14 Four Strategic Site Allocations (strategic sites are defined as being of at least 350 dwellings) form the basis of long-term growth in the Area Strategy, which are:
- a strategic extension to the north, east and south of Down Ampney (1,658 dwellings)
 - a strategic extension to the north east of Fairford (1,141 dwellings)
 - a strategic extension to the south west of Kemble (1,020 dwellings), and
 - a new settlement to the south of Driffield (1,090 dwellings*).
- *please note that the Driffield allocation has potential to deliver around 1,132 additional housing in the longer term, beyond 2043.
- 6.15 These allocations are shown in **Figure 6.1** and represent the main focus for new homes, employment land, community facilities and green and blue infrastructure to 2043 within this area, thus helping to also enable the coordinated delivery of infrastructure-led development.
- 6.16 Each strategic site allocation is supported by a Site Development Frameworks, set out in **Appendix B**. The Frameworks provide a comprehensive and coordinated masterplanning approach for each site, establishing the overarching development principles and policy requirements to guide future proposals. This includes matters such as the scale and mix of

development, movement and access, green and blue infrastructure, landscape and heritage integration, infrastructure delivery, and phasing. The Site Development Frameworks are intended to ensure that strategic sites are planned holistically, deliver necessary infrastructure in a timely manner, respond positively to their context, and achieve high quality, inclusive, energy efficient and climate responsive development. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies, and the Cotswold Design Code.

Non-strategic Site Allocations in the South Cotswold Area Strategy

- 6.17 Non-strategic site allocations (these are defined as being of less than 350 dwellings) help to ensure an appropriate scale and distribution of development across the South Cotswold Area Strategy, supporting the role of settlements such as Tetbury, Fairford, Lechlade, Kempsford, Down Ampney and neighbouring rural communities. These smaller sites provide opportunities to reinforce local settlement patterns, support existing services and facilities, and deliver a balanced mix of housing, including affordable homes, while responding sensitively to local landscape character and heritage context.
- 6.18 Each non-strategic site allocation is accompanied by a Site Development Template, set out in **Appendix C**. The Templates establish the detailed and specific policy requirements, including design principles for matters such as layout, access, landscape integration and environmental performance. They support the delivery of development that reflects local character, contributes positively to settlement form, and achieves high quality, energy efficient and climate responsive design. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies, and the Cotswold Design Code.

How the South Cotswolds Strategy Area Will Change by 2043

- 6.19 By 2043, the South Cotswolds Area will continue to function as a network of thriving market towns, villages and rural communities. Strategic development will have been sensitively integrated with existing settlements, supported by substantial improvements to infrastructure, community facilities, transport networks, and green and blue infrastructure. This will include new primary schools, community hubs, sustainable transport connections, healthcare provision, and utility network upgrades to support planned growth. Historic character, landscape settings and biodiversity will have been protected and enhanced, with new development responding positively to the area's distinctive rural context.
- 6.20 By 2043, the four Strategic Site Allocations will have delivered coordinated, infrastructure-led growth across the Strategy Area, including:
- 1,658 homes at Down Ampney
 - 1,141 homes at Fairford
 - 1,020 homes at Kemble, and
 - 1,090 homes at the new settlement south of Driffield.
- 6.21 Together, these sites will have created a series of well-connected, sustainable neighbourhoods and, in the case of Driffield, a new community of strategic scale. Development will have been planned and delivered comprehensively through masterplanning, ensuring that homes, jobs, services and infrastructure

are closely aligned and phased appropriately. New primary schools, local centres, community hubs and supporting transport infrastructure will have been delivered alongside development, with contributions helping to fund secondary education provision and other strategic infrastructure across the area.

6.22 The Strategic Site Allocations will collectively:

- reinforce the role of Principal Settlements by directing growth to sustainable locations with access to services and facilities
- support improved self-containment through the provision of local centres, schools, employment opportunities and community infrastructure
- deliver significant enhancements to sustainable transport, including new and improved walking and cycling routes, better access to public transport, mobility hubs, rail station improvements at Kemble, and reduced reliance on the private car
- establish a strong network of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure, integrating biodiversity, recreation, landscape and drainage functions including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG) provision where required
- support investment in utility infrastructure, including electricity and wastewater network upgrades, and
- protect and where possible enhance the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, Special Landscape Areas, and the historic environment.

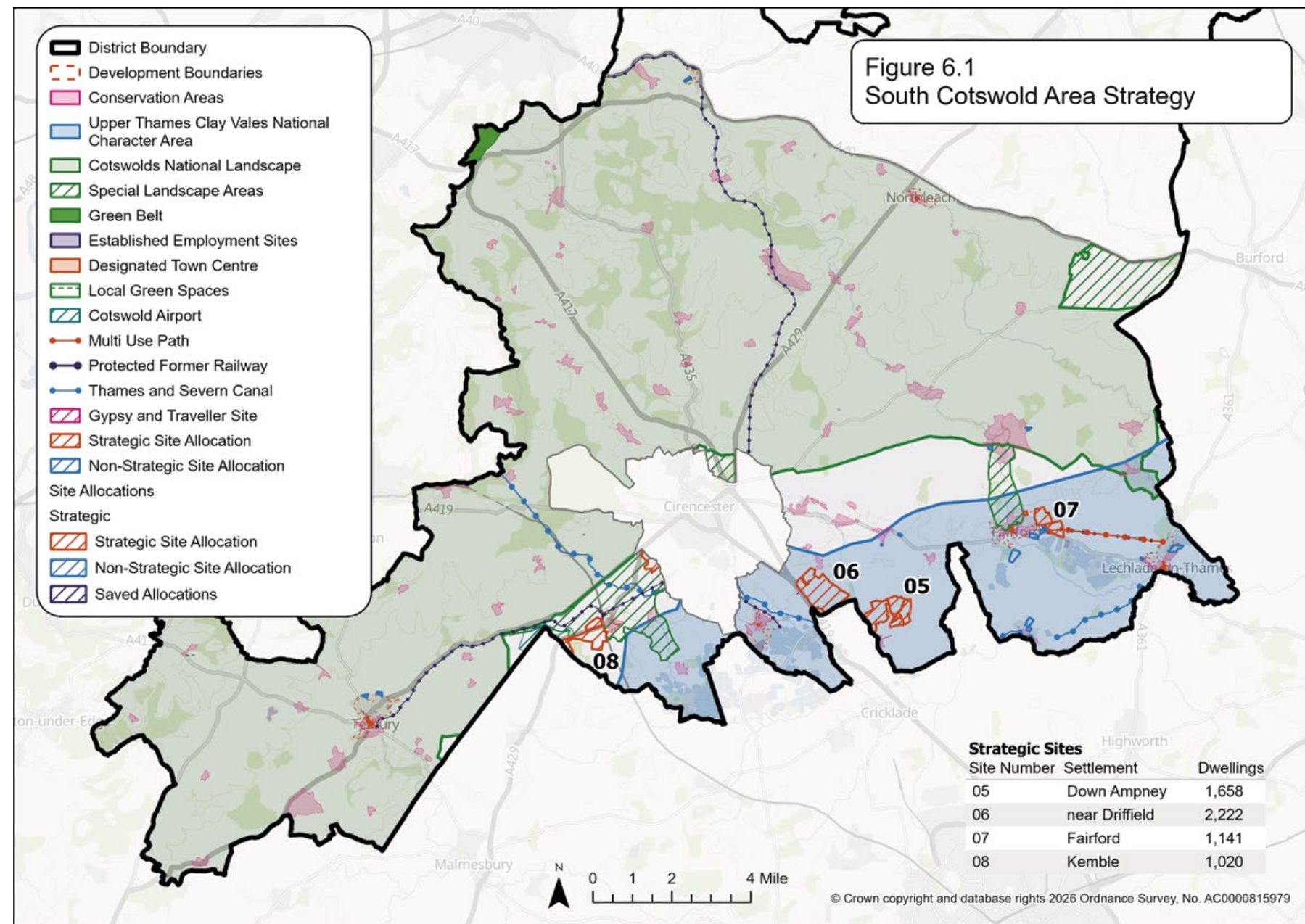


Figure 6.1: South Cotswold Strategy Area Map.

- 6.23 More detailed, site-specific principles for each Strategic Site Allocation are set out in the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and **Core Policy 12**.
- 6.24 A total of 764 homes will be delivered on 12 non-strategic site allocations in Andoversford, Down Ampney, Fairford, Hatherop, Kempsford, Lechlade, Northleach, Poulton, Quenington and Tetbury. These smaller-scale developments will complement strategic growth by supporting local services, maintaining the vitality of settlements, and responding sensitively to local character and constraints. They will also contribute towards the delivery of strategic infrastructure, including education, transport, recreation and environmental mitigation measures across the South Cotswolds Strategy Area.

Core Policy 12: South Cotswold Area Strategy

Our over-arching priorities for the South Cotswold Area are to secure the aligned delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure required to help achieve sustainable development; improve self-sufficiency for each settlement by enhancing its services and facilities to improve its vitality and viability and the ability to access these through non-car modes; as well as maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices. Development in the South Cotswold Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out by **Core Policy 4**.

Housing Delivery

Around 5,673 dwellings will be delivered through a combination of four strategic site allocations and twelve non-strategic site allocations. Other development may come forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans and the Development Management process, often referred to as windfalls. **Tables 6.1** and **6.2** show how the level of planned housing within the South Cotswold Strategy Area will be distributed for strategic and non-strategic allocations respectively:

Table 6.1: South Cotswold Strategy Area Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Site name	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (Approximate figure)
Down Ampney	To north, east & south	1,658	0
Fairford	Mixed-use to north-east	1,141	0
Kemble	Mixed-use to south-west	1,020	0
New settlement	New mixed-use settlement to south of Driffield	1,090	1,132*
TOTAL		4,909	1,132

*approximate figures are provided for the longer-term potential for development at Driffield to continue to deliver some housing beyond 2043.

Table 6.2: South Cotswold Strategy Area Non-Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Non-strategic/land location	Number of dwellings
Andoversford	To rear of Templefields and Crossfields	52
Fairford	South-east of Fairford	55
	West of Terminus and Station Cottages	30
	At Totterdown Hill, Horcott	150
Hatherop	Glebe Farm Yard	12
Kempsford	To rear of the Knoll, Whelford Road	149
Lechlade	South of Butler's Court	15
	South of Ferrers Park	150
Poulton	North of London Road	10
Quenington	Godwin Pumps factory, Springfield Road	47
Tetbury	Adjacent to Blind Lane	44
	North-west of Highfield Cottage	50
TOTAL		764

Employment Delivery

Existing employment land will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 5**. A total of 23.7ha of new employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on three strategic site allocations. **Table 6.3** shows how the level of planned employment growth within the South Cotswold Strategy Area will be distributed:

Table 6.3: South Cotswold Strategy Area Employment Allocations

Settlement	Strategic extension/site name	Hectares
Fairford	To the north-east of Fairford	4.2
Kemble	To the south-west of Kemble	8.6
New settlement	New settlement to the south of Driffield	10.9
TOTAL		23.7

Development will be supported at the strategic and non-strategic site allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and Site Development Templates (**Appendix C**) and is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.



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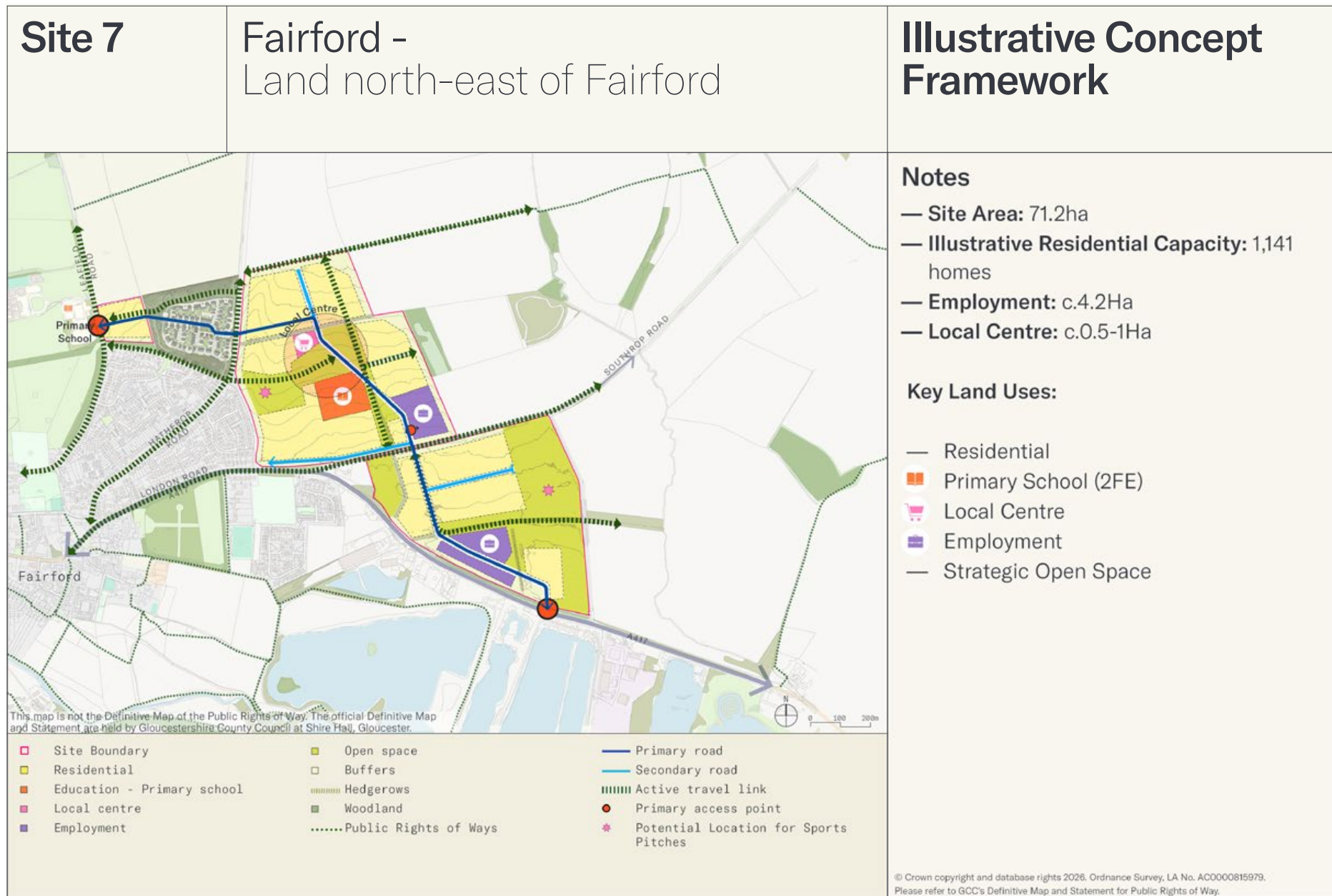


Figure 6.2: Indicative Masterplan Framework for the North-East of Fairford Strategic Allocation.

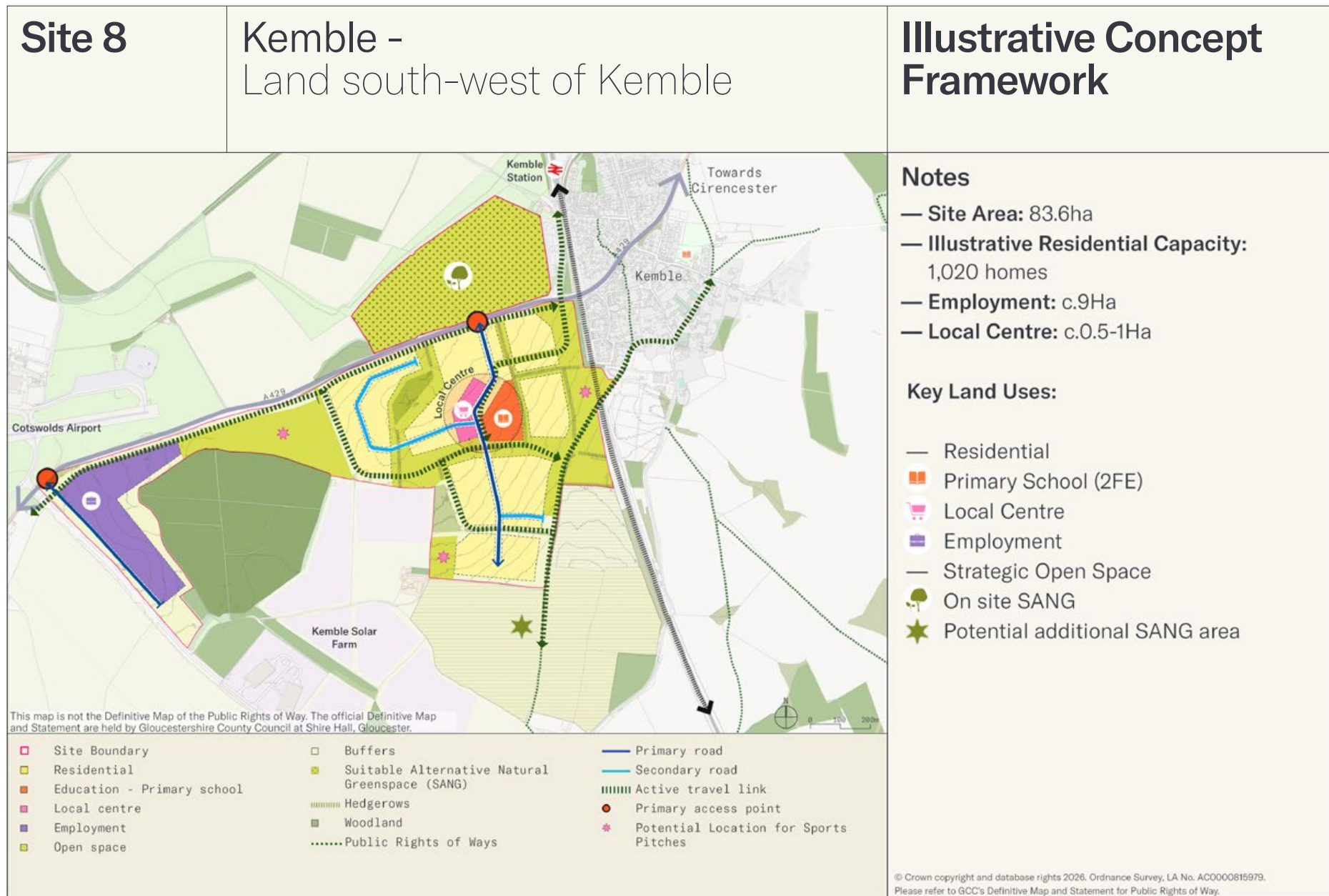
Strategic Extension to the North-east of Fairford

6.25 The strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford will deliver a sustainable extension to Fairford (**Figure 6.2**) sensitive to landscape and the environment. The development will provide a well connected new neighbourhood including new homes, community facilities, significant new public green spaces, and a new street to act as a primary vehicular route linking the site parcels. Key considerations for planning for this site are set out in the development framework in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 1,141 new homes, including affordable housing
- 4.2ha of B2, B8 or E(g) Class employment land, which is well-related to the village, by walking and cycling
- a new primary school and a local centre, providing essential day to day services, community space and supporting the needs of both new and existing residents
- a new street to act as a primary vehicular route linking the site parcels between Leaffield Road and London Road (A417), relieving congestion around Fairford Primary School and Farmor's School, improving circulation and providing a direct route for east west movements
- extensive multifunctional green infrastructure, including green corridors, retained habitats, new planting, public open space, and naturalistic SuDS features integrated into the landscape framework

- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other natural green spaces, where required, to support recreation, biodiversity and environmental mitigation
- an approach that integrates high value habitats, delivers biodiversity net gain, and sensitively manages relationships with nearby heritage assets, including Mount Pleasant Cottage
- enhanced public transport connectivity, particularly between Fairford and Cirencester, and
- inclusive, attractive and direct active travel connections linking the new neighbourhood to Fairford town centre, local schools, the National Cycle Network, existing Public Rights of Way and new routes including along the former railway alignment.

6.26 Comprehensive masterplanning, ensuring development is brought forward in coordinated phases, with early delivery of key infrastructure and careful integration of homes, landscape, transport and community facilities, including coordination with adjacent committed development and the delivery of a connected movement network across the site.



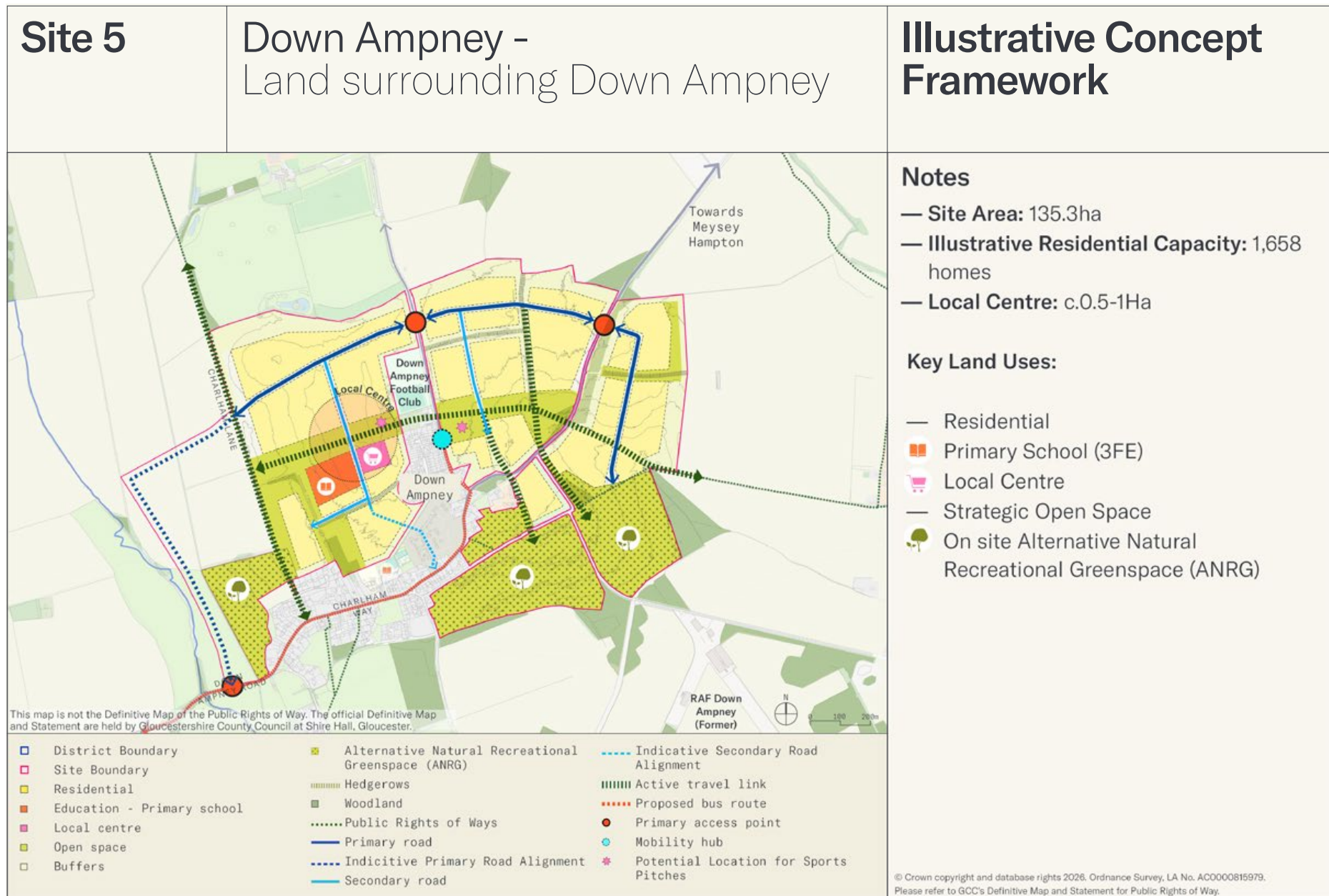


Figure 6.4: Indicative Masterplan Framework for the Down Ampney Strategic Allocation.

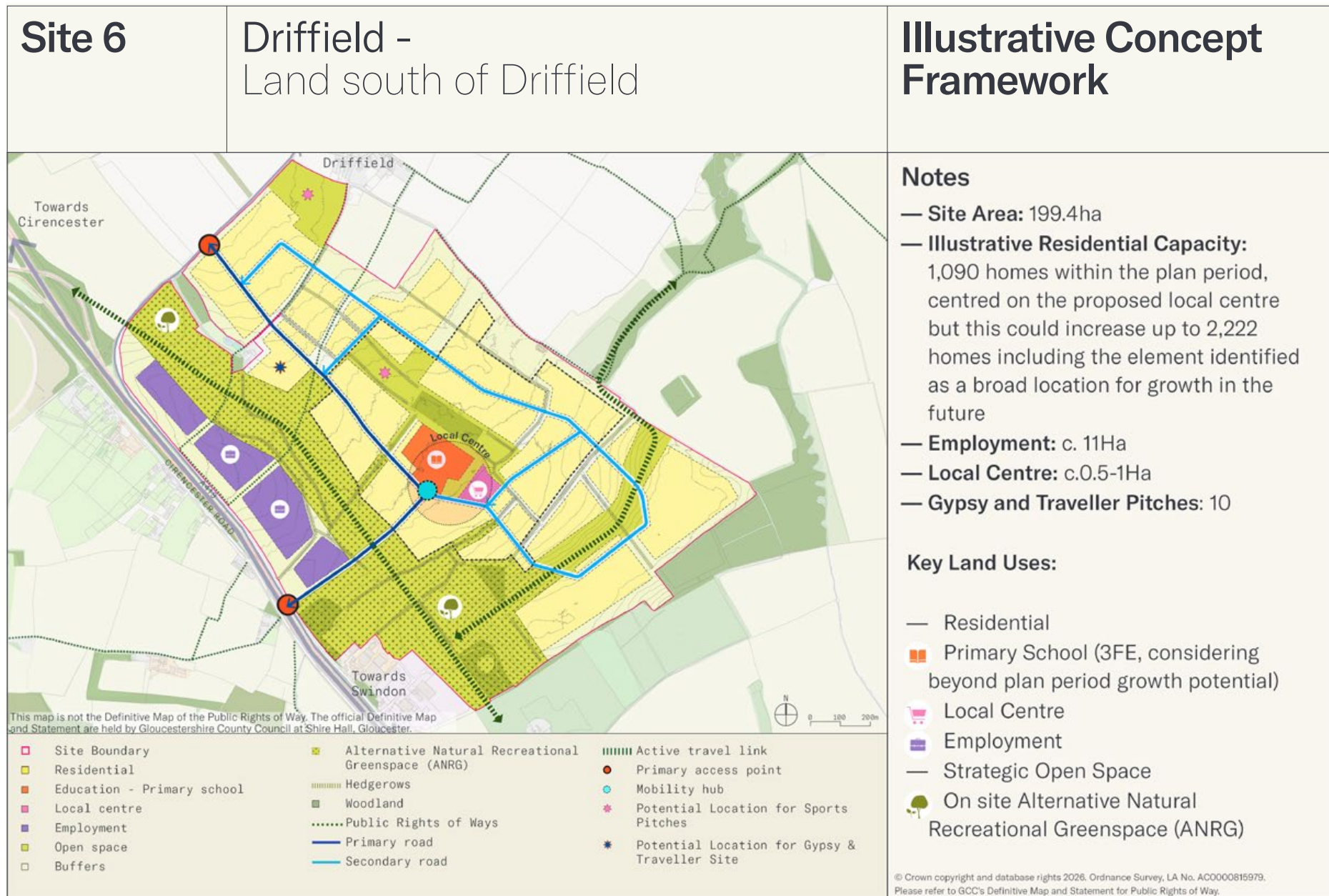
Strategic Extension to Down Ampney

6.29 The strategic extension at Down Ampney will deliver a sustainable expansion of the village, coordinated across multiple land parcels and two promoters (**Figure 6.4**) sensitive to landscape and the environment. The development will provide a well connected new neighbourhood including new homes, community and social infrastructure, significant new public green spaces, and an integrated network of green and blue infrastructure. Key considerations for planning for this location are set out in the development framework in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 1,658 homes, including affordable housing
- a new or expanded primary school and community hub, local centre and other supporting services and facilities, providing day to day services, flexible workspace, and social facilities to support new and existing residents
- extensive multifunctional green infrastructure, including green corridors, new planting, retained hedgerows, play spaces, sports provision, naturalistic SuDS, and enhanced ecological networks
- a comprehensive package of biodiversity mitigation and enhancement, addressing the village's location within a Nature Recovery Network site and within the zones of influence for the Cotswold Water Park Site of Special Scientific Interest and North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation

- inclusive, attractive and direct walking and cycling connections linking new neighbourhoods to the existing village, local facilities, bus stops, recreation areas, Public Rights of Way, and nearby settlements
- enhanced public transport connectivity, particularly between Down Ampney and Cirencester
- masterplanning that respects local character, manages views, protects heritage assets, and ensures that new development sits sensitively within the surrounding countryside, and
- a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery, including new road connections, drainage systems, utilities upgrades and early site preparation, enabling multiple outlets to operate simultaneously and accelerate delivery, including the provision of a bus route and an on-site mobility hub to support sustainable transport choices.

6.30 Comprehensive, phased development, ensuring early provision of green/blue infrastructure and community facilities, and alignment of housing delivery with transport, utilities and environmental requirements, including the delivery of strategic open space, east-west green corridors, and approximately 31ha of Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG).



Strategic Infrastructure Delivery in the South Cotswold Strategy Area

- 6.33 The delivery of strategic services and infrastructure is essential to supporting sustainable growth across the South Cotswolds Strategy Area. This includes major transport improvements, new and expanded education provision, enhanced green and blue infrastructure networks, active travel corridors, surface water management infrastructure and utilities upgrades. Strategic Site Allocations will deliver the bulk of these improvements, supported by non-strategic allocations, sites with planning permission and windfall development where appropriate.
- 6.34 Delivery will be phased in line with each strategic allocation's masterplan and Site Development Framework (**Appendix B**).



Core Policy 13: South Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery

To deliver the growth in the South Cotswold Area, strategic transport and other infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth, which is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area.

The strategic infrastructure requirements for the South Cotswolds Area will be required as follows:

- a) A strategic movement framework, including a network of new and improved routes to support connectivity across the South Cotswolds, comprising:
 - new and enhanced primary vehicular routes and road links within and between strategic allocations, including the delivery of a new primary vehicular route at Fairford linking Leafield Road, London Road (A417) and Hatherop Road
- b) Delivery of a comprehensive active travel network, including:
 - a strategic active travel route linking Down Ampney and Driffield to Cirencester
 - enhanced connections between Land north-east of Fairford and the town centre via Southrop Road, London Road and Hatherop Road, including integration with the former railway alignment, and
 - new and improved active travel links to Kemble Station, Kemble village centre, including improvements along the A429 corridor, Old Vicarage Road, Church Road and Station Road.

The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Gloucestershire County Council.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the South Cotswold Area

6.35 Delivery of the strategic transport improvements, will require land to be safeguarded, as set out in **Core Policy 14: South Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery**.

Core Policy 14: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the South Cotswold Area

Land is safeguarded to support the future delivery of the following schemes as listed:

- a strategic active travel route linking Down Ampney and Driffield to Cirencester
- a strategic active travel route linking Kemble and Cirencester, and
- a corridor for a potential very light rail connection (or successor technology) between Kemble and Cirencester.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified schemes (as shown by maps in **Appendix 8** and the Policies Map)* would need to demonstrate the proposal would not harm its delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the scheme listed.

If necessary, the Council, working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council and relevant neighbouring authorities, will use Compulsory Purchase Powers to enable delivery and bring forward the identified transport schemes, to support delivery of the Cotswold District Local Plan.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 8** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with landowners, National Highways, Gloucestershire County Council and other relevant parties.

Cotswold Airport

- 6.36 Cotswold Airport (a former MOD base known as RAF Kemble) straddles the administrative boundary between Cotswold District and Wiltshire and covers an area of some 210 hectares. Today, the airfield is operated commercially and is accessed from the A433 Cirencester to Tetbury Road in Cotswold District.
- 6.37 A quite separate employment area (Kemble Airfield Business Park) operates from former RAF Kemble premises accessed off the A429 to the south of the airfield in Wiltshire. Despite their close proximity on opposite sides of the airfield, Cotswold Airport and Kemble Airfield Business Park are entirely different entities separated physically and functionally by the intervening runway.
- 6.38 The airfield lies adjacent to both the Cotswolds National Landscape and the Kemble-Ewen Special Landscape Area and is highly visible from the A433 and A429.
- 6.39 The hangars and other buildings at Cotswold Airport are used primarily by aviation-related businesses. About 30 thriving businesses are reliant on the active runway, including flying schools and aircraft salvage. These businesses employ around 300 local people, excluding the Airport’s operational personnel, fire crews, and support staff. It is understood that many

local businesses within a 10-mile radius support and supply commercial operations at Kemble Airfield. The Airfield’s other uses include training for Wiltshire and Cirencester fire brigades and the operations hub for the Department for International Development. Should Cotswold Airport close, those businesses reliant on the functioning runways would have no alternative but to either cease trading or move to an alternative airport, with a consequential loss of local jobs.

6.40 Since the publication of the Government’s General Aviation Strategy in 2015⁵⁸, national policy has continued to place increasing emphasis on the protection of general aviation airfields through the planning system. The Department for Transport’s General Aviation Roadmap (2021)⁵⁹ identifies the national network of airfields as a strategic asset and confirms that airfields play a vital role in local and regional economies, business connectivity, emergency services, skills development and aviation innovation. The Roadmap is explicit that Government policy is to protect, enhance and future-proof general aviation infrastructure.

6.41 This position was reinforced in a formal ministerial statement issued in November 2021⁶⁰, which confirmed that general aviation airfields form part of the UK’s critical national infrastructure and that Government expects them to be supported so that they can grow and thrive as key economic

58 General Aviation Strategy (Department for Transport, 2015): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a805326ed915d74e622dcd3/General_Aviation_Strategy.pdf
59 General Aviation Roadmap (Department for Transport, 2021): <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6086e901e90e076aad25a5a5/general-aviation-roadmap-spring-2021.pdf>
60 General Aviation in the UK (Statement UIN HLWS936 made on 27 April 2021 by Baroness Vere of Norbiton): <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-04-27/hlws936>

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contributors. More recent national aviation policy, including Flightpath to the Future (2022)⁶¹, similarly emphasises the importance of making best use of existing aviation infrastructure. In this context, Cotswold Airport, as a strategically important general aviation and aviation business hub, should be safeguarded from inappropriate development that could prejudice its continued operation or long-term economic role.

- 6.42 Both Cotswold District Council and Wiltshire Council support the continued use of the former RAF Kemble runway, buildings and associated infrastructure for aviation-related economic and leisure purposes, along with the associated employment uses already based there. In seeking to retain use of the airfield as a productive asset, both Cotswold and Wiltshire councils are aware of the need to safeguard amenities in the area and the visual impact that development could have on the countryside.
- 6.43 The rural location of Cotswold Airport also makes it necessary to be cautious about the extent of new employment development. Such development would inevitably lead to further dependence on the use of private vehicles. This policy will allow for the growth and diversification of the airport that is in accordance with other policies of the Plan. Any proposals for small-scale employment development at Cotswold Airport outside the areas shown on the Policies Map would be subject to **Core Policy 15**.

⁶¹ Flightpath to the Future (Department for Transport, 2022): <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/628f7d26e90e07039f799ebc/flightpath-to-the-future.pdf>

Core Policy 15: Cotswold Airport

Cotswold Airport, shown on the Policies Map (and shown by **Appendix 18**), will be safeguarded for aviation-related and operational airport uses

Development proposals that would result in the loss, fragmentation or impairment of the operational runway, taxiways, safety areas, or other infrastructure essential to the functioning of the airfield will not be permitted unless it can be robustly demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the site or relevant infrastructure being used for aviation purposes.

Proposals for aviation-related development, diversification, or intensification that support the continued operation, resilience and economic role of the Airport will be supported, subject to compliance with other policies of the Plan, including those relating to landscape, amenity and transport impacts.

The Thames and Severn Canal

- 6.44 The Thames and Severn Canal is an historic inland waterway running for approximately 29 miles between the River Thames at Lechlade and the Stroudwater Navigation at Wallbridge, Stroud. The Canal is subject to an on-going restoration project which is steered by the Cotswold Canals Partnership Board of which Cotswold District Council is an active supporting member.
- 6.45 Within Cotswold District, the canal route, identified on the Policies Map, extends from Lechlade westwards through the rural Cotswold landscape, passing near South Cerney, Siddington and into Cotswold Lakes area, where it forms a key component of the District's Blue and Green Infrastructure network. Much of the original route remains intact or identifiable, although sections have been infilled, culverted or otherwise altered over time
- 6.46 The restoration project has the potential for further leisure for boating and active travel opportunities such as walking and cycling routes along the towpath. Further improvements could facilitate new sustainable links to the Cotswold Lakes and South Cerney from the canal route and vice versa.
- 6.47 The restoration of the Canal contributes to the economic, environmental and social and regeneration objectives by providing attractive locations for canal-side development. The Development of the Canal must carefully balance

conservation and enhancement; and should provide better opportunities for biodiversity. Canals and towpaths can achieve more sustainable patterns of movement and measures to improve access to the Canal for transportation are appropriate.

- 6.48 All developments adjacent to the Canal must respect its character, setting, biodiversity and historic value as well as have regard to improving and enhancing views along and from the Canals. Environmental improvements to the Canal's appearance will include enhancement of its historic, and biodiversity value and have particular regard to the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the Cotswold District Council Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Green Infrastructure and **Core Policy 70: Green and Blue Infrastructure**.
- 6.49 Throughout the Canal's length are various structures and engineering works that were essential to its function and are part of the canal environment. These features must be retained and restored as and when development takes place in the vicinity. Restoration of bridges must take account of present-day requirements. Development on the route of, or adjacent to, the Thames and Severn Canal must not prevent the improvement, reconstruction, restoration or widening of the canals or towpaths.
- 6.50 For much of its course, the alignment of the Canal is intact and readily discernible. In areas where it has been largely or wholly obliterated. Wherever possible, restoration should be on the original alignment, and future development should avoid

destroying the route. However, there may be circumstances where the Canal could more readily be re-created immediately alongside its original line, or a more practical alternative, for example, as part of post-extraction restoration in gravel winning areas. Prospective developers will be encouraged to discuss their plans with the Cotswold Canals Trust.

Core Policy 16: Thames and Severn Canal

Development will be permitted that:

- a) positively contributes to the restoration of the Canal and towpath; and, where identified as being required, contributes proportionately to provision of the infrastructure needed to support the restoration and operation of the canal
- b) improves access to and along the Canal for transport, sport, cultural, leisure, and recreational purposes
- c) respects, improves and enhances the Canal’s character, setting, biodiversity and historic value, and
- d) does not:
 - i. prevent or impair restoration, improvement or reconstruction
 - ii. destroy its existing historic route as shown on the Policies Map, unless provision is made for its restoration on an acceptable alternative alignment, including the restoration or improvement of the towpath and its linkage with existing rights of way and local communities
 - iii. result in the loss of any buildings, locks or other structures originally associated with the Canal, or
 - iv. prevent opportunities for public access.

The River Thames

6.51 The Environment Agency has not published a specific strategy for the Upper Thames. Applicants should engage with the Environment Agency at an early stage to ensure proposals respond appropriately to navigation, flood risk, environmental and ecological considerations. Development associated with the River Thames should be consistent with any future strategy or management framework that may emerge during the plan period. Proposals should also be considered in the context of the Environment Agency’s concerns regarding the restoration of the Thames and Severn Canal and the potential implications of increased navigation between Inglesham Lock and Cricklade. This policy should be read in conjunction with (**Core Policy 65: Watercourses**).

Core Policy 17: The River Thames

Where there is physical and environmental capacity for increased activity, proposals to increase moorings and enhance sport and recreation development, both on and off the main channel of the River Thames, will be permitted provided that they:

- a) do not result in unacceptable impacts on biodiversity, water quality, ecological networks, landscape character or the river’s environmental capacity, and
- b) conserve and, where possible, enhance the recreational, environmental and navigational functions of the River Thames.

Cotswold Lakes Post-Mineral Extraction After Use

6.52 The south eastern part of Cotswold District has undergone extensive sand and gravel extraction since the 1920s and this will continue for several years, particularly around Down Ampney. The resulting landscape comprises remnant agricultural land, over 150 artificial lakes and wetland habitats, and areas of active mineral working. The area now forms an east–west landscape corridor containing significant green and blue Infrastructure assets, including the River Thames and Thames Path National Trail, the disused Thames and Severn Canal, several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), nearby Special Areas for Conservation (SAC) in Wiltshire, and National Cycle Route 45.

6.53 Designated in the 1960s, the Cotswold Lakes (formerly Cotswold Water Park) spans Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and is nationally recognised for its ecological value and role in water-based recreation. A large part of the Cotswold Lakes is designated as a SSSI, which covers just under 2,000 hectares and is the UK’s largest marl (lime-rich) lake system⁶².

6.54 Previous Local Plan policy supported the development of recreation, leisure and tourism facilities across the Cotswold Lakes. However, given the substantial amount of existing and consented holiday accommodation, it is no longer necessary to promote additional provision through a specific

⁶² SSSI Designation information can be found on the Natural England website at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SSSIGuidance.aspx>

- policy; proposals will therefore be assessed against **Core Policy 18**. Therefore, the same policy approach will be applied to holiday accommodation within the Cotswold Lakes as elsewhere in the District.
- 6.55 The Lakes remain an important focus for outdoor and water-based recreation. However, increased visitor numbers have raised concerns for some residents, particularly around access and tranquillity. **Core Policy 18** therefore supports appropriate outdoor and water based activities while addressing local concerns. New cycling and walking routes will be encouraged, consistent with Gloucestershire’s Local Transport Plan and Cirencester’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan⁶³.
- 6.56 **Core Policy 18** supports delivery of the 2008 Cotswold Lakes Strategic Review and Implementation Plan (Masterplan) vision for a sustainable, high-quality landscape⁶⁴, which was updated in 2021 and is a live document. Development should also have regard to up-to-date guidance such as the Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan⁶⁵.
- 6.57 Remnant farmland and nearby SACs, at North Meadow and Clattinger Farm, contribute significantly to the area’s ecological value. Enhancing biodiversity at site and landscape scale is essential, as wildlife is a major draw for visitors.
- 6.58 Given its mineral extraction legacy and recreation role, **Core Policy 18** adopts a more supportive approach to sports and leisure uses. To maximise benefits, improvements will be sought, and potential impacts from increased recreational pressure on SSSI lakes and the SAC must be avoided or mitigated. It is acknowledged there are potential impacts from increased recreational pressure and disturbance on certain lakes in the SSSI and these should be avoided or mitigated.
- 6.59 Tourist accommodation is addressed through **Core Policy 50**, which applies District-wide.
- 6.60 When considering landscape matters, regard will be had to extant landscape character assessment(s) that apply directly to areas of the Cotswold Lakes within Gloucestershire.
- 6.61 The Cotswold Lakes boundary relates to the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (as designated by Natural England), part of which falls within Cotswold District. This designation covers the entire Cotswold Lakes area within Gloucestershire.

⁶³ Cirencester Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (Gloucestershire County Council, 2022): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/o2vbw4b/cirencester-lcwip-v20-final-plus-exsum.pdf>

⁶⁴ Strategic Review and Implementation Plan for the Cotswold Water Park (Scott Wilson, 2008): <https://cotswoldlakestrust.org/resources-documents/> and Cotswold Water Park Strategic Review and Implementation Plan – Two Years on Progress up-date and Review (CWP Joint Committee, 2010): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/qxqni04x/cwpmasterplanupdate1.pdf>

⁶⁵ Cotswold Water Park Nature Recovery Plan (Cotswold Water Park Nature Conservation Forum, 2021): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/wwferfcb/cotswold-water-park-nature-recovery-plan.pdf>

Core Policy 18: Cotswold Lakes: Post-Mineral Extraction After Use

Within the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (as shown on the Policies Map and by **Appendix 18**), proposals for outdoor or water based sports, leisure or recreational uses on former mineral extraction sites will be permitted where they:

- deliver net gains for biodiversity proportionate to the site’s opportunities
- conserve and enhance landscape character and reinforce the Cotswold Lakes sense of place
- improve safe, inclusive public access to and enjoyment of the lakes and surrounding countryside
- are consistent with, and build upon, approved restoration and aftercare schemes for former mineral extraction sites
- avoid significant adverse impacts on residential amenity, or mitigate them where necessary, and
- respect the character and setting of nearby settlements.





Chapter seven

North Cotswold Area Strategy

Introduction

- 7.1 The North Cotswold Strategy Area includes the parishes lying north of the A40 and forms one of the most distinctive and environmentally sensitive parts of the District. The area is characterised by its rolling limestone uplands, rich historic environment, and a dispersed settlement pattern that has evolved in close relationship with the wider landscape. Large parts of the Strategy Area lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape, reflecting its nationally recognised scenic quality, while two Special Landscape Areas provide an additional layer of local landscape protection (**Figure 7.1**). Although the Cotswolds National Landscape dominates the area, there are important transitional areas outside the designation, particularly to the east of Moreton-in-Marsh and in the far north of the District, where landscape sensitivity and capacity for change are more varied.
- 7.2 The Strategy Area contains a network of vibrant market towns and service centres that play an essential role in supporting the wider rural hinterland. Moreton-in-Marsh, the only settlement

with a mainline railway station in the North Cotswold Strategy Area, provides a key gateway to the wider region, offering direct connectivity to Oxford, Worcester and London. Honeybourne (to the north of Mickleton) and Kingham (to the east of Bedlington) stations are close to the District boundary and provide further access to the same train line. Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Bourton-on-the-Water are internationally recognised for their heritage, tourism and cultural value, while numerous smaller villages contribute significantly to local identity, rural services and community cohesion.

- 7.3 Movement across the area is structured by a number of important transport corridors. The A429 (Fosse Way) provides the principal north–south route through the District, connecting many of the area’s main settlements. The A44 links the North Cotswold Area to Worcestershire and the West Midlands, while the A40 forms a key east–west corridor at the southern boundary of the Area. These routes collectively support the area’s economic resilience, tourism role and its pattern of dispersed rural communities, while also shaping opportunities and constraints for future development.
- 7.4 Taken together, the Principal and Non Principal Settlements within the North Cotswold Strategy Area form a dispersed but interrelated network of communities. The Principal Settlements provide the widest range of services and facilities, while smaller settlements play an important role in meeting local needs and sustaining rural communities. The spatial

strategy for the area reflects this settlement hierarchy and the significant environmental and heritage constraints that shape patterns of development.

7.5 This Chapter contains the following policies:

- **Core Policy 19: North Cotswold Area Strategy**
- **Core Policy 20: North Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery**
- **Core Policy 21: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the North Cotswold Area**
- **Core Policy 22: Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt**
- **Core Policy 23: Former Cheltenham to Stratford-Upon-Avon Railway Line**
- **Core Policy 24: Special Policy Area – Campden BRI**
- **Core Policy 25: Special Policy Area – Fire Service College.**

Housing and Economic Development

7.6 The housing and economic strategy for the North Cotswold Strategy Area focuses growth in the most sustainable locations, where development can support existing settlements, deliver new infrastructure, and respond positively to the area's extensive environmental and heritage constraints. The approach seeks to meet identified housing and employment needs while protecting the distinctive landscape character, historic environment and ecological assets that define the area.

7.7 The majority of new development will be delivered through two Strategic Site Allocations, supported by a range of non-strategic allocations within Principal and Non-Principal Settlements. This enables growth to be planned comprehensively, with development brought forward in a coordinated and infrastructure-led way, including the provision of new schools, community facilities, employment land, green and blue infrastructure and improved transport connections. Smaller allocations play a complementary role by supporting local services, meeting local housing needs and reinforcing settlement patterns.

7.8 The overall approach to housing and employment delivery in the North Cotswold Strategy Area is set out in **Core Policy 19: North Cotswold Area Strategy**, which should be read alongside the relevant District-wide policies.

Strategic Site Allocations in the North Cotswold Area Strategy

7.9 Two Strategic Site Allocations (defined as developments consisting of over 350 dwellings) form the basis for long-term growth in the Strategy Area, which are:

- strategic extension to the north and west of Mickleton (1,238 dwellings), and
- strategic extension to the south and east of Moreton-in-Marsh (2,217 dwellings). A further area that has the potential to accommodate additional development in the longer term, to

the north of Moreton-in-Marsh, is identified as a 'broad location'. This designation recognises its longer term potential, but will be subject to further consideration through future Local Plans, including its ability to deliver further strategic infrastructure, in particular the northern and eastern sections of a multi-modal spine road.

7.10 These allocations are also shown by **Figure 7.1** and represent the main focus for new homes, employment land, community facilities and green and blue infrastructure to 2043, within this area, thus helping to also enable the coordinated delivery of infrastructure-led development.

7.11 Each strategic site allocation is supported by a Site Development Framework, set out in **Appendix B**. The Frameworks provide a comprehensive and coordinated masterplanning approach to delivering each site, establishing the overarching development principles and policy requirements to guide future proposals. This includes matters such as the scale and mix of development, movement and access, green and blue infrastructure, landscape and heritage integration, infrastructure delivery, and phasing. The Site Development Frameworks are intended to ensure that strategic sites are planned holistically, deliver necessary infrastructure in a timely manner, respond positively to their context, and achieve high quality, inclusive, energy efficient and climate responsive development. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies and the Cotswold Design Code.

Non-strategic Site Allocations in the South Cotswold Area Strategy

7.12 There are also sixteen non-strategic site allocations (developments of less than 350 dwellings) that help to ensure an appropriate scale and distribution of development across the North Cotswold Strategy Area, supporting the role of settlements such as Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold and neighbouring rural communities. These smaller sites provide opportunities to reinforce local settlement patterns, support existing services and facilities, and deliver a balanced mix of housing, including affordable homes, while responding sensitively to local landscape character and heritage context.

7.13 Each non-strategic site allocation is accompanied by a Site Development Template, set out in **Appendix C**. The Templates establish the detailed and specific policy requirements, including design principles for matters such as layout, access, landscape integration and environmental performance. They support the delivery of development that reflects local character, contributes positively to settlement form, and achieves high quality, energy efficient and climate responsive design. They should be read alongside relevant Local Plan policies and the Cotswold Design Code.

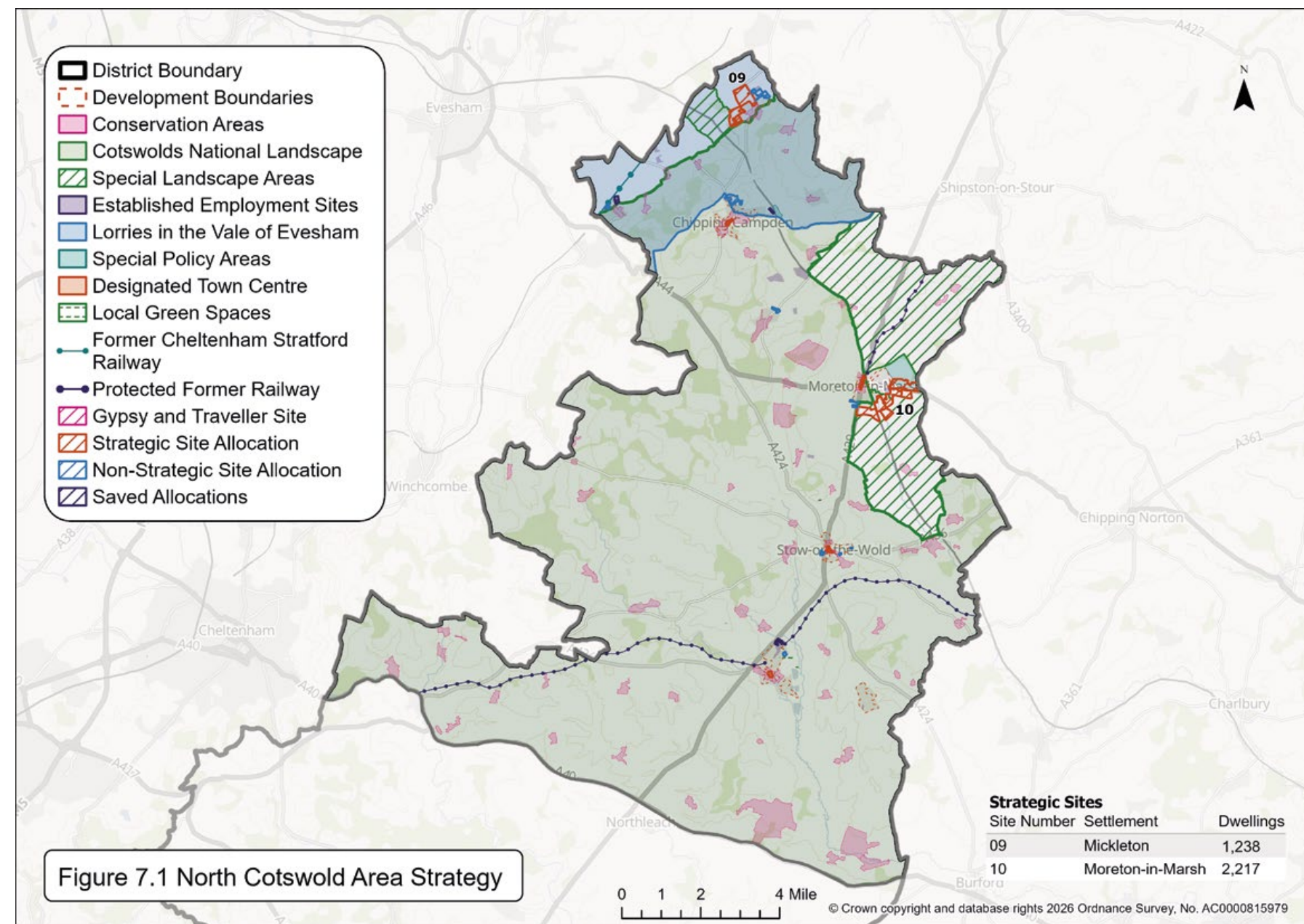


Figure 7.1: North Cotswold Strategy Map.

How the North Cotswold Strategy Area Will Change by 2043

- 7.14 By 2043, the North Cotswold Strategy Area will continue to function as a network of thriving market towns, villages and rural communities. Strategic development will have been sensitively integrated with existing settlements, supported by substantial improvements to infrastructure, community facilities, transport networks and green and blue infrastructure. Historic character, landscape settings and biodiversity will have been protected and enhanced.
- 7.15 By 2043, the Strategic Site Allocations will have delivered coordinated, infrastructure-led growth across the Strategy Area, including:
- 1,238 homes in Mickleton, and
 - 2,217 homes in Moreton-in-Marsh.
- 7.16 Together, these sites will have created a series of well-connected, sustainable neighbourhoods and communities of strategic scale. Development will have been planned and delivered comprehensively through masterplanning, ensuring that homes, jobs, services and infrastructure are closely aligned and phased appropriately.

7.17 The Strategic Site Allocations will collectively:

- support improved self-containment through the provision of local centres, schools, employment opportunities and community infrastructure
- deliver significant enhancements to sustainable transport, including new and improved walking and cycling routes, better access to public transport, and reduced reliance on the private car
- establish a strong network of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure, integrating biodiversity, recreation, landscape and drainage functions, and
- protect and where possible enhance the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, Special Landscape Areas, and the historic environment.

7.18 More detailed, site-specific principles for each Strategic Site Allocation are set out in the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and **Core Policy 19**.

7.19 A total of 567 homes will be delivered on 14 non-strategic site allocations in Blockley, Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Mickleton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Willersey.

Core Policy 19: North Cotswold Area Strategy

Our over-arching priorities for the North Cotswold Area are to secure the delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure required to help achieve sustainable development; improve self-sufficiency for each settlement by enhancing its services and facilities to improve its vitality and viability and the ability to access these through non-car modes; as well as maximising opportunities for sustainable travel choices. Development in the North Cotswold Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out by **Core Policy 4**.

Housing Delivery

Around 4,022 dwellings will be delivered through a combination of two strategic site allocations and 14 non-strategic site allocations. Additional development may come forward through Neighbourhood Development Plans and the Development Management process, often referred to as windfalls. **Tables 7.1** and **7.2** show how the level of planned housing within the North Cotswold Area will be distributed for strategic and non-strategic allocations respectively:

Table 7.1: North Cotswold Area Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Site name	Housing allocation to 2043	Longer term potential (approximate figure)
Mickleton	Strategic extension to the north and west of Mickleton	1,238	0
Moreton-in-Marsh	Strategic extension to the South and East of Moreton-in-Marsh	2,217	0
TOTAL		3,455	0

Table 7.2: North Cotswold Area Non-Strategic Housing Allocations

Settlement	Site name	Capacity
Blockley	Former allotments, Station Road	40
	The Limes, Station Road	8
Bourton-on-the-Water	Land off Mallard Crescent	53
Chipping Campden	Land north-west of Aston Road	10
	Land north-east of Aston Road	150
Mickleton	Land east of former Meon Hill Nurseries	40
	Land between Summerville Ltd. and Stratford Road	33
	Land east of Stratford Road	76
Moreton-in-Marsh	Land west of Aldi	20
	Land south of North Cotswold Hospital	44
Stow-on-the-Wold	Land adjacent Griffin Court / Playing Field	10
	Land adjoining Tall Trees, Oddington Road	8
	The Hollies, Lower Swell Road	35
Willersey	Land between Colin Lane and future Heritage Railway	40
TOTAL		567

Employment Delivery

Existing employment will be protected in accordance with **Core Policy 5**. A total of 7.6ha of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth on three saved allocations from the 2011-2031 Plan (each allocated for B2, B8 and E(g) uses). The saved allocation policies are repeated by **Appendix 11** for ease of reference. **Table 7.3** shows how the level of planned employment growth within the North Strategy Area will be distributed:

Table 7.3: North Cotswold Strategy Area Employment Allocations

Settlement	Site name	Employment land (ha)
Saved Local Plan 2011-2031 Allocations		
Bourton-on-the-Water	North of Bourton Industrial Park	4.9
Chipping Campden	West of Battlebrook Drive, Station Road	0.7
Willersey	North of B4632 and east of employment estate	2.0
TOTAL		7.6

Development at the new allocations will be supported at the strategic and non-strategic site allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and Site Development Templates (**Appendix C**) and is in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole.



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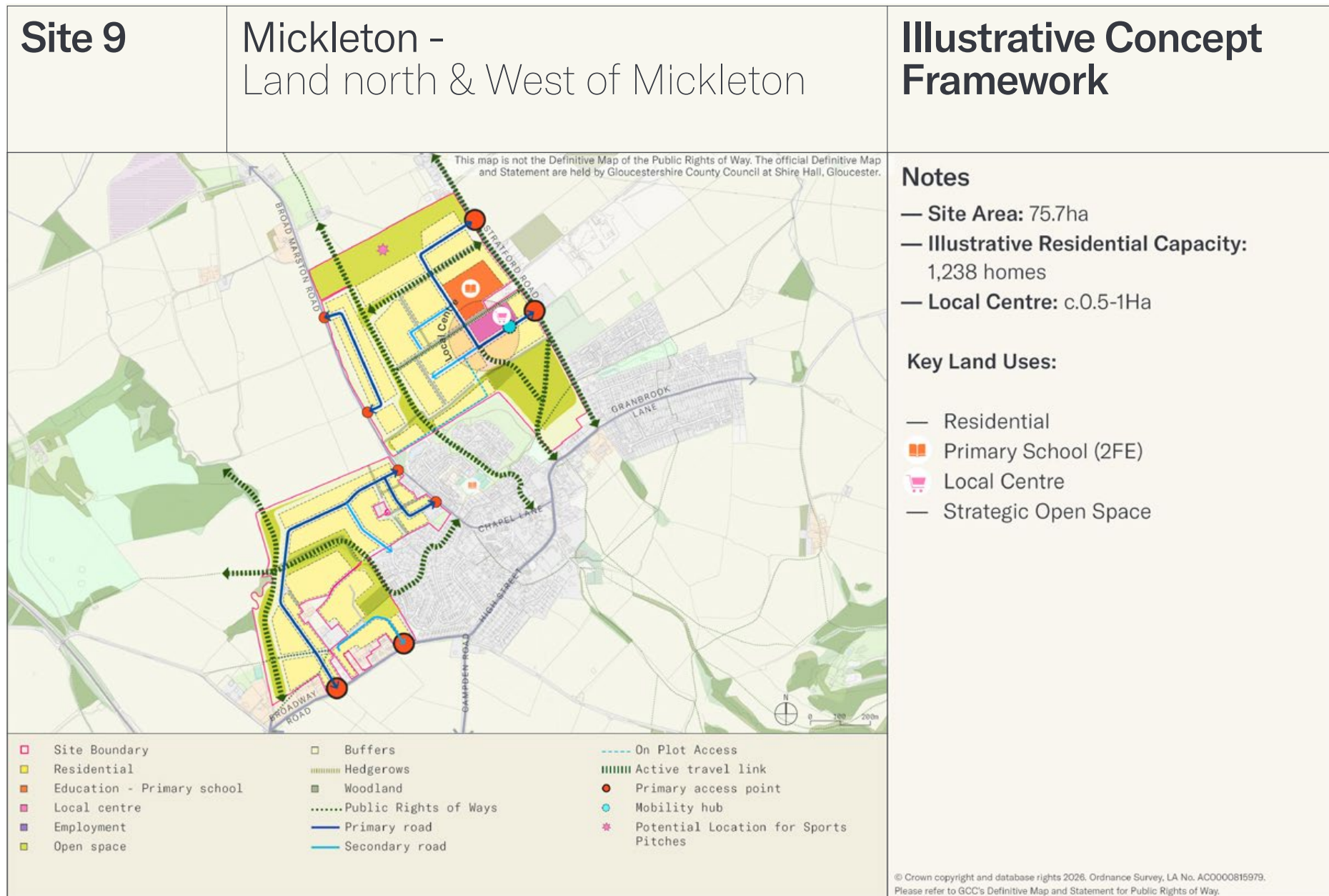


Figure 7.2: Indicative Masterplan Framework for the North and West of Mickleton Strategic Allocation.

Strategic Extension to the North and West of Mickleton

7.20 The strategic extension at Mickleton will deliver sustainable growth to the north and west of Mickleton (**Figure 7.2**) that is sensitive to landscape and the environment. The development will provide well-connected new neighbourhoods including new homes, community facilities, local employment opportunities, significant new public green space, footpaths and cycleways. Key considerations for planning for this site are set out in the Site Development Framework in **Appendix B** and include:

- around 1,238 new homes, including affordable housing
- delivery of a well-planned and integrated residential environment, comprehensively masterplanned across all land parcels rather than developed in isolation
- establishing a strong and enduring western edge to Mickleton, with development contained by a substantial landscape framework
- ensuring that development within the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape and the adjoining Norton Hall Special Landscape Area is sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts, through generous buffers, sensitive layout, and appropriate density
- placing green and blue infrastructure at the heart of the scheme, providing multifunctional open spaces, biodiversity enhancement and naturalistic drainage

- creating safe, direct and attractive walking and cycling routes linking the site to Mickleton village centre, schools, services and the surrounding countryside
- enhancing public transport connectivity, particularly to Honeybourne Railway Station and Moreton-in-Marsh, and
- delivering development that reflects local character, landscape context and village scale, supporting high quality place making for both new and existing residents.

infrastructure improvements to bus services and the provision of car clubs and e-bike schemes. These measures will be supported by robust travel planning and travel plan monitoring. The allocations will contribute to the delivery of new and enhanced active travel routes from the site and within the town including enhanced connections to rail stations and schools.

7.23 Taken together, the interventions will help to ensure the development proposals, for residential and employment, provide a realistic alternative to the car and mitigate any additional pressure on the highway network resultant from developments, including through supporting sustainable modes.

7.24 In Moreton-in-Marsh development sites will be required to deliver a multi-modal spine road connecting the A429 and A44 through the strategic site allocation. This road will provide connectivity through the sites and serve as the primary 'estate road' access. The road is required to help relieve pressure from some of the key junctions and routes in the Moreton-in-Marsh that would result from additional traffic movements from the new developments. The road will act as a local distributor and will be built to a specification suitable for all vehicles including active travel, buses and HGV's, but should function as a main street, with residential frontages for much of its length.

7.25 The multi-modal spine road will be built to the appropriate design standards and take into account the design principles in the Cotswold Design Code.

The route to enable a future onward connection from the A44 in the east of Moreton and the A429 to the north is also safeguarded.

7.26 A new 6-form-entry secondary school will also be provided to provide for the new development, whilst also reducing the need for pupils to travel out of Moreton-in-Marsh for secondary education, thus helping to reduce the need for car journeys.

7.27 It is therefore important that strategic transport and infrastructure improvements are made within the North Cotswold area as set out within the following **Core Policy 20** in addition to the site-specific requirements set out in **Core Policies 19** and the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and Development Templates (**Appendix C**).

Core Policy 20: North Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery

To deliver the growth in the North Cotswold Area, strategic transport and other infrastructure has been identified to mitigate the impact of planned growth, which is important to help secure a viable and sustainable future for the area.

The strategic infrastructure requirements for the North Cotswold Area include:

- a. a multi modal spine road in Moreton-in-Marsh linking the A429 to the south of the town and the A44 to the east of the town for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians
- b. improvements to Moreton-in-Marsh railway station forming part of a wider Transport Hub
- c. new active travel roads along Long Marston Road in Mickleton to facilitate segregated access to National Cycleway 5
- d. new active travel routes between Moreton-in-Marsh and Shipton-on-Stour, Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-in-the-Wold, as well as along Fosse Way (A429) and the A44
- e. a new 6-form entry secondary school, accessed from the new multi modal spine road, to the south of Moreton-in-Marsh, and
- f. a new 2-form entry primary school on in Moreton-in-Marsh and a new 2-form entry primary school in Mickleton.

The package may be further refined through development of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan being developed by Gloucestershire County Council.

Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes in the North Cotswold Area

7.28 Delivery of the strategic transport improvements, will require land to be safeguarded, as set out in **Core Policy 20: North Cotswold Strategic Infrastructure Delivery**. As discussed above, two routes are safeguarded for the potential longer term extension of the multi-modal link road to the east and north of Moreton-in-Marsh to ensure route options remain open while more detailed feasibility and other necessary work is undertaken.

Core Policy 21: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Infrastructure Schemes in the North Cotswold Area

Land is safeguarded to support the future delivery of the following schemes as listed in **Core Policy 20**:

- a multi modal spine road in Moreton-in-Marsh linking the A429 to the south of the town and the A44 to the east of the town for all vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians,
- a future section of the multi-modal spine road between the A44 to the east and A429 to the north of Moreton-in-Marsh, and
- strategic cycle links around Moreton-in-Marsh and Mickleton.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to have the potential to impact the delivery of the identified schemes (as shown by maps in **Appendix 8** and the Policies Map)* would need to demonstrate the proposal would not harm its delivery.

If necessary, the Council, working in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council and relevant neighbouring authorities, will use Compulsory Purchase Powers to enable delivery and bring forward the identified transport schemes, to support delivery of the Cotswold District Local Plan

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the scheme listed.

*the area shown on the Policies Map and **Appendix 8** illustrates where the policy will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with landowners, National Highways, Gloucestershire County Council and other relevant parties.

Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt

- 7.29 A very small part of the District, near Ullenwood, lies within the Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt. This 1.1km² area, which includes Crickley Hill Country Park, is situated on top of the Cotswold escarpment and is located entirely within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which further reinforces its landscape sensitivity and the importance of conserving its openness and scenic quality.
- 7.30 National planning policy requires planning positively to enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt land, and specifies that inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful, should only be approved in very special circumstances.
- 7.31 A review of the Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt was completed in 2026. This concluded that the part of the Green Belt within Cotswold District (Parcel SH7)⁶⁶ makes a strong and essential contribution to meeting the purposes of the Green Belt. The rising landform, extensive mature woodland and open countryside create a clear and robust separation between Cheltenham, Gloucester and the wider rural landscape. The parcel performs strongly in preventing urban sprawl, preventing the merging of settlements, and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The review also confirmed that this land does not meet the definition of Grey Belt and remains a critical component of the wider Green Belt designation.

⁶⁶ Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt Review (Land Use Consultants, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>

Core Policy 22: Gloucester and Cheltenham Green Belt

Inappropriate development within the Green Belt will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, in accordance with national planning policy. Proposals must conserve and enhance the openness, landscape character and separation function of this part of the Green Belt, which also lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

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Former Cheltenham to Stratford-upon-Avon Railway Line

- 7.32 The Cheltenham to Stratford-upon-Avon railway line, the ‘Honeybourne Line’, is a former double-track main line route, which once linked directly to Birmingham. A disused section of the line passes through the parishes of Willersey and Saintbury. The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, a volunteer-run heritage railway, has reopened a 14-mile section from Cheltenham to Broadway, and there is potential to extend four miles northwards to the national main line network at Honeybourne, which includes a two-mile section through Cotswold District. The railway is a significant regional tourist destination and a contributor to the local economy.
- 7.33 The Honeybourne Line also has national strategic importance. Passenger and freight use on the national rail network are rising. More and more dismantled railway lines across the country are being reopened to alleviate increasing congestion on the national transport network.
- 7.34 Many locations along this route, including Willersey and Weston-sub-Edge, lost their railway stations when services were withdrawn before the line’s closure in the 1970s. Protecting this route therefore also provides an opportunity to reopen these stations and increase accessibility in the District, although any future connections to the main line would be subject to necessary capacity enhancements also being delivered on the main network.

Core Policy 23:
Former Cheltenham to Stratford-Upon-Avon Railway Line

Development to restore and reinstate the railway connection between Broadway and Honeybourne (as shown on the Policies Map and by **Appendix 19**) will be permitted provided that:

- a. it positively contributes to the restoration of the former railway line
- b. does not impair restoration, improvement or reconstruction of the former railway line and retains existing embankments, cuttings, bridges and other associated features, and
- c. respects, improves and enhances its character, setting, biodiversity and historic value.

Development that would harm the route, function, character, or implementation of the proposed or existing transport network and related services and facilities will not be permitted.

Special Policy Areas

- 7.35 Due to the significance of their contribution to the Cotswold economy, three areas are subject to dedicated ‘Special Policy Area’ policies (**Core Policies 24 and 25**). Two of these are in the North Strategy Area, which are: Campden BRI, Chipping Campden and the Fire Services College, Moreton-in-Marsh. The Special Policy Area policies for these locations provide clarity to help ensure that a holistic and long-term approach is taken to planning for these sites.
- 7.36 Applications will need to be supported by comprehensive Master Plans for each of these sites. These will provide additional guidance to assist with the planning for these sites. The Master Plans will be prepared with an appropriate level of community participation, as described in the Councils Statement of Community Involvement.

Campden BRI, Chipping Campden

- 7.37 Campden BRI is a food research and development institution near Chipping Campden where national and international food testing and research is completed. It has seen significant growth in business, with food security being a key issue for both private and public sector members. Campden BRI currently has 2,100 members from 70 countries across the world, including Pepsi, Kelloggs, and Warburtons. It holds conferences and training events for 17,000 visitors per year. The company employs 300 staff at Chipping Campden.
- 7.38 The existing site comprises a series of ad hoc buildings and facilities which no longer meet modern standards of design or efficiency for a research and development institution. Campden BRI requires a positive framework which supports investments in new laboratories, business space, and supporting infrastructure to fulfil its growth aspirations whilst recognising the environmental and landscape constraints.
- 7.39 The Council recognises that the wider Campden BRI site needs to be conceptualised and planned as a comprehensive development to secure the future of the organisation within the District. The overriding constraint is part of the site’s location within Flood Zone 3b, and Campden BRI is working with the Environment Agency to resolve this issue. Further significant constraints, in particular, those relating to access and the location within the Cotswolds National Landscape, must be addressed through the master planning process.

Core Policy 24: Campden BRI Special Policy Areas

Proposals for development within Campden BRI Special Policy Area (defined on the Policies Map and shown by **Appendix 7**) will be supported where they demonstrate a comprehensive and master-planned approach, considering the wider land holding (i.e. the whole planning unit) and support the long-term future of the site.

At this site, proposals for new laboratories, business space, conference, training facilities, staff and visitor facilities, ancillary development, and associated infrastructure to facilitate the use of the site as a food testing and research establishment, will be permitted provided that:

- a) development proposals are tied to the established operations of the Campden BRI
- b) proposals are supported by a comprehensive phasing plan, and
- c) that all flood constraints are identified and overcome including the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and their long-term management which can be secured through conditions or separate contractual agreements.

Applications should be supported by a Masterplan that is produced in consultation with the local community that demonstrates the comprehensive phasing programme for the construction, reuse or demolition of existing redundant buildings and infrastructure within the site.

Fire Service College, Moreton-in-Marsh

- 7.40 The Fire Service College is a leader in fire and emergency response training and one of the world’s largest operational fire and rescue training facilities. It specialises in providing dedicated training for fire and rescue services, emergency responders and a wide spectrum of commercial and public sector clients globally.
- 7.41 In March 2013, the College moved from government to private ownership to help secure future investment to maintain the College as a pioneering facility for the fire and rescue services, both in the UK and overseas. Significant new and replacement infrastructure and supporting facilities are required to ensure that the College remains at the forefront of training provision.
- 7.42 The site is over 100 hectares on the eastern edge of Moreton-in-Marsh and is significant to the town’s future. Consequently, the development of the site needs to be planned in a holistic manner to secure the long-term future of the College and achieve benefits to the local community. For example, the College has recreational facilities that are not currently available in Moreton-in-Marsh. The Master Plan should aim to secure public access to these facilities on a permanent basis.
- 7.43 Care will need to be taken in the master planning of the site to provide a landscape sensitive gateway from the eastern approach into Moreton-in-Marsh, which provides a smooth transition between the countryside and the settlement.

Core Policy 25: Fire Service College Special Policy Area

Proposals for development within the Fire Service College Special Policy Area (defined on the Policies Map and shown by **Appendix 7**) will be supported where they demonstrate a comprehensive and master-planned approach, considering the wider land holding (i.e. the whole planning unit) and support the long-term future of the site.

At this site, proposals for development of operational fire, rescue and emergency responders’ training facilities, ancillary development, and associated infrastructure, will be permitted provided that:

- a) development proposals will be tied to the operations of the Fire Service College
- b) enhance the setting afforded by this important gateway site to Moreton-in-Marsh
- c) demonstrate that a thorough investigation of noise, fumes and smells has been carried out in relation to the use of the operational area, and identify any appropriate safeguarding measures required to satisfactorily address potential impacts on residential and other sensitive areas
- d) undertake a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment to investigate land contamination on the site, with any necessary remediation measures required to a standard agreed with the Local Planning Authority
- e) seek to retain, protect and proactively manage the designated Wildlife sites
- f) demonstrate how community leisure uses will be safeguarded and access will be provided to ensure their available use for local residents, and
- g) demonstrate how existing trees and other vegetation around the boundary and stretching into the site will be retained and enhanced, especially where this would improve biodiversity and landscape screening, through a long-term arboricultural management plan. Where there is no alternative but to remove existing trees and vegetation, appropriate mitigation will be provided, including on-going management.

Applications should be supported by a Masterplan that is produced in consultation with the local community that demonstrates how the proposals for new buildings are effectively screened from view from outside the site, particularly along the approach roads to Moreton-in-Marsh.



Chapter eight

Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy

Introduction

- 8.1 Achieving a low-carbon future for Cotswold District requires a fundamental shift in the way buildings are designed, constructed, adapted and powered. As national and local commitments drive the transition towards net zero carbon, sustainable construction methods and renewable energy generation are central in minimising the long-term environmental impact of development. This chapter sets out how the Local Plan will guide development to reduce energy demand, eliminate reliance on fossil fuels, and expand renewable energy generation across the District.
- 8.2 The built environment plays a major role in the District's total carbon emissions. Improving the energy efficiency of both new and existing homes and

workplaces will be essential to meeting the national carbon budget and targets by 2050⁶⁷. Energy retrofitting in existing building measures, alongside high standards for new development, ensure that buildings use less energy, cost less to run, emit less carbon and are more resilient to climate change.

- 8.3 At the same time, the transition to zero-carbon requires a significant increase in renewable energy deployment. Solar panels, wind turbines and battery storage will all have a role to play in meeting rising electricity demand while maintaining the District's exceptional landscape quality and heritage assets. The policies in this chapter provide a positive framework for supporting well-designed renewable energy projects, ensuring that they are delivered in appropriate locations and contribute meaningfully to both local and national climate goals.

- 8.4 This chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 26: Retrofitting and Decarbonisation of Existing Buildings**
- **Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings**
- **Core Policy 28: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission**
- **Core Policy 29: Wind Energy Development**
- **Core Policy 30: Roof-Mounted and Ground-Mounted Solar Panels**
- **Core Policy 31: Community Renewable Energy Schemes**
- **Core Policy 32: Low Carbon Heat Networks.**

⁶⁷ Progress in reducing emissions 2026 report to Parliament (Climate Change Committee, 2026): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2026-report-to-parliament/>

Retrofitting and Decarbonisation of Existing Buildings

- 8.5 The capacity of the UK to generate electricity renewably is not infinite. The total demand on the network needs to be limited to the amount of energy that we can produce primarily from wind and solar energy alongside nuclear by 2050. This requires us to reduce energy use from existing buildings through retrofit, which will also save money on energy bills and make the transition affordable for people and businesses and manageable for the country. The approach will also help to reduce overall household costs by lowering combined housing and energy expenditure, thereby improving affordability and resilience to rising living costs.
- 8.6 The objective of retrofitting should be to put existing buildings on track towards Net Zero Carbon by 2050 (or earlier) and save energy costs for residents. The ultimate ambition is to generate all of a building’s energy needs from zero carbon energy sources. This will require a reduction in energy use coupled with an increase in renewable energy generation, as well as the phase out of fossil fuels. Although getting existing buildings on track towards Net Zero is a challenge, it can be done.
- 8.7 The detailed modelling for the Cotswold context was produced in line with the goal of ensuring the Cotswold District plays its full role in fulfilling the UK’s commitment to the Paris Agreement (seeking

to limit global climate change to 1.5°C ideally, or no more than 2°C) and included the emissions outside Cotswold District associated with production and transport of goods consumed within Cotswold District. This is different from the UK’s legislated national carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008, which the NPPF instructs the Local Plan to pursue (NPPF 2024 paragraph 162/footnote 61, and draft NPPF 2025 Plan-Making Policy CC1/ footnote 30). However, the national analysis of the most realistic pathway to those legislated carbon budgets identifies^{68, 69}, a similar range of changes are needed in existing and new buildings, including greater acceleration of rollout of energy efficiency improvements and electric heat pumps to existing buildings as well as near-Passivhaus standards of energy efficiency in new homes from 2025 and an ongoing increase in renewable energy generation (both on-site at buildings, and standalone). Neither current nor incoming Building Regulations deliver the full level of energy efficiency that had been identified as necessary within that pathway.

- 8.8 This level of ambition emphasises the need to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels in the District and the reason why the following retrofit policies are based on a three-pronged approach: 1) move away from gas and oil boilers; 2) use energy more efficiently; and 3) generate renewable energy on-site where possible.
- 8.9 There are other valuable co-benefits that are also a key outcome from retrofitting buildings. Improving

68 7th Carbon Budget (Climate Change Committee, 2025): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-seventh-carbon-budget/>
69 UK Housing: Fit for the future? (Climate Change Committee, 2019): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/uk-housing-fit-for-the-future/>

airtightness, insulation, ventilation and addressing defects and damp are all components of good retrofit, and all will make homes more robust, more comfortable and healthier.

A Hierarchy of Retrofit Measures

- 8.10 Retrofitting involves incorporating measures in existing buildings to reduce the demand for energy. It can also include micro energy generation⁷⁰. For example, retrofitting can reduce the amount of heat lost through the roof, walls and windows and can help generate more renewable energy on site with solar panels.
- 8.11 The following provides a hierarchy of retrofit and decarbonisation measures and highlights the measures that will have the greatest impact on reducing carbon emissions:
- **No more fossil fuels:** the main objective of retrofit should be to accelerate the move away from gas/oil boilers towards heating systems using electricity (e.g. heat pumps⁷¹). Households not served by mains gas should remain off gas
 - **Energy efficiency improvements:** save energy, reduce running costs and improve comfort. Upgrading windows, insulating walls, roofs and floors, improving airtightness and installing effective and efficient ventilation (e.g. Mechanical

Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) all improve comfort and energy efficiency. Which combination of measures are appropriate for a particular building will depend on a variety of factors, including its age, construction, current level of energy efficiency and any technical constraints

- **Solar PVs:** we need to increase solar energy generated in the Cotswold District to balance energy use, thereby reducing carbon emissions and energy bills. Many homes and commercial buildings have a significant roof space and can directly benefit from this ‘free’ electricity
- **Demand flexibility for a smarter electrical system:** energy storage (e.g. hot water tanks, batteries) and smart controls will play an important role in integrating buildings into the wider energy system, and
- **Whole house building approach:** this includes a whole building assessment and a detailed design and specification as set out by Historic England guidance⁷². The whole building approach is a systematic process for devising and implementing suitable, coordinated, balanced and well-integrated solutions.

- 8.12 In addition to these policies, buildings must also comply with all requirements of the Building Regulations Part L (2021) and Part L (2026) (the Future Homes and Buildings Standard) from March

70 Examples of micro-renewables include heat pumps (ground and air); micro-hydro; micro-wind turbines (free-standing or building-mounted); solar hot water (also known as solar thermal); and solar photovoltaics (solar PV).
71 Direct electric heating and hot water may be acceptable in a very efficient home
72 Whole Building Approach for Historic Buildings (Historic England, 2024): <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/whole-building-approach-for-historic-buildings>

Core Policy 26: Retrofitting and Decarbonisation of Existing Buildings

Buildings of Modern Construction

Mitigating and adapting to climate change can be addressed through a variety of means, from the incorporation of better insulation and renewable energy technologies to adaptations for severe weather events, and the use of local and recycled building materials. Re-use of existing buildings is also often more environmentally sustainable than demolition and new build. Development proposals must accord with the following criteria:

- applications for the creation of one or more residential dwellings and/or commercial units through conversions/ change of use will be expected to incorporate a new low carbon heating system
- proposals that seek to extend an existing residential or commercial building will be expected to demonstrably improve its energy efficiency, improve its adaptability to climate change and, where possible, appropriately incorporate micro-renewables and de-carbonise its heating system
- proposals that facilitate carbon reduction through retrofitting at whole street or neighbourhood scales will be supported, subject to all other relevant policies and legislation, and
- proposals to demolish existing buildings and structures will not be permitted unless accompanied by evidence that demolition and rebuild would support the principles of achieving sustainable development, including consideration of embodied carbon and the circular economy.

Buildings of Traditional Construction⁷⁴

The Council will seek to encourage and enable the sensitive retrofitting, use of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of renewable energy in buildings of traditional construction, (including listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets, and buildings in Conservation Areas) whilst safeguarding the significance and special characteristics of these heritage assets for the future. The policy will be supported by the Council's Guidance on Traditional Buildings, Retrofit and Energy Efficiency⁷⁵. Development proposals must accord with the following criteria:

- the Council will expect the 'Whole House' approach to be taken and for proposals to demonstrate that they are consistent with the energy hierarchy (firstly reducing (especially carbon-based energy demand), secondly increasing energy efficiency, and finally looking to generate renewable energy)
- the future-fitting of energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures and appropriate use of renewable energy in buildings of traditional construction will be supported where harm to the significance of heritage assets is avoided. Where harm cannot be avoided, the harm must be minimised to the lowest level possible and then be justified by the relevant planning balances relating to heritage assets
- all proposals shall avoid compromising the breathability, ventilation or structural stability of buildings of traditional construction, having due regard to dew points, cold spots and condensation, and

⁷⁴ Traditional construction Historic England's definition.

⁷⁵ Retrofit and Energy Efficiency (Cotswold District Council, 2026): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/historic-buildings-and-conservation-areas/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency/>

2027 (in accordance with the implementation and transitional arrangements published by MHCLG)⁷³.

- 8.13 While retrofitting may reduce the operational emissions, embodied carbon can increase when emissions associated with the sourcing, manufacture and transportation of materials are considered. Further emissions can be generated if inappropriate measures need to be removed or replaced later because they do not perform effectively. It is therefore important to consider the whole life carbon impact of measures.
- 8.14 The embodied carbon of buildings and structures are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Proposals are required to demonstrate that opportunities for the retention and retrofitting of existing buildings within a site have been considered and accommodated as far as practicable and viable in the design of new development. Where proposals seek to demolish a building and / or structure, evidence must be submitted with the planning application to demonstrate why this is necessary. This evidence should demonstrate why demolition would better facilitate the fundamental purpose of planning, the achievement of sustainable development.
- 8.15 There is a large number of designated heritage assets, including listed buildings, and other traditionally constructed historic buildings in the District. It is vital that these buildings are adapted to meet the challenges of the climate crisis, while still ensuring that their historic significance and character

is retained. The maintenance and repair of older buildings is essential to their long-term conservation and energy performance. It should be undertaken before adaptations are considered.

- 8.16 The approach to retrofit and energy efficiency proposals can be very different for traditionally constructed buildings, particularly those of solid wall construction, compared with modern buildings. Installing inappropriate measures can cause harm both to the historic significance of the heritage asset but also not deliver the desired energy or carbon savings, or comfort and health outcomes for occupants for example if the measures exacerbate damp issues in the property. Given the challenge of retrofitting traditional historic buildings, a "whole building approach" should be taken for any significant measures ensuring that the benefits are maximised and any detrimental impacts avoided.
- 8.17 It is important that any measures that might be harmful to a heritage asset are fully assessed in line with the Historical Environment Policies in this Local Plan, ensuring that the implications of the measures and their potential public benefits are fully understood, normally as part of a whole-building assessment. A range of information, as set out in the policy, are likely to be required, in support of relevant applications, to justify any measures that have the potential to be harmful to the significance of the heritage asset, for example providing details on the likely carbon savings of any measures, including the embodied carbon cost of those measures.

⁷³ The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-building-circular-012026/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-building-circular-012026-letter>

h. proposals to demolish existing buildings and structures of traditional construction will not be permitted unless that demolition and rebuild would support the principles of achieving sustainable development, including consideration of embodied carbon and the circular economy and be justified by the relevant planning balances relating to heritage assets.

The Net Zero Carbon Toolkit

- 8.18 The Council firmly believes that net zero should be the standard for all new housing and future-fit projects in Cotswold District. To help others reach net zero and to speed up the UK's collective response to the climate emergency, the Net Zero Carbon Toolkit⁷⁶, which is a material planning consideration, is openly available as a resource for private and public sector.
- 8.19 Future-fitting will be encouraged through a range of mechanisms under the influence of the Council and its partners, including via Planning Services, information and advice services, community enabling and support projects and Housing Services.
- 8.20 The Toolkit can also be used alongside Historic England's Retrofit and Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings publications⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ Achieving net zero carbon homes (Cotswold District Council): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/environment/climate-action/how-to-achieve-net-zero-carbon-homes/>

⁷⁷ Whole house approach to improving energy efficiency; Advice on statutory requirements; Guidance on installing energy efficiency measures (Historic England): <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/>

⁷⁸ "A1-A5" relates to modules A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 within the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment (RICS WLCA): <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/construction-standards/whole-life-carbon-assessment>. The RICS WLCA defines buildings' whole-life carbon into a range of modules that are lettered/numbered according to when in the building's lifecycle they occur. Modules A1 to A5 represent emissions caused by the creation of a building from raw material extraction through to completion of construction. Modules A1-A5 are therefore also termed 'up-front embodied carbon'.

Net Zero Carbon New Buildings

- 8.21 New buildings should be designed and constructed to be Net Zero Carbon in operation to enable the District to achieve Net Zero and enable residents to have low energy bills. Net Zero Carbon buildings use less energy, do not use fossil fuels on site, are powered by renewable energy sources and in some cases may be able to store energy to use it at a different time. Emphasis is also placed on reducing their embodied carbon during construction and their long-term environmental impact, including demolition and re-use.
- 8.22 A significant amount of work has been undertaken to define and articulate the detailed requirements of a Net Zero Carbon building. This includes the work undertaken and published by the Climate Change Committee, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Chartered Institute of Building Services (CIBSE), the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC), the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP), the Passivhaus Trust, the Good Homes Alliance (GHA) the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard⁷⁸.
- 8.23 This work has led to various standards and guidance that are very similar in their approach, setting similar metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that include:

- Energy Use Intensity (EUI) targets (kWh/m² floor area/yr)
- Renewable energy generation (either as equal to annual energy demand or sometimes in kWh/m² footprint/yr), and
- Upfront Embodied carbon targets (kgCO₂/m² floor area (A1-A5)).

- 8.24 Delivering high-quality energy efficient and low carbon buildings requires addressing several aspects. It is not one-dimensional, hence why the delivery of Net Zero Carbon buildings relies on meeting requirements in different areas, including quality assurance to deliver performance in practice.
- 8.25 It is possible that the definition of Net Zero Carbon buildings will evolve over time, for example because of the work currently undertaken by the building industry on the Net Zero Carbon building standard (UKNZCBS⁷⁹). The Local Plan supporting evidence base has sought to be consistent with this work.
- 8.26 Net Zero Carbon buildings in operation are supported by six core principles:

- 1 Energy efficiency:** buildings use energy for heating, cooling, hot water, ventilation, lighting, cooking and appliances. All energy use within the building must be considered, i.e. not only "regulated" energy use. The efficient use of energy reduces both carbon emissions and running costs

⁷⁹ The UKNZCBS is a standard developed in coalition by all major standard-setting bodies in the UK built environment. After a year-long pilot, the full Version 1 of the UKNZCBS was published in Spring 2026. The UKNZCBS is designed to define what energy/carbon performance is needed in buildings in order to be in line with the UK's transition to net zero carbon by 2050. However, please note that the standards it sets would not make a building net zero carbon in all cases, because its renewable energy generation targets are set in relation to building footprint, not in relation to matching the building's energy demand: <https://www.nzcbldings.co.uk/the-standard>

- 2 Low carbon heat:** low carbon heat is an essential feature of Net Zero Carbon buildings. All new buildings should be built with a low carbon heating system and must not connect to the gas network or, more generally, use fossil fuels on-site
- 3 Renewable energy generation:** new buildings should seek to add at least as much renewable energy generation to the energy system as the energy they will use in an annual basis. In Cotswold, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels will usually be the renewable energy system to deliver this objective
- 4 Energy flexibility:** new buildings should be able to store energy and use it at different times (e.g. when it is cheaper and/ or lower carbon)
- 5 Embodied carbon:** operational carbon is only part of the story. Net Zero Carbon buildings should also minimise carbon that is embodied in the materials used in construction of the building and their impact throughout their lifecycle, including demolition, and
- 6 A very limited role for offsetting:** the Climate Change Committee is clear: offsetting must have a very limited and defined role if we are to achieve Net Zero by 2050, and it should not be relied on as a key mechanism to decarbonise new buildings. Its role should therefore be clearly defined and restricted.

- 8.27 In simple terms, to achieve net zero carbon in a new building, the energy use of a building should be matched by renewable energy generation on an annual basis.
- 8.28 In addition to **Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings**, buildings must also comply with all requirements of the Building Regulations Part L (2021) and Part L (2026) (the Future Homes and Buildings Standard) from March 2027 (in accordance with the implementation and transitional arrangements published by MHCLG)⁸⁰. New dwellings should also comply with the requirements of Part O (Overheating)⁸¹. However, the compliance with Building Regulations continues to be through building control, not through the planning permission system.

Space Heating Demand

- 8.29 The space heating demand is the amount of heat energy needed to heat a home over a year and is expressed in kWh/m²/yr. It is a measure of the thermal efficiency of the building elements. Various design and specification decisions affect space heating demand including building form and orientation, insulation, airtightness, windows and doors and the type of ventilation system.

- 8.30 The Climate Change Committee has published a report in 2019 named 'UK housing – fit for the future?'⁸². The report highlights the need to build new buildings with 'ultra-low' levels of energy use. It makes a specific reference to space heating demand and recommends a maximum of 15-20 kWh/m²/yr for new dwellings. This recommendation is also in line with the recommendations of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI), the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard⁸³ and the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC).
- 8.31 As a dwelling with a low space heating demand would lose heat very slowly, it will place lower 'peak demand' on the grid thus also make it easier for the wider energy system to deliver energy in a flexible way, helping to maximise the contribution from renewable energy and reduce energy cost benefits for the residents.
- 8.32 **Core Policy 27** operates an approach where space heating demand requirements become more stringent over time. This is designed to support town planners, architects, and building specialists to put in place new processes and provide time to upskill.

⁸⁰ The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: Building Circular 01/2026 (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-building-circular-012026/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-building-circular-012026-letter>

⁸¹ Overheating: Approved Document O (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overheating-approved-document-o>

⁸² UK Housing: Fit for the future? (Climate Change Committee, 2019): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/uk-housing-fit-for-the-future/>

⁸³ The UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (2026): <https://www.nzcbuildings.co.uk/the-standard>

Energy Use Intensity (EUI)

- 8.33 For new buildings to be compliant with our climate change targets, they need to use a total amount of energy that is small enough so that it can be entirely matched, on an annual basis, by renewable energy and low carbon energy generation on site. Reducing total energy use is also beneficial as it would directly reduce energy costs for residents and building users and minimises the need for grid capacity expansion as above.
- 8.34 The Energy Use Intensity (EUI) metric is beneficial as it can be measured postconstruction, therefore helping to drive down the performance gap which is a significant issue in the construction industry.
- 8.35 This policy operates an approach where the Energy Use Intensity (EUI) requirement for dwellings becomes more ambitious over time. This is designed to support town planners, architects, and building specialists to put in place new processes and provide time to upskill.
- 8.36 For more information about the EUI metric, please refer to the Sustainable Construction Policies: Operational energy and carbon evidence base⁸⁴.

No Fossil Fuel Use.

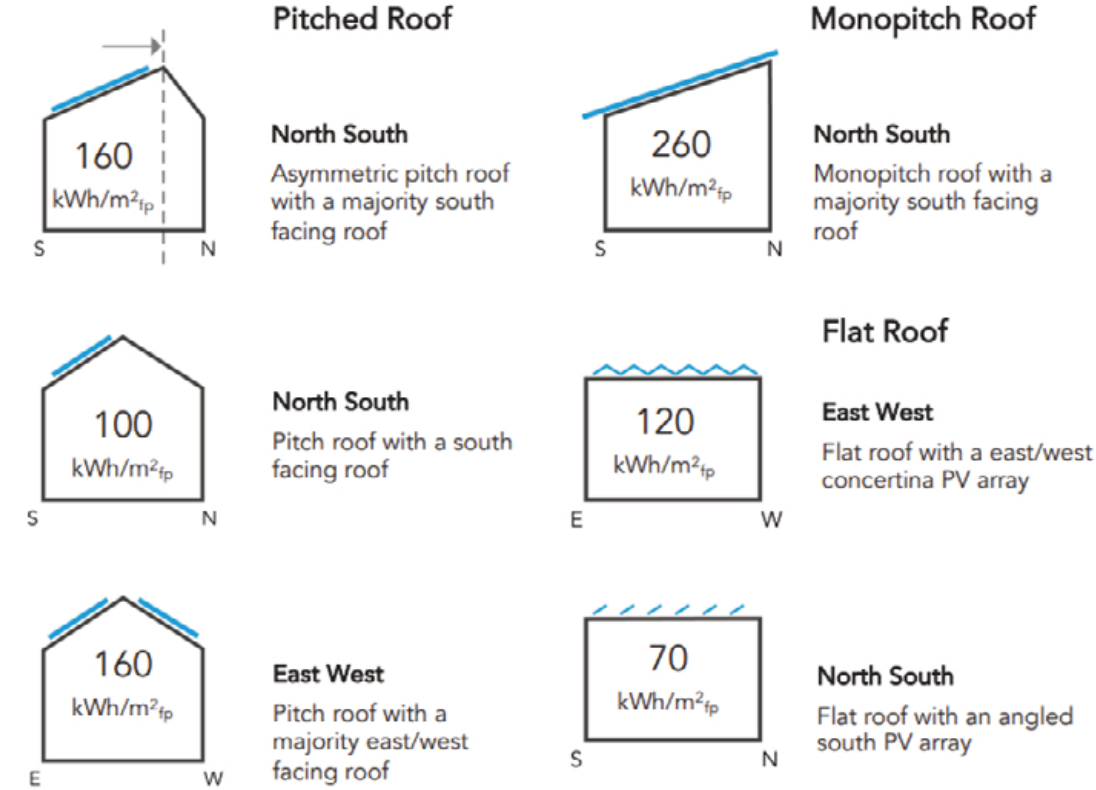
- 8.37 New buildings cannot continue to burn fossil fuels for heating and hot water if the UK is to achieve Net Zero and for Cotswold to play its proportionate role in the achievements of nationally legislated

⁸⁴ Sustainable Construction Policies: Operational energy and carbon evidence base (Etude and Levitt Berstein, 2023): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-SustainableConstruction>

- carbon budgets. Low carbon heating is therefore an essential component of a Net Zero Carbon building and fossil fuels shall not be used on-site to provide heating or hot water. Fossil fuel should not be used for cooking either.
- 8.38 The main low carbon alternative to fossil fuels currently available is electricity. Electricity can be provided through on-site renewables and through grid electricity, which is becoming increasingly decarbonised. The use of electricity for heating, hot water and cooking also benefits air quality as there are no local emissions. However, it is important that energy use is limited to reduce the burden on the national grid in the wider context of electrification of transport and buildings.
- 8.39 Heat pumps can provide both space heating and domestic water heating and can serve individual homes or communal heating systems. The key benefit of heat pumps is their efficiency. Efficiencies vary but are typically around 350% for an Air Source Heat Pump. Heat sources can include outside air, the ground or a local water source.
- 8.40 Direct electric heating systems convert electricity directly into heat through resistive heating. It is typically 100% efficient. When direct electricity is used it is important to reduce the risk of high energy bills by ensuring that the dwelling is truly low energy. This can be ensured using an independently certified performance standard that limits space heating demand (e.g. Passivhaus). Sustainable green hydrogen is not currently a viable option.

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Figure 8.1: Roof design can be optimised to maximise energy output from photovoltaics.



On-Site Renewable Energy

8.41 New buildings should contribute to the significant increase in renewable energy generation required between now and 2050. The simplest way to achieve the overall objective of balancing total energy use and renewable energy generation for new buildings at a system level is to balance this at the site level, rather than at an individual dwelling level.

8.42 A significant advantage is the generation of electricity close to its point of use, helping to deliver significant energy cost savings for residents and building users. The supporting evidence shows that for domestic buildings the level of generation is deliverable for typical new development. It is also important to note that all new dwellings will have to comply with the PV requirements of the Future Homes Standard from 2027-28⁸⁵. Roof design can also be optimised to maximise energy output from photovoltaics.

85 The Future Homes and Buildings Standard, Approved Document L 2026 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approved-document-l-2026>

Figure 8.2: List of Requirements a Planning Application would have to Meet Before Being Allowed to Use Offsetting as a Planning Compliance Mechanism.

Reduced operational energy consumption	Achieve a Space Heating Demand and an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) lower than the levels required in the Local Plan (e.g. 30 kWh/m ² GIA/yr and 40 kWh/m ² GIA/yr respectively for domestic buildings)
Low carbon energy supply	No gas connection or fossil fuel use on site (or connection to heat networks using fossil fuels)
On-site renewable energy generation	Achieve a minimum electricity generation intensity compliant with the requirement in the Local Plan (or as a minimum 50-120kWh/m ² ground floor area/yr)
Net Zero energy balance	Annual balance of zero for the whole development showing predicted energy use and renewable energy generation on-site.

Energy Offsetting

8.43 The Climate Change Committee is clear, offsetting must have a very limited and defined role if we are to achieve Net Zero by 2050⁸⁶. Its role in the Local Plan as part of the Net zero carbon new buildings suite of policies should therefore be limited to a mechanism that enables buildings that cannot technically achieve net zero energy balance on site to be ‘deemed compliant’ with planning policy. This policy limits the role and scope of the offset mechanism to a ‘renewable energy offset’ with the offset price expressed in £/kWh instead of £/tCO₂. This makes it independent from carbon factor changes.

8.44 **Figure 8.2** provides a list of requirements an application would have to meet before being allowed to use offsetting as a planning compliance mechanism. However, the offset mechanism is restricted to funding ‘missing’ PVs.

8.45 Offset contribution will be used to fund PV systems in Cotswold District (or if not feasible then within Gloucestershire) to compensate the renewable energy generation shortfall. Therefore, the offset price should be set at a level which enables the Council to find, manage, fund and deliver these PV systems off-site. This purpose will be defined in the legal agreement related to the permission.

86 Voluntary Carbon Markets and Offsetting (Climate Change Committee, 2022): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Voluntary-carbon-markets-and-offsetting-Final.pdf>

Core Policy 27: Net Zero Carbon New Buildings

All new dwellings shall be designed and built to be Net Zero Carbon in operation. They should be low energy buildings, use low carbon heating, contribute to the generation of renewable energy on-site, be flexible in terms of energy use and be constructed with low levels of embodied carbon. The delivery of these policy requirements will be supported by appropriate planning condition(s).

Space Heating Demand

Until 31 December 2030, applications for non-domestic buildings and/or new dwelling(s) must include a predictive energy modelling assessment to demonstrate a space energy demand limit of no more than 30 kWh/m² GIA/yr.

From 1 January 2031, applications for non-domestic buildings and/or new dwelling(s), must include a predictive energy modelling assessment to demonstrate a space energy demand limit of no more than 20 kWh/m²yr for detached houses and bungalows, and 15 kWh/m²yr for all other typologies.

Energy Use Intensity (EUI)

Until 31 December 2030, applications for new dwelling(s) must include a predictive energy modelling assessment to demonstrate an EUI of no more than 40 kWh/m²/GIA/yr.

From 1 January 2031, applications for new dwelling(s), must include a predicative energy modelling assessment to demonstrate an EUI of no more than 35 kWh/m² GIA/yr.

New non-domestic buildings shall achieve an EUI of no more than the following (where technically feasible) by building type or nearest equivalent:

- a. warehouses and light industrial units (heated; excluding refrigerated storage units and data centres): 40 kWh/m² GIA/yr
- b. student/keyworker accommodation: 65 kWh/m² GIA/yr
- c. higher education teaching facilities, GP surgery: 70 kWh/m² GIA/yr
- d. offices: 90 kWh/m² GIA/yr, and
- e. care homes: 150 kWh/m² GIA/yr.

Applicants must therefore submit predictive energy modelling to demonstrate that the development accords with this target. It is accepted that some sub-classes of building within these categories will unavoidably exceed these limits due to the inherent purpose of the building, for example retail units focussed on groceries or food and beverage which therefore have needs for extensive refrigeration. In such cases, the application should demonstrate how the energy use has been minimised as far as feasible and viable, and compare the predictive energy modelling outcomes to the most relevant EUI limits from the UK Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard for the anticipated year of building completion.

No Fossil Fuel Use

New developments shall be constructed without connection to the national/central gas grid. All applications shall be submitted with sufficient information to demonstrate this.

New buildings shall be constructed to provide primary sources of space heating, cooling, hot water and cooking by means of non-fossil fuels. All applications shall be submitted with sufficient information to demonstrate this.

On-Site Renewable Energy

Renewable energy should be generated on-site for all new developments. All applications for new-build development shall be submitted with sufficient information to demonstrate that the following requirements are met or justification as to why they cannot be technically achieved.

The amount of expected energy generated in a year shall match or exceed the predicted annual energy demand of the building, i.e. Renewable energy generation (kWh/m²/yr) = or > EUI (kWh/m²/yr).

When this is not technically possible or viable (as demonstrated by suitable justification) to achieve an energy balance, the amount of renewable energy generated in a year shall be, as a minimum:

- f. at least 120 kWh/ground floor area per year for industrial buildings (measured in per square meter of ground floor area), and
- g. at least 50kWh/m² ground floor area per year for all other building types.

Energy Offsetting

Offsetting will only be accepted as a means to achieving planning policy compliance a last resort if the building is compliant with all other Net Zero carbon buildings policies and in particular if the following conditions have been met:

- h. the proposed building must not use fossil fuels on-site
- i. it must have a level of space heating demand and EUI compliant with the Local Plan, and
- j. on-site renewable energy generation (e.g. through PVs) has been maximised and achieves at least 120 kWh/m² ground floor area for industrial buildings and 80 kWh/m² for other building types.

In these circumstances, the applicant must, within a timescale required within the associated legal agreement, provide a reasoned calculation of the shortfall in renewable energy generation to enable the annual renewable energy generation to match the EUI in kWh. The applicant shall pay to the Council a sum of money equivalent to this shortfall to fund renewable energy installations in the District, or in Gloucestershire, where appropriate.

Large Scale Renewable Energy

- 8.46 The government’s clean energy mission targets achieving a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030, supported by a doubling of onshore wind and a quadrupling of solar deployment⁸⁷. The net zero carbon transition will also require the electrification of home heating and transport, which currently rely largely on fossil fuels⁸⁸. We therefore expect to see a significant rise in demand for electricity and renewable energy in the coming decades.
- 8.47 Current renewable capacity in the District is dominated by small scale generation sites. At the end of 2022, the District’s renewable electricity generation capacity stood at 74MW⁸⁹, dominated by solar photovoltaic technology (almost 69MW, from over 1,700 sites, an average of around 40kW per site), and including eight small wind sites with a combined capacity of 200kW.
- 8.48 To assist identifying the potential for supply and demand for renewable and low carbon energy, and the impacts this might have on environmental and heritage assets, the Council commissioned a ‘Renewable Energy Study’⁹⁰.

- 8.49 The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN3 notes the positive role that large-scale renewable projects play in the mitigation of climate change, the delivery of energy security and the urgency of meeting the national targets for renewable energy supply and emissions reductions. The National Planning Policy Framework asks plans to identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources. It states that when determining applications, Local Planning Authorities should support planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon development and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal’s contribution to a net zero future.
- 8.50 In the context of Cotswolds Climate Emergency Declaration, and the importance for the Local Plan to be consistent with the national policy, the Council wants to promote a positive framework for supporting increased renewable energy generation in the District by the end of the Local Plan period in 2043. Therefore, this policy sets out a positive and proactive approach for determining applications and guiding development to the right locations.
- 8.51 To decarbonise the electricity system by 2030, the government is planning for a major expansion

⁸⁷ Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2025): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

⁸⁸ This is especially the case for transport, which is currently 94.5% fossil fuelled (source: DfT transport energy consumption dataset ENV0102: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/transport-energy-and-environment-data-tables-env>) although the share of electric vehicles on the road is growing. For grid electricity, the phaseout of coal and the increase in renewable generation across the UK means that UK fossil fuels only contribute 27% of UK grid electricity generation as of 2025: <https://www.neso.energy/news/britains-energy-explained-2025-review>

⁸⁹ 73.4MW at the end of 2022, per Department for Energy Security and Net Zero Regional Renewable Statistics, Renewable Electricity by Local Authority: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

⁹⁰ Cotswold Renewable Energy Study (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/kr1lgbj3/cotswold-renewable-energy-study-january-2025.pdf>

of the distribution network (the local low voltage network) and transmission system (the high voltage lines and pylons). The National Energy System Operator (NESO) is responsible for identifying and modelling infrastructure requirements and critical grid upgrades through Regional Energy Spatial Plans (RESP) and the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP). Where local consents are required for infrastructure upgrades, the Council will give weight to the identified need for them.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission

- 8.52 This policy sets out the criteria for all standalone renewable energy projects. Some renewable energy proposals are considered Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects (NSIP):
- solar and wind power generating projects of 100MW or above (noting that the solar projects threshold was raised from 50MW as of 31st December 2025), and
 - other on-shore power generating projects of 50MW or above, which includes energy storage that is pumped hydro storage. (It does not include battery energy storage).
- 8.53 Proposals going via the NSIP route can be determined nationally rather than by the Local Planning Authority. These NSIPs are determined in accordance with the decision-making framework in

⁹¹ Future Energy Scenarios (FES) (National Energy System Operator, 2025): <https://www.neso.energy/publications/future-energy-scenarios-fes>

⁹² 6th Carbon Budget (Climate Change Committee, 2020): <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan).

- 8.54 In estimating the future electricity demand of Cotswold District, as set out in **Table 8.2**, the average of the National Grid’s Future Energy Scenarios (FES) 2023⁹¹ and the Climate Change Committee’s (CCC) 6th Carbon Budget⁹² has been used.

Table 8.2: Current and Projected Cotswold Energy Demand.

Sector	Current Cotswold demand (2021, GWh)	Projected Cotswold demand (2050, GWh)
Industry and commercial	195.4	293.7
Residential	222.1	366.0
Road and rail transport	8.3	124.3
Total	425.8	784.0

- 8.55 The Renewable Energy Study also analyses several deployment scenarios showing that it would be technically possible to generate sufficient electricity from renewable energy sources within the District to cover the District’s energy demand by 2050. However, the technology mixes in the study are for illustrative purposes only, as the deployability of wind turbines and ground mounted solar PV in particular is subject to often complex site-specific constraints that need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 8.56 The Study lists a series of strategic recommendations for renewable energy development, some of which are not planning related (such as renewable energy systems on Council buildings⁹³ and doing wider community engagement and facilitation of partnerships), as well as recommendations regarding enhanced energy standards for buildings and heat networks which are covered by other policies in this chapter.

⁹³ However, renewable energy systems on Council buildings may be a suitable avenue to effectively spend any offsetting payments raised from developers in accordance with the separate policy on net zero carbon new buildings.

Core Policy 28: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation, energy storage and distribution networks will be supported where they contribute to generating Cotswold District's electricity demand from renewable sources or alleviate grid constraints and / or allow further renewable developments to be deployed.

Proposals will need to meet all the following requirements:

- commercial-led energy schemes with a capacity over 5MW shall provide an option to communities to own at least 5% of the scheme subject to viability
- there are appropriate plans and a mechanism in place for the removal of the technology at the end of its useful lifespan, and restoration of the site to its original use or an acceptable alternative use, and
- they are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Proposals for renewable energy that affect the Cotswolds National Landscape or Special Landscape Areas must demonstrate the benefits of development outweigh harm to the designated area or its setting.

Proposals for battery and other energy storage systems and balancing plant will be permitted where the visual impact of associated development and plant is minimised or mitigated, and safety, and/ or noise risks are adequately managed or mitigated. Balancing plants that increase the District's carbon emissions, for example those that burn fossil fuels directly, will be refused unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant that the objectives of the proposal could not feasibly be met by alternatives such as battery storage.

Identifying Suitable Areas for Wind and Solar Developments

- 8.57 The Renewable Energy Study also incorporates a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) for Renewable Energy Development to help identify areas of potential suitability for wind and solar energy. This study comprises the evidence base for initial identification of potentially suitable areas for wind and solar energy by combining the results of the assessment of technical potential with the assessment of landscape sensitivity.
- 8.58 The assessment of technical potential within the Renewable Energy Study identifies areas where wind and solar can 'technically' be delivered in the District based on a number of assumptions regarding the key opportunities such as levels of wind speed or solar irradiance, and the potential constraints to development, i.e. nature conservation designations, heritage designations, physical constraints (slope, built development etc). In line with National Planning Practice Guidance, the assessment approach was based on the former Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Capacity Methodology: Methodology for the English Regions (2010) but was updated and refined to take account of local circumstances within the District where appropriate. Full details of the assumptions used to identify the technical potential within the District are set out in the Renewable Energy Study⁹⁴.

⁹⁴ Cotswold Renewable Energy Study (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/kr1lgbj3/cotswold-renewable-energy-study-january-2025.pdf>
⁹⁵ Cotswold Renewable Energy Study (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/kr1lgbj3/cotswold-renewable-energy-study-january-2025.pdf>

- 8.59 Different landscapes present different opportunities for renewable energy, and the Landscape Sensitivity study identifies which landscape character types within the District are more or less sensitive to different scales of wind energy and ground mounted solar PV developments⁹⁵.

- 8.60 The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment considered the suitability of different turbine heights (to blade tip) as set out in **Table 8.3**.

Table 8.3: Wind Energy Development Sizes.

Turbine scale banding	Turbine height (to blade tip)
Small wind installation	26m to 60m
Medium wind installation	61m to 99m
Large wind installation	101m to 150m
Very large wind installation	151m to 200m

- 8.61 The size of solar energy development can also differ greatly in terms of power output and area covered. Schemes in the UK range in area from less than 1 hectare, up to well over 100 hectares. The sizes considered in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment are set out in **Table 8.4**.

Table 8.4: Solar PV Development Sizes.

Solar PV scale bandings	Solar PV size (hectares)
Small solar PV installation	1 to 5 hectares
Medium solar PV installation	5 to 20 hectares
Large solar PV installation	20 to 50 hectares
Very large solar PV installation	50 to 120 hectares

- 8.62 The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment provides overall scores of landscape sensitivity for the different scales of solar PV and wind energy developments within different landscape character types, which are set out in **Table 8.5**.
- 8.63 While the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results provide an indication of landscape sensitivity, they are not definitive statements on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process in accordance with the criteria set out in the policies in this chapter.

Table 8.5: Landscape Sensitivity.

High Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from wind and solar energy development. Such development is likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate/High Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from wind and solar energy development. There may be some limited opportunity to accommodate wind turbines/ solar panels without significantly changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in siting and design.
Moderate Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb wind and solar energy development, it is likely to cause a degree of change in character. Care would be needed in siting and design.
Low/Moderate Fewer of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind and solar energy development with limited change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics.
Low Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust in that they can withstand change from the introduction of wind turbines and solar panels. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind and solar energy development without a significant change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing these developments to ensure best fit with the landscape.

Renewables and the Cotswold National Landscape

- 8.64 A significant proportion of the District (80%) is within the nationally designated Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) where National guidance states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty. A smaller area of the District falls within Special Landscape Areas that have been identified to protect the setting of the CNL and these areas should be considered in the same way as for the CNL.
- 8.65 Notwithstanding this, the Council acknowledges that if its targets for renewable energy deployment are to be met, some renewable energy development, in keeping with the special qualities of the CNL, will be necessary. The contribution of proposals to meeting the Council’s renewable energy deployment targets, carbon reduction targets and other benefits will be weighed against the landscape and other impacts of the development on a case-by-case basis. In terms of wind energy, there will be a presumption against such development in areas of high landscape sensitivity within the Cotswolds National Landscape, as identified by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment in the Renewable Energy Study.

96 Cotswold Renewable Energy Study Appendix B (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/uj0js1cb/appendix-b-renewable-energy-assessment-figures.pdf>

Wind Energy Development

- 8.66 Government policy requires Local Planning Authorities to have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources including the identification of suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources. Local Plans should identify suitable areas for such development and set out the factors that will be taken into account when considering individual proposals within these areas.
- 8.67 In 2020, onshore wind energy was recognised in a report by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy as being one of the cheapest forms of energy generation (including conventional generational sources)⁹⁶.

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Core Policy 29: Wind Energy Development

- Wind energy development proposals will be permitted where they:
- a. avoid or adequately mitigate shadow, flicker, noise and adverse impact on air traffic operations, radar and air navigational installations
 - b. do not have an unacceptable overbearing effect on nearby settlements
 - c. do not lie within an area of high landscape sensitivity, including within the Cotswolds National Landscape or Special Landscape Areas, and
 - d. their siting has been informed by ecological survey to identify and minimise the risks to birds.
- Wind energy proposals are more likely to be permitted where they:
- e. are in locations with technical potential for wind and in areas of lower landscape sensitivity (for the scale of turbine(s) under consideration) as identified on the Energy Opportunity Maps (Appendix B of the Renewable Energy Study⁹⁷)
 - f. are for the repowering of an existing wind turbine / farm, or
 - g. they comprise community energy schemes as defined in **Core Policy 31**.

Proposals should clearly demonstrate that the scale of the development is appropriate to the site, the benefits of the development outweigh any harm to the local community.

97 Cotswold Renewable Energy Study Appendix B (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/ujojs1cb/appendix-b-renewable-energy-assessment-figures.pdf>

Roof-Mounted and Ground Mounted Solar Arrays

- 8.68 Ground mounted solar arrays (also known as solar farms/solar fields) can make a significant contribution to the amount of renewable energy generated in the District.
- 8.69 The nature of the District means that arrays should be sited on land of lower agricultural quality and which is not functionally linked to protected sites (SACs, SPAs and SSSIs) and does not disrupt opportunities for Nature Recovery and areas identified for and/or delivering Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 8.70 In addition, ground-mounted solar arrays can provide benefits to biodiversity and soils by providing an undisturbed area that can host a rich variety of species and rest core soil nutrients. Solar arrays can also retain agricultural uses such as sheep grazing and can support rural businesses and the rural economy.
- 8.71 In many cases roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are now permitted development. Where planning permission is required, solar arrays should be designed to complement the aesthetic of the host building. Consideration of character should inform design choices in line with relevant Local Plan policies. Designing solar arrays as a complementary part of a building can enable the PV arrays to complement the

aesthetic of a building or development and need not compromise the character of protected areas such as Conservation Areas provided proposals are consistent with **Core Policy 30: Roof-Mounted and Ground-Mounted Solar Panels**. When designing building mounted solar arrays, consideration should be given to aesthetics and character in design choices in line with the Cotswold Design Code. As detailed in **Core Policy 27**, the appropriate use of micro-renewables in properties with heritage value and within Conservation Areas will be supported where they demonstrate that they are consistent with the energy hierarchy and minimise harm to the heritage significance of the building. The Council strongly supports the deployment of solar PV panels on industrial and commercial rooftops, most of which will not require planning permission.

Core Policy 30: Roof-Mounted and Ground-Mounted Solar Panels

Development proposals will be supported and encouraged in principle where planning permission is required for building-mounted solar thermal and photovoltaics panels and the development of solar arrays over car parks, including within Conservation Areas, subject to the criteria set out below:

- In addition, ground mounted solar energy development proposals will be permitted where they:
- a. avoid the loss of hedgerow and woodland connectivity unless appropriately mitigated
 - b. avoid the loss and deterioration of UK priority habitats (as shown on the Policies Map)
 - c. meet current best practice guidelines and standards on protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and
 - d. are supported by a Glint and Glare Assessment which demonstrates how the location and orientation of solar panels will not have an adverse impact, cumulatively or in isolation, on sensitive receptors, such as residential dwellings, highways users and aviation paths.

Ground mounted solar energy proposals are more likely to be permitted in locations with technical potential for solar and in areas of lower landscape sensitivity (for the size of development under consideration) as identified on the Energy Opportunity Maps (Appendix B of the Renewable Energy Study⁹⁸).

98 Cotswold Renewable Energy Study Appendix B (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2025): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/ujojs1cb/appendix-b-renewable-energy-assessment-figures.pdf>

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Community Renewable Energy Schemes

- 8.72 **Core Policy 31** supports the delivery of community led renewable energy schemes, the broader community involvement that they bring and the social and economic benefits they deliver for local communities. This follows with the approach set out in the government’s Clean Power Plan and Local Power Plan which plans for a major expansion of community energy sector, with the potential for the sector to contribute up to 8GW of clean, homegrown energy. The policy recognises there is a spectrum of ownership models, from 100% community owned projects, joint ventures with the private sector, through to predominantly private enterprises, albeit still offering a minority proportion of community ownership.
- 8.73 Communities should feel tangible and enduring benefit from their role in creating a low-cost, clean energy system. Such benefits can include both monetary (in-cash) and non-monetary (in-kind) contributions that improve the local economy, society, and environment. For example, community benefits could include funding to support community projects, funding to support community priorities such as local tourism, education and skills

development opportunities, or in-kind benefits, such as direct investment in local infrastructure or donation of equipment. They are additional to the intrinsic benefits that come from development and construction, such as local employment opportunities.

- 8.74 ‘Community ownership’ is defined as where a community group is provided with the opportunity to make an investment in a commercially owned renewable energy project. Arrangements where local residents, community groups, or public bodies have a direct ownership stake in renewable energy infrastructure, enabling them to participate in decision-making and share in the financial and social benefits generated by the project

Core Policy 31: Community Renewable Energy Schemes

Proposals for community renewable schemes will be supported where evidence of community support or community benefits can be demonstrated, with administrative and financial structures in place to deliver / manage / own the project and any income from it. The host community, or communities, must maintain an enduring legal interest in the operation and governance of such schemes.

Encouragement will be given to schemes to provide for a community benefit in terms of profit sharing or proportion of community ownership. If community ownership is not viable, community benefits should go directly to community organisations and be reinvested into projects that improve the local economy, society, and/ or environment.

Low Carbon Heat Networks

- 8.75 Heat networks are a means of distributing heat at scale around a group of buildings. Heat networks are normally more suitable for high-density developments (e.g. multistorey blocks of flats in an urban area). Although Cotswold District is not an urban authority or an area with many multi-storey apartment blocks, there may be situations where fifth generation heat networks⁹⁹ can provide a low carbon heating option where individual systems are unsuitable. For example:
- blocks of flats where there may not be space for individual air source heat pumps, and
 - compact town centres where heat pumps cannot be physically accommodated at the property.
- 8.76 Additionally, heat networks can provide opportunities to reuse heat from sources where it would otherwise be wasted, such as data centres or refrigerated premises, which need to reject a lot of heat.
- 8.77 It is therefore important that where a low carbon heat network is provided within a development, it is done so in a sustainable and climate friendly way.
- 8.78 The following provides a list of heat sources that are compatible / not compatible with net zero.

⁹⁹ Fifth generation or ambient loop heat networks operate at low temperatures between 10oC and 30oC. One benefit of this low-temperature operation is that multiple water-source heat pumps can be used on the network. They can use the network as a heat source or a heat sink, depending on the demand for heating or cooling.

8.79 Heat sources compatible with net zero:

- heat pumps, due to decarbonisation of the electricity grid. These can use air, ground, or water as a heat source
- geothermal energy, which can be used directly or as a heat source for heat pumps in some locations
- industrial processes that do not rely on combustion fossil fuels such as refrigeration, data centres, electricity substations, and subways, and
- wastewater, which can be relatively warm due to discharge of hot water into drains that can provide a heat source for heat pumps.

8.80 Heat sources not compatible with net zero:

- fossil gas boilers (although it is less common, some networks may use standalone fossil gas boilers)
- fossil gas fired combined heat and power (and other fossil fuel based thermal power generation) these systems usually also have gas boilers to provide a significant part of the heat demand in winter
- unabated waste to energy (these municipal waste incineration plants generate electricity with hot water as waste, through incineration), and
- industrial processes that release large amounts of greenhouse gases such as cement, lime, and iron and steel production.

Core Policy 32: Low Carbon Heat Networks

Applications proposing to use low carbon heat networks will be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

- a. the proposed heat source(s) is/are genuinely low carbon, and net zero compatible (Building Regulations Part L emission factors will not be acceptable)
- b. the proposal will not use the following heat sources: oil boilers, fossil gas boilers, fossil gas-fired combined heat and power (CHP), unabated biomass or unabated energy from waste
- c. their heat distribution flow will be below 30°C
- d. the proposal complies with CIBSE / Association for Decentralised Energy CP1 Heat Network Code of Practice, and
- e. the proposal is registered with the Heat Trust's voluntary consumer protection scheme.





Chapter nine Transport

Introduction

- 9.1 This chapter sets out our policies to help ensure that development reduces the need to travel, where possible, supports healthier and lower-carbon travel choices, and manages residual transport impacts in a way that reflects the transport hierarchy and the District’s wider climate, health and place-making objectives.
- 9.2 The strategic context for transport planning in the District is set out in the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (2020-41)¹⁰⁰ prepared by the County Council as Local Highway Authority with which all development proposals will need to align and be assessed against. A central objective of the LTP is to deliver a ‘resilient transport network that enables sustainable economic growth providing door-to-door travel choices’. It is important the Local Plan is read alongside the Local Transport Plan and its associated guidance so that land use and transport planning work are considered together from the outset.
- 9.3 Cotswold is a large and predominantly rural district

and local evidence shows that transport presents some challenges for the District. The 2023 Cotswold Transport Decarbonisation Study found that transport accounts for 45.4% of local emissions, that transport-related carbon emissions per person are around 60% higher than the England average, and that 95% of transport emissions come from cars, vans and light goods vehicles¹⁰¹. Census evidence also points to high car availability, with only 11% of households having no car or van. This is why the majority of development proposed by this Local Plan is located on large strategic sites, in locations that have, or can be made to have, good sustainable connectivity between the development, and the larger settlements, such as Cirencester. However, it also means that for more local and smaller scale development, a realistic and place-based approach to transport decarbonisation and travel behaviour change, is needed.

- 9.4 The evidence shows that different parts of the District have different levels of access to services and public transport, so the mix and balance of transport measures will vary between Cirencester, strategic site allocations, Principal and Non-Principal settlements and more dispersed rural settlements/ open countryside.
- 9.5 To support net zero or low carbon growth within the District, the strategic site allocations identified in this Plan maximise opportunities for accessing

¹⁰⁰ Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan 2020-2041 (Gloucestershire County Council, last revised March 2021): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/gloucestershire-local-transport-plan-2020-2041/gloucestershire-ltp-2020-2041/>
¹⁰¹ Cotswold District Transport Decarbonisation Study (City Science, 2023): <https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=6995>

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sustainable travel choices. These include rail and bus services and ensuring the sites are close to key local services that are also accessible by walking, cycling and wheeling.

9.6 The policies in this Chapter support the ‘decide and provide’ approach to shape the future of development and transport infrastructure in the District. This approach ensures that sustainable transport is the preferred mode for transport, wherever practical, and the supply of sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling and wheeling, will usually be prioritised.

9.7 This chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport & Connectivity**
- **Core Policy 34: Assessing and Managing Transport Impacts**
- **Core Policy 35: Active Travel: Walking, Cycling & Wheeling**
- **Core Policy 36: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Design**
- **Core Policy 37: Public Transport, Shared Transport and Interchanges**
- **Core Policy 38: Our Kerbside Space and Parking**
- **Core Policy 39: Electric and Low Emission Vehicles**
- **Core Policy 40: Aerodrome Safeguarding.**

Sustainable Transport & Connectivity

9.8 **Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity** establishes the overarching approach to transport in this Local Plan. In a rural district, transport outcomes are shaped partly by where development is located, and also the mix of uses it contains, and the way the streets, routes and spaces are arranged. If new development is poorly connected or laid out from the outset, it becomes harder to change travel patterns in the longer term.

9.9 The District’s rural character, dispersed pattern of many settlements and varied quality of public transport mean that not every place can achieve the same level of modal shift. Even so, the evidence shows that a “do everything” approach will be needed to deliver the District’s climate objectives in line with the Climate Change Act 2008. This is why the new strategic development supported by this Local Plan is directed to the most sustainable locations, or to locations that can be made substantially more sustainable through planned investment, and should support a pattern of growth that reduces the need to travel, and shortens trip lengths wherever possible. This includes improving inclusive access to everyday services, local employment, schools, public transport and community facilities.

9.10 Sustainable transport infrastructure and services need to be in place early if they are to shape travel behaviour. So, new development should be ‘plugged in’ to existing networks as soon as is reasonably practicable, and early enough to influence first occupation and establish lower-carbon travel patterns from the outset. In many cases, sites will require off-site measures as well as good on-site design. This will often include walking and cycling links, public transport facilities, and improvements to the wider transport network needed to connect a site to key destinations and address adverse impacts.

9.11 Mobility hubs will play an important role in delivering this integrated approach to sustainable transport on strategic site allocations. Located in accessible, well-connected parts of new development, particularly in close proximity to local centres, community facilities and higher-density areas, mobility hubs will provide a focal point for a range of shared and public transport options. By co-locating services such as bus stops, cycle hire, secure cycle parking, cargo bike facilities and car club vehicles, these hubs will make it easier for residents to access low-carbon travel choices in a convenient and legible way. They will also support first- and last-mile connections to the wider public transport network, helping to reduce reliance on private car use.

Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport & Connectivity

Development proposals should support and, where appropriate, deliver measures identified in the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (2020-41) (or any subsequent Local Transport Plans), Local Cycling, Walking Cycling Infrastructure Plans and other area travel plans within the District. Proposals should demonstrate how they will work with Gloucestershire County Council to ensure that transport improvements contribute positively to the attractiveness and safety of our places, enhance quality of life, and respond sensitively to our natural and historic environment.

The Area Strategies (**Chapters 5, 6 and 7** in this Plan) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identify specific schemes addressing sustainable transport and connectivity. All strategic developments set out in **Chapter 4** and the Area Strategies will be expected to provide direct bus access, rapid electric charging points and a shared mobility scheme, along with all of the identified requirements set out in the Site Development Frameworks (**Appendix B**) and other policies in this Plan, as well as local and national design guidance, including Manual for Gloucestershire Streets.

Sustainable modes of transport should be prioritised in new developments to promote accessibility and integration with the wider community and existing networks. Priority should be given to cycle and

pedestrian movements and providing access to public transport including the provision of new bus services or enhancing existing bus services.

Strategic allocations will deliver mobility hubs in accessible locations which are close to community facilities on site and provide sustainable connections to wider services. These mobility hubs will provide access to bus services in a convenient location including provision for measures included in the shared mobility scheme such as cycle hire, cargo bikes, and a development wide car club.

Development proposals should provide the following sustainable measures, proportionate to the scale of development:

- a) maximise the incorporation of bus service provision and supporting infrastructure, including the enhancement of existing services, demonstrating how proposed bus services will operate, including routing, vehicle tracking, turning provision, frequency assumptions and long-term viability
- b) promote walking and cycling by ensuring movement proposals give first priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the use of road space and provide for filtered permeability
- c) deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with Gloucestershire County Council and where possible Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 standards (or any replacement standards) including measures for the reduction of conflict with motor vehicles. Provision should be inclusive and address disabled users and those with mobility needs

- d) ensure that existing pedestrian and cycling routes and Public Rights of Way are retained as continuous linear features and improved where appropriate
- e) identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicted active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements
- f) reduce road danger from other transport modes
- g) ensure the provision of cycle parking and active travel in line with Gloucestershire County Council latest guidance, and
- h) cycling and walking routes should be planned, where possible, as part of the network of multi-functional green infrastructure.

Where off-site infrastructure is required, proposals should be supported by a clear strategy for and evidence of their deliverability, including their funding and the availability and control of the land required to facilitate delivery. Transport infrastructure will be required to be delivered prior to or early in occupation, through phasing plans and triggers secured via planning obligations.

Assessing and Managing Transport Impacts

- 9.12 This policy explains how transport impacts should be assessed, managed and monitored. The Council expects the transport implications of development to be addressed in a proportionate but robust way, taking account of both negative impacts and opportunities to secure positive change such as modal shift, network improvements and better public realm. The purpose of assessment is not only to quantify traffic, but to demonstrate how the transport strategy for a site responds to the wider vision of the Plan and the realities of the local network. Assessments should use appropriate modelling software and apply realistic trip generation and mode share forecasts, which reflect the District's rural context.
- 9.13 The transport impact of new development should therefore be fully assessed to ensure that proposals are safe, well connected to the existing movement network and do not cause unacceptable harm to amenity, environmental quality or the efficient operation of the network. The National Planning Policy Framework requires the response to be proportionate, and makes clear that development should be refused on transport grounds only where the residual cumulative impacts are severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios. In this context, 'residual' means after mitigation has been applied. This makes it especially important that proposals properly consider sustainable transport interventions and demand-management measures before seeking additional highway capacity for lower-priority road users.

- 9.14 The need for a Transport Statement, Transport Assessment, Travel Plan or related evidence will depend on the nature, scale and location of the proposal. Existing congestion, air quality concerns, heritage sensitivity, impacts on designated nature sites, heavy vehicle generation, parking demand and cumulative impacts may all justify a greater level of assessment, even where a proposal is not large in floorspace or dwelling numbers. The Council will expect applicants to engage early with the relevant highway and transport authorities on the scope of assessment and to make best use of available evidence, tools and guidance, including Gloucestershire guidance, the Department for Transport Connectivity Tool and Active Travel England's planning assessment toolkit where relevant.
- 9.15 Mitigation should be vision-led and should reflect the transport hierarchy. Where measures are needed, improvements to walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, shared transport and travel behaviour should be considered before schemes that principally assist the movement of private motor vehicles. Proposals should demonstrate that sustainable transport measures alone are sufficient, or identify necessary highway interventions where they are not. Assessments should also address servicing and freight, environmental effects such as air quality and noise, and how schemes will respond to climate change and extreme weather over time. The Council will expect a 'monitor and manage' approach where appropriate, including suitable monitoring, review points and fallback measures if the initial package of transport interventions does not deliver the expected outcomes.

- 9.16 The promotion of Travel Plans is essential to encourage residents and employees to make use of sustainable transport networks, and to inform them of the travel choices available. A key element of this is the marketing and promotion of public transport, cycling, wheeling, walking and shared transport. Travel Plans should be informed by Gloucestershire County Council guidance¹⁰² and include the following:
- identification of and delivery mechanisms for the sustainable transport interventions, behavioural changes and travel planning mechanisms required to ensure the development reduces carbon emissions to become net zero and achieve modal split targets
 - proposals for the appointment of a Travel Plan Coordinator
 - the provision of Travel Packs for new residents including information on public transport discounts, bike/ e-bike/e-scooter hire schemes, car clubs and car sharing schemes
 - proposals for digital active and sustainable travel information to be made available to all residents and occupiers across the development and to be regularly maintained and updated, and
 - an action plan setting out specific actions, timelines and targets to be monitored and reviewed annually.

¹⁰² Travel Plans (Our Guide for Developers) (Gloucestershire County Council, last reviewed in 2021): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/travel-plans-our-guide-for-developers/>

Core Policy 34: Assessing and Managing Transport Impacts

Development should generally be located close to key services and facilities (other than where consistent with exception policies included in this Local Plan or national policy), to promote walking, wheeling and cycling; and where there is an appropriate level of public transport accessibility and sufficient public transport capacity to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of trips, or where capacity can be increased to an appropriate level through contributions, or other infrastructure funding. The delivery of proposed infrastructure schemes should be fully evidenced through engineering feasibility, highway safety compliance, land control, funding and include clearly defined timing of delivery within the Plan period.

Developers will be required to submit a Transport Assessment and/ or a Transport Statement to assess the potential impacts of development in line with the thresholds set out in the Gloucestershire County Council latest guidance.

Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans will be required to demonstrate how opportunities for active sustainable travel have been maximised and to provide adequate mitigation measures to effectively address the likely transport impacts. Mitigation measures should be realistic and technically evidenced in terms of deliverability and costed. Where that mitigation relates to matters that can be addressed by management measures, the mitigation should be accompanied by the preparation of a Travel Plan.

Development proposals should:

- a) prioritise active travel over the use of the car, including providing walking, wheeling and cycling connections to key services in the settlements and the permeability and accessibility to existing settlements
- b) contribute towards the improvements of all sustainable modes of transport including public transport and the improvement and delivery of walking and cycling routes that serve the site. This could be achieved through the design of development and/ or through financial contributions appropriate to the scale and impact of the development
- c) limit motor vehicle trips and where necessary identify and deliver highway safety measures at and around the development site, including temporary measures during the construction phase. These measures should reduce road danger and facilitate safer movements for all users and transport modes. Assessments should be evidenced through realistic trip generation and mode share forecasts, reflecting where appropriate the District's rural context
- d) implement shared mobility schemes including the provision of electric car club vehicles, hire bicycles and e-cargo bikes, where appropriate. Such schemes are to be supported by evidence of likely uptake and cannot be relied upon as primary mitigation, and
- e) comply with the latest guidance on design, parking provision, servicing facilities and electric charging infrastructure.

Proposals to improve or provide new public transport infrastructure and facilities will be supported subject to:

- f) being acceptable in terms of the impact on the environment including landscape, townscape, public realm and amenity of adjoining areas
- g) being designed to be safe, convenient, attractive and accessible for use especially for vulnerable users including lone females, young adults, people with disabilities and specific mobility needs, and
- h) providing adequate secure cycle parking and ease of access on foot, including consideration of pedestrian desire lines.

Travel Plans

All developments that generate significant amounts of movement will be required to produce a Travel Plan having regard to the thresholds in the Gloucestershire County Council published guidance.

Active Travel: Walking, Cycling & Wheeling

- 9.17 Active travel is a key component of sustainable transport planning, as it has a number of benefits for individuals, communities, and the environment. Planning for active travel leads to healthy and attractive places and reduces the number of short trips made by car. It supports access to day-to-day services, allows more people to remain independent for longer, and contributes to the character and vitality of towns, villages and neighbourhoods. It is also one of the most affordable forms of transport, helping to reduce household travel costs and support overall living affordability, which is particularly important in enabling people to access and sustain a home in the District. **Core Policy 35: Active Travel: Walking, Cycling & Wheeling** therefore, places active travel at the heart of the movement strategy for new development, with a particular focus on making these modes the easiest and most attractive choice for shorter everyday journeys.
- 9.18 This requires more than the provision of isolated paths or cycle stands. Developments should be planned around direct, safe, coherent and overlooked routes to the destinations people are most likely to use regularly, including schools, shops, community facilities, open spaces, employment areas and public transport stops. Walking, wheeling and cycling routes should be at least as direct as those for cars and, where possible, more direct. Site boundaries and layouts should be permeable to active travel at regular intervals, and schemes should connect within existing communities and enable

future connections to neighbouring land where that would improve connectivity over time.

- 9.19 The Council will expect developers to submit scaled drawings and sufficient supporting technical evidence to demonstrate that proposed improvements to the walking, cycling and wheeling networks are safe, achieve the required level of directness, and are fully deliverable in accordance with Gloucestershire County Council design guidance. Improvements must be capable of delivery within land under the developer's control or within the public highway, and be supported by appropriate funding arrangements and a delivery programme commensurate with the development.
- 9.20 The District's evidence base points to the need for different approaches in different places. Central Cirencester has the greatest potential for everyday walking and cycling, but there are also significant opportunities in the other Principal and Non-Principal settlements, and at our strategic development sites, where improvements to routes to schools, centres, employment areas and public transport can reduce dependence on short car trips. In the more rural parts of the District, opportunities may be more dispersed and may rely more heavily on targeted connections between settlements, public rights of way, National Cycle Network links and routes to key hubs. Existing public rights of way and green infrastructure corridors are therefore important assets and should, wherever possible, be protected, enhanced and integrated with wider active travel networks.

- 9.21 The Council will also expect active travel provision to be supported by the facilities that make active travel practical in day-to-day use. This includes secure, convenient and well-located cycle and micromobility parking, rest points, appropriate lighting, shading

and, where needed, improved crossings or route treatments on and off site. Further detail on parking and related facilities is set out in **Core Policy 38: Our Kerbside Space and Parking**.

Core Policy 35: Active Travel: Walking, Cycling & Wheeling

Development proposals should be planned around a network of safe and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling routes where dedicated traffic free links make walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for day-to-day trips, encourage sustainable travel, and support healthy and active lifestyles.

Proposals for the delivery of public realm improvements and infrastructure will be supported where they are designed to create attractive places that make walking, wheeling and cycling safer, healthier, and more attractive, facilitating modal shift to active travel as the natural first choice for journeys. All active travel infrastructure should be deliverable within the highway boundary or secure land and be designed to avoid conflicts with motor traffic.

All development and infrastructure proposals should:

- a) deliver an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Provision should be inclusive and address disabilities and particular mobility needs and take account of those who cannot or choose not to drive
- b) identify key pedestrian and cycling routes and their destinations and assess existing and predicated active travel movements to, through and from the site. They should provide safe, direct, and attractive routes that accommodate these movements and will be encouraged to support additional active travel movements
- c) facilitate high quality routes for active travel to schools including supporting the introduction of school streets and enhancing walking access and permeability to schools
- d) reduce road danger from other transport modes
- e) enable and contribute towards improvements and delivery of local and strategic active travel routes and links as identified in the **Area Strategies** and associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and
- f) all highway interventions should be supported by evidence demonstrating safe junction design, visibility splays and appropriate crossing provision.

Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Design

9.22 This policy concerns the quality of streets and movement spaces, and the relationship between movement and place. Streets are not simply corridors for traffic: they are part of the public realm, they shape first impressions of a development, and they influence whether people feel safe and comfortable walking, wheeling, cycling, waiting for public transport, meeting others, or accessing homes, shops and services. The design of new streets and changes to existing streets should therefore respond to the context of surrounding uses and the balance of activities that the street should accommodate, rather than being designed solely around the efficient movement of vehicles. Proposals should demonstrate how the design has balanced place and movement functions, taking account of the role of the street, highway safety, accessibility and the operation of the wider transport network. These considerations should be addressed alongside those set out in **Core Policy 69: Good Design Outcomes and Processes**.

9.23 Good design also means inclusive design. Streets, crossings, footways, cycle facilities, parking areas, public transport stops and interchange spaces should work for people of different ages and abilities, including disabled people and those with reduced mobility. The Council will expect proposals to have regard to relevant local and national guidance, including the Manual for Streets and the Manual for Gloucestershire Streets, and to demonstrate how the needs of people walking,

wheeling and cycling have been considered alongside the needs of other users. Good natural surveillance, clear lines of sight, simple wayfinding and comfortable walking distances can all contribute to safer and more inclusive environments.

9.24 Street design also has an important role in supporting healthier, quieter and lower-speed environments. Where streets have a significant place function, or where there is regular movement of pedestrians and cyclists, including around homes, schools and community facilities, the design should help reduce vehicle speeds and create conditions in which active travel feels normal and safe. This may involve lower design speeds, tighter junction geometry, raised tables, better crossings, street trees, seating, shade and a more generous public realm. The Council will also expect the design of streets and spaces to take account of climate resilience and biodiversity, for example through planting, sustainable materials and layouts that can accommodate shade, drainage and surface water management without undermining accessibility. Where speed management measures are proposed, applicants should demonstrate that they are appropriate to the function and context of the street and are supported by relevant design evidence and guidance.

Core Policy 36: Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Design

The design of new streets and works within existing streets, including site accesses for all modes, will have regard to the up-to-date national and local guidance to include Manual for Gloucestershire Streets (or updates to it)¹⁰³. In all cases it will be:

- a) inclusive
- b) safe
- c) healthy
- d) reliable and support the economy
- e) resilient and sustainable, and
- f) protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

The design of these streets will:

- g) respond to the context, and the activities and demands which result from the buildings and land uses adjacent to them, as well as the movement demands along and across them
- h) provide connectivity to the wider multi-modal transport network
- i) provide appropriate kerbside, crossing, parking, pedestrian, cycle, micromobility and vehicle facilities, as required by adjacent land uses and the wider movement network. This includes on street seating at frequent intervals, shade, interchange, parking and loading facilities
- j) support the delivery of local character and biodiversity net gain, including through the appropriate use of materials and planting
- k) support social contact and placemaking, including through the overall design of streets, provision of pocket spaces and public realm, and
- l) take account of the need to reduce carbon impacts and be resilient to climate change. This could include using low carbon materials and ensuring materials can withstand climate impacts, including higher temperatures and flooding.

¹⁰³ Manual for Gloucestershire streets (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mfsgs/>

Public Transport, Shared Transport and Interchanges

- 9.25 Public transport cannot usually be retrofitted successfully once a development pattern is fixed. **Core Policy 37: Public Transport, Shared Transport and Interchanges** therefore requires public transport, shared transport and interchanges to be considered from the outset, as part of a vision-led approach to masterplanning and design. The way a development is laid out, the position of accesses, the routeing of streets, the location of higher-density uses, and the quality of routes to stops and stations will all influence whether public transport becomes a realistic option for residents, employees and visitors. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how their overall transport vision supports public transport use and how the location, mix of uses, layout and design contribute to achieving mode shift away from private car travel. This includes delivery and funding over the longer term.
- 9.26 This is particularly important in Cotswold District because public transport provision is uneven. The 2023 Transport Decarbonisation Study notes that bus provision is predominantly arterial, that rural coverage is limited, and that there are only two rail lines in the District with one station on each, at Kemble and Moreton-in-Marsh¹⁰⁴. This does not reduce the importance of public transport; rather, it means that development needs to be aligned, as far as possible, with existing corridors, hubs

and new service opportunities, and that developer contributions may be needed to help improve frequencies, passenger facilities, interchange or route connectivity or deliver new services or facilities.

- 9.27 Public transport should also be understood more broadly than conventional fixed-route bus services alone. In some locations, particularly in rural areas, demand-responsive transport like The Robin, community transport, rail connections, coach services, taxis and private hire can all play an important supporting role in improving travel choice and widening access to jobs and services. The Council will therefore expect proposals to consider the most appropriate mix of public and shared transport for the site and its context, rather than relying on a single mode or assuming that the private car is the only realistic option. Where conventional public transport services are unlikely to be viable or sufficient on their own, proposals should demonstrate how alternative and shared transport services will contribute to meeting travel needs.
- 9.28 Good public transport depends on the quality of access to it. The routes between homes, workplaces and public transport stops or stations need to meet the same standards of safety, directness, comfort, inclusivity and attractiveness that the Plan expects for walking, wheeling and cycling more generally. Stops, waiting areas and interchange points should be located and designed so that they are convenient, legible, safe and attractive to use, with appropriate information, shelter and lighting,

104 Cotswold District Transport Decarbonisation Study (City Science, 2023): <https://meetings.cotswold.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=6995>

and, where relevant, opportunities for cycle and wheeling parking and interchange with other modes. Development should be designed to minimise walking distances to public transport and maximise the proportion of homes and businesses located within a reasonable walking distance of stops, stations and interchange hubs. Interchange facilities should be proportionate to their role and function and provide an attractive environment for onward travel by public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.

- 9.29 For development generating significant travel demand, the Council will expect public transport provision to be planned around services capable of achieving a meaningful shift away from private car use. This includes ensuring that development is located and designed to support frequent and direct services, that the majority of users are within convenient walking distance of public transport, and that appropriate infrastructure, interchange facilities and service enhancements are delivered where required.

Core Policy 37: Public Transport, Shared Transport and Interchanges

Development proposals are required to consider public transport from the earliest stages of development, and must articulate a vision for the development that facilitates and encourages public transport (as part of the vision described in **Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport & Connectivity**). The vision should establish how the proposed location, mix of uses, layout and design support public transport use; and contribute to the delivery of the vision of this Plan, the Local Transport Plan, the Bus Service Improvement Plan and other relevant guidance documents (and updates to such guidance) in force at the time. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate, through supporting evidence, that the proposed public transport strategy and associated service levels are achievable, deliverable and capable of being implemented within a timescale commensurate with the development.

Public transport should be an attractive and realistic alternative to the car. This should include (as a minimum) ensuring that development which generates a significant travel demand is served by a public transport service which:

- a) meets the “Expressbus” Levels of Service set out in Gloucestershire County Council’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (and any new or updated guidance)

- b) provides a direct connection to a main town or city centre and primary trip attractors at a frequency which will achieve a mode shift to public transport
- c) is commercially viable or has the potential to be commercially viable within five years (and is supported until such a time), and
- d) has appropriately attractive stops, stations, interchanges, ticketing and vehicles. This should include future proofing for technology in line with ambitions set out in the latest Bus Service Improvement Plan. Development proposals should demonstrate how the required level of service will be achieved and maintained, including evidence of service viability, operator engagement where appropriate, proposed funding arrangements and any transitional support required to establish services.

Development proposals should make provision for public transport routes and stops and should deliver safe and direct multi-modal connectivity to public transport facilities including interchange hubs and stations, with routes meeting the requirements set out in **Core Policy 34: Active Travel: Walking, Cycling and Wheeling**. Interchange hubs should be appropriately scaled to their location, and should include as a minimum a shelter and secure bike and wheeling parking.

The layout of development will minimise walking distances from dwellings and entrances to businesses to public transport stops, interchange hubs or stations. Development which generates a significant travel demand should be designed so that:

- e) the majority are within 400m walking distance via a safe and direct route of a bus stop, interchange hub or station served by the frequency of service noted above, and
- f) all are within 800m walking distance via a safe and direct route.

Development proposals should consider the role of all public and shared transport to optimise service offering. This could include incorporating demand responsive transport, community transport and coaches within public transport proposals. The important supporting roles of taxi and private hire vehicles should also be considered (see also **Core Policy 38: Our Kerbside Space and Parking**).

Developments will be required to support the delivery of public transport improvements which contribute to delivering the development's transport vision and/or improve the services or facilities which the site occupiers will use. This may include: contributing to improving existing bus service frequencies; provision or enhancement of bus stops; the Bus Rapid Transit network; strategic multi-modal interchanges; Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI); bus priority schemes; demand responsive travel services; and new or enhanced rail infrastructure and services.

Our Kerbside Space and Parking

- 9.30 Parking and kerbside space have a major influence on the character and function of a place. If they are over-provided or poorly arranged, they can dominate the public realm, reduce opportunities for landscaping and social space, and lock in patterns of car dependence. **Core Policy 38: Our Kerbside Space and Parking** therefore takes a broader view of parking than simply vehicle storage, and is concerned with how parking and kerbside space can support the transport hierarchy while still contributing positively to the quality and functioning of streets and spaces.
- 9.31 Parking should be considered as part of the development as a whole, rather than as a separate technical exercise carried out at the end of the design process. Car parking should be provided efficiently and in a way that supports the overall vision for the site. At the same time, provision for the highest priority users should be the most attractive and convenient. This includes secure, covered and well-located parking for cycles, e-bikes and other micromobility devices, as well as appropriate provision for Blue Badge holders, shared mobility and car clubs where relevant. Parking strategies should be supported by evidence of existing car ownership patterns and realistic demand forecasts.

- 9.32 The policy also recognises the changing role of the kerbside and the need to plan for deliveries, loading, taxis and private hire, and short-stay stopping so that these activities do not undermine the quality of the public realm or conflict with higher-priority users.
- 9.33 The District's climate objectives also require parking and kerbside strategies to support the transition to ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles without displacing more sustainable modes. Electric vehicle charging will need to be planned alongside the wider hierarchy of users and in a way that is consistent with Building Regulations and county guidance, ensuring the infrastructure will be accommodated without impacting footways, visibility or traffic flows. Proposals for significant new public long-stay parking will need a clear justification and should not be treated as a substitute for improving access by sustainable modes.

Core Policy 38: Our Kerbside Space and Parking

Development proposals are required to provide a balanced parking and kerbside strategy, which:

- a) supports the transport hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport & Connectivity**
- b) contributes positively to the character and function of streets and public spaces
- c) prioritises the needs of people walking, wheeling and cycling
- d) accommodates servicing, deliveries and other kerbside functions in a safe and efficient manner, and
- e) avoids adverse impacts on highway safety, residential amenity and surrounding communities through parking displacement.'

Proposals should take into account the latest Gloucestershire Parking Standards and the parking standards and design principles set out in the Cotswold Design Code.

For all development types, including employment, secure cycle and wheeling parking should be prioritised over private car parking and will be located in a convenient location. Cycle storage should include provision for electric cycle charging. Developments which propose flats or homes in multiple occupation should ensure that there is enough cycle parking space available for all residents.

Educational developments, including new schools and expansions, should deliver secure parking for cycles and other wheeled vehicle storage for school pupils, staff and visitors and parents.

New transport infrastructure or proposals to enhance existing transport infrastructure, including bus interchanges and rail stations, should include proposals for secure cycle parking and also facilitate parking/ docking for cycle hire schemes.

All major developments, including employment, and the strategic allocations should deliver an electric car club scheme of an appropriate scale to the development.

Development proposals should consider those with mobility challenges and ensure secure and accessible parking is provided for mobility scooters and vehicles including charging infrastructure.

Proposals which include provision below the local and national standards should be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify a deviation from the standards and must be supported by robust evidence and assessment of potential impacts on surrounding highways and communities.

Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

- 9.34 Development will make convenient, attractive and safe provision for the parking and charging of Ultra Low and Zero Emission Vehicles at preferential locations within the development, in line with the hierarchy of users (prioritised above other motorised vehicles, but not more sustainable modes). This should include appropriate provision of public EV chargepoints, in addition to those provided for private dwellings. The number and type of EV chargepoints proposed should be justified, demonstrating that it serves the function of the place in optimal locations. Provision will be fully consistent with Building Regulations, parking standards (like those set out in Manual for Gloucestershire Streets), other relevant guidance documents and updates to such guidance in force at the time. Where a Travel Plan or other strategy has identified a target uptake of Ultra Low or Zero Emission Vehicles, provision should at least meet the target level of use.

Core Policy 39: Electric and Low Emission Vehicles

All development proposals should maximise the opportunity for occupiers and visitors to use electric and low emission vehicles, including electric bicycles and electric cargo cycles.

Safe charging infrastructure for bicycles should be installed in cycle storage which will be located in a prominent and easily accessible location.

Infrastructure and storage should be installed for electric mobility scooters where appropriate, and particularly in specialist and older persons housing.

Proposals should maximise the provision of residential and public electric vehicle charging/ plug-in points and/ or the space and infrastructure required to provide them in the future. The design and operation of such infrastructure should follow best practice so that their operation does not undermine the quality of the public realm.

Proposals should demonstrate that charging infrastructure is located and designed to avoid obstruction, maintain accessibility and ensure safe operation within the highway environment.

Aerodrome Safeguarding

9.35 There are several active airports and major gliding clubs within the District including Kemble Airfield and The Cotswold Gliding Club (CGC) based at Aston Down Airfield. There are several hot air balloon and para-gliding sites, which collectively generate a large amount of aircraft movements per annum. Ensuring the safety of such aircraft movements is therefore a consideration that can impact on the planning process. Gliding is further regulated by the British Gliding Association. These statutes, regulations and advice prescribe the routes and heights that aircraft can use, both on route to, and in the vicinity of aerodromes. The Council will seek through its development management process to ensure that any risks between aircraft movements and proposed developments are removed, both for the safety of the general public and aircrew alike.

9.36 Policy provisions regarding the safeguarding process are set out in the ODPM/DfT Circular 1/2003 (or any subsequent revisions) Safeguarding aerodromes, technical sites and military explosives storage areas. In accordance with this Circular, the relevant safeguarding authority is a statutory consultee for certain planning applications for development that require safeguarding to protect the safety of the site's operation.

9.37 Safeguarding ensures the safety of aircraft manoeuvring on the ground, taking off, landing or flying in the vicinity of an aerodrome. Aerodrome safeguarding is a legal requirement and regulated by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) and the Civil Aviation Authority.

9.38 **Development Policy 40: Aerodrome Safeguarding** ensures that development the relevant authority is consulted on any proposals that may impact aircraft safety and development will not have a negative impact on the operation of airfields across the District.

Development Policy 40: Aerodrome Safeguarding

Development that would adversely affect the operational integrity or safety of any officially safeguarded civil aerodrome or associated aerodrome navigation aids, radio aids or telecommunications systems will not be permitted.

Proposals located within an aerodrome safeguarding area or along flight paths to airports located within Cotswold District will be expected to consult with the relevant authority.





Chapter ten Housing

Introduction

- 10.1
- The Local Plan aims to ensure that homes delivered across the Cotswold District meet the needs of its communities both now and in the future. The Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) 2026¹⁰⁵ identifies the scale and nature of our need, and highlights the significant affordability pressures, a growing older population, and strong demand for smaller and more accessible homes as particularly important factors for Cotswold District.
- 10.2
- The policies in this chapter ensure that new development contributes to a balanced and inclusive housing stock, supports mixed and sustainable communities, and responds to the distinct characteristics of the District’s settlements.

- 10.3
- This chapter includes the following policies:
- **Core Policy 41: Standards for New Residential Development**
 - **Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing**
 - **Core Policy 43: Self-build and Custom-build Housing**
 - **Core Policy 44: Specialist Accommodation**
 - **Core Policy 45: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation**
 - **Development Policy 1: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites**
 - **Development Policy 2: Community Led-Housing**
 - **Development Policy 3: Dwellings for Rural Workers Outside Development Boundaries**
 - **Development Policy 4: Removal of Occupancy Conditions**
 - **Development Policy 5: Replacement Dwellings.**

¹⁰⁵ Housing Need Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

Standards for New Residential Development

- 10.4 New housing development must deliver a mix of homes, by size, type and tenure that meets the needs of Cotswold District's current and future communities. The housing mix is informed by the HENA, which identifies an ongoing requirement for a greater supply of smaller market homes, a substantial need for affordable housing (especially rented products), and a clear need for 2 and 3 bed dwellings across all tenures.
- 10.5 Housing affordability in Cotswold District affects an increasing proportion of the local workforce. Groups who have traditionally accessed home ownership, including key workers, young professionals and growing families, are now experiencing significant barriers as house prices rise faster than incomes. Providing a broader range of homes, including smaller market dwellings, can help meet the needs of lower income households and reduce pressure on the affordable housing sector.
- 10.6 A balanced mix of housing types and sizes in new developments is essential to support the needs of different demographic groups and to improve the overall flow of the existing housing stock. Ensuring a supply of appropriately sized homes enables households to move more easily between tenures and dwelling sizes as their circumstances change.

10.7 The HENA provides the key evidence for understanding the mix of homes required across the District. The analysis shows that Cotswold has:

- a low proportion of households with dependent children (26%)
- high levels of under-occupation, particularly in the market sector
- strong demand for smaller homes, especially 2 and 3 bed properties
- significant affordability pressures, and
- a growing older population, increasing the need for accessible and specialist housing.

10.8 The HENA identifies a clear requirement for a balanced mix of dwelling sizes across all tenures, with 2- and 3-bedroom homes forming the core of future need. The identified mix for Cotswold is shown by **Table 10.1**.

Table 10.1: Size and Mix of Housing by Tenure for Cotswold District as Identified by the Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2026).

	Market	Affordable home ownership	Rented affordable housing
1-bedroom	0%-10%	15%-25%	25%-30%
2-bedrooms	30%-40%	35%-45%	30%-40%
3-bedrooms	35%-45%	25%-35%	20%-30%
4+ -bedrooms	15%-25%	5%-15%	5%-15%

Core Policy 41: Standards for New Residential Development

All residential developments, including conversions, will provide a mix of dwelling sizes reflecting the requirements set out in **Table 10.1**, or in accordance with the most up-to-date housing evidence, unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more appropriate, or where proven to be necessary due to viability constraints.

Specialist and Accessible Housing

To meet identified needs arising from an ageing population and increased mobility impairments:

- a) at least 50% of all dwellings (market and affordable) must meet M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard, and
- b) at least 5% of affordable dwellings and 3% of market dwellings on major development sites must be delivered to M4(3) wheelchair user standard.

Application of Policy and Flexibility

Any deviations to the above baseline requirements must be justified by robust, up-to-date evidence, considering:

- c) the nature, character and location of the site
- d) localised patterns of housing stock and turnover
- e) identified rural needs, and
- f) viability considerations (where clearly demonstrated) based on a Planning Practice Guidance compliant developer funded viability assessment agreed with the Council, through an open book approach.

Nationally Described Space Standards

All new dwellings, including holiday homes (C3 use class), must comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

Affordable Housing

- 10.9 Cotswold District is one of the least affordable locations in the country to buy or rent a home. In 2025, the median house price was £455,000, which is 14.6 times the median wage¹⁰⁶, and the average monthly rental cost was £1,200, the highest across Gloucestershire¹⁰⁷. For this reason, the delivery of more affordable housing, particularly social rented housing, is a Council priority.
- 10.10 Affordable housing is required for eligible households whose needs are unable to be met within the open market. The term affordable housing includes a number of separate housing types, including: social rent, affordable rent, First Homes and intermediate low-cost home ownership (including shared ownership, discounted, rent to buy and equity model). These are defined in national policy and guidance¹⁰⁸ and by the Glossary to this Local Plan (**Appendix 21**).
- 10.11 The HENA identifies an annual need for **328 affordable homes in Cotswold District**, comprising 184 households unable to rent or buy in the market and 144 households able to rent but unable to purchase. Applied over the Local Plan period (2026–2043), this equates to a need for **approximately 5,600 affordable homes**.

- 10.12 **Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing** will help to boost the supply of affordable homes in the District over the Plan period and help to re-balance the local housing supply, enabling local people access housing more effectively.
- 10.13 The HENA evidence indicates that affordable housing needs should be met through an 80:20 split between rented and intermediate affordable housing. Consistent with the Council’s priority to maximise social rented housing, the rented element is proposed to comprise approximately three-quarters social rent and one-quarter affordable rent. This results in a tenure mix of 60% social rent, 20% affordable rent and 20% intermediate housing. Applying this mix to the identified annual affordable housing need results in:
- 197 social rented homes per year
 - 66 affordable rented homes per year, and
 - 66 intermediate homes per year.
- 10.14 Over the 17 year plan period, this equates to:
- around 3,350 social rented homes
 - around 1,120 other affordable rented homes, and
 - around 1,120 intermediate homes.

¹⁰⁶ House price to workplace-based earnings ratio (Office for National Statistics, 2026): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

¹⁰⁷ Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

¹⁰⁸ National Planning Policy Framework, Annex 1 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2012): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-1-implementation>

- 10.15 The scale of need underlines the importance of maximising affordable housing provision wherever viable and prioritising rented products that meet the most acute needs. This is done by lowering the threshold for the provision of affordable housing in rural areas and raising the required contribution on all new developments.
- 10.16 The Affordable Housing need is identified at a District-wide level, with the majority of affordable homes being delivered through the strategic and non-strategic allocations set out in **Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy. Rural Exception Sites** will also be supported by **Development Policy 1**, and within specialist accommodation developments (**Core Policy 44**).
- 10.17 **Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing** sets an affordable housing requirement on proposals with a combined gross floorspace of over 1,000 sqm. In calculating the combined gross floorspace, account should be taken of the gross internal area only. Calculation of the gross floorspace will include ancillary garages and other outbuildings in addition to the dwellings themselves.
- 10.18 To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, national policy requires that any Affordable Housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount. The methodology for how the vacant building credit will be calculated is provided at **Appendix 9**.
- 10.19 The proportion of Affordable Housing and self-build / custom build homes should be calculated against the total number of dwellings proposed.
- 10.20 Applicants should engage with the Local Planning Authority at the pre-application stage to agree the Affordable Housing provision. It will be assumed there will be no public subsidy towards Affordable Housing provision.
- 10.21 The Local Plan policies have been viability tested¹⁰⁹. The affordable housing requirements have been set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for developments to be deliverable. Development proposals will be policy compliant in delivering the required affordable housing contribution and will not normally require a viability assessment. It will be expected that these policies will fully inform, and be reflected in, land valuation and purchase negotiations. Viability will only be considered in exceptional circumstances for the reasons set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on Viability¹¹⁰. Should a viability consideration arise, viability assessments should demonstrate that policy requirements have been fully taken into account in land valuation and scheme design. Any departure from policy must be clearly justified in accordance with national guidance. The price paid for land will not normally be a relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan. Landowners and site purchasers should consider this when agreeing land transactions.

¹⁰⁹ Cotswold Local Plan Viability Assessment (Quintic, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Viability>

¹¹⁰ Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Paragraph 002, Reference ID: 10-002-20251216 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability>

- 10.22 In exceptional circumstances, the Council may take account of a viability assessment. Any relaxation of the policy requirements will only be considered where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied, on a site-by-site basis, that such a requirement will render any development proposals unviable having first varied the mix and type of housing to improve viability in agreement with the Local Planning Authority.
- 10.23 Where a viability assessment is submitted to accompany a planning application, this should be based upon and refer back to the viability assessment that informed the Local Plan. Even if a development site is unviable, the weight to be given to a viability assessment will be a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case. As per national planning policy, off-site provision, or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu, will only be accepted where it can be demonstrated as being justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. The viability assessment must also:
- a) demonstrate that the maximum reasonable level of affordable housing is being delivered, and
 - b) prioritise rented affordable housing wherever possible, reflecting the acute needs identified in the District.
- 10.24 Where a site is sub divided, the Council will expect each sub-division to contribute proportionally towards achieving the number of affordable

dwellings which would have been applicable on the whole site.

- 10.25 On-site affordable housing will be transferred to the purchasing Registered Provider in line with the number, size, type and tenure of Affordable Housing required by the Local Planning Authority's policies in accordance with the HENA; and relevant housing plans and advice from the Council. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to provide free serviced land for the provision of the required units to a Registered Provider or the Local Planning Authority by agreement. A legal agreement will be used to ensure transfer to a Registered Provider and that the affordable housing remains available as such in perpetuity for eligible households.
- 10.26 Registered Providers generally require affordable housing to be served by an adopted highways to ensure long-term management, access and maintenance, and to avoid additional costs that may affect affordability. Experience has shown that the use of private or unadopted highways can delay or prevent the transfer of Affordable Homes, undermining delivery of the Plan's affordable housing objectives. **Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing** therefore ensures that affordable housing is deliverable in practice, treated on an equal basis with market housing, and that access arrangements are not used to circumvent affordable housing requirements, while allowing limited flexibility where equivalent, legally secure alternatives are agreed.

Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing

All housing developments that provide 10 or more new dwellings (gross), or sites with an area of 0.5 hectares or more, or have a combined gross floorspace of over 1,000sqm will be required to provide 40% of all new dwellings as affordable housing.

In designated rural areas¹¹¹, all housing developments that provide 3 to 9 new dwellings (gross) will contribute towards affordable housing provision to meet the identified need in the District and address the Council's strategic objectives on affordable housing.

Affordable housing should be delivered on-site. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to accepting a financial contribution (a commuted sum) from the applicant where it is demonstrated that affordable housing cannot be delivered on-site, or that the District's need for Affordable Housing can be better satisfied through this route.

Affordable housing must be designed to be tenure blind and well-integrated throughout the development. Clustering should be limited to ensure effective management and should not result in segregation. The type, size and mix, including the tenure split, of affordable housing will address the identified and prioritised housing needs of the District and take account of the most up-to-date housing needs assessment.

Unless otherwise agreed by the Council, the affordable housing contribution on qualifying sites will deliver the following split between rented and intermediate affordable housing. Of the rented affordable housing:

- 60% should be made available as Social Rent
- 20% should be made available as other forms of Affordable Rent, and
- 20% should be made available as intermediate products, such as Shared Ownership or Rent to Buy.

The Council will consider First Homes as part of the intermediate tenure mix where they meet identified local needs, but priority will be given to products delivering genuine affordability to local households.

All affordable housing must be served by an adopted highway, unless robust evidence demonstrates that an alternative arrangement will not compromise delivery, management, equal access, or long-term affordability. Proposals must ensure that affordable housing is delivered on an equal basis with market housing and that access arrangements are not used to avoid affordable housing requirements.

Where exceptional development costs mean it is not possible to meet the full requirements for the delivery of affordable dwellings the burden of proof will be on the developer to demonstrate this to the Council and the evidence must be supported by a Planning Practice Guidance-compliant developer-funded viability assessment.

¹¹¹ In Cotswold District, the designated rural area, under s157 of the Housing Act 1985, is the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Self-build and Custom-build Housing

- 10.27 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) places a statutory duty on Local Planning Authorities to support individuals and groups who wish to build their own homes. Local authorities are required to:
- keep and maintain a register of individuals and associations of individuals seeking to acquire serviced plots of land for self-build and custom build housing, and
 - grant sufficient development permissions to meet the demand recorded on the register, subject to the eligibility criteria and timescales set out in national regulations.
- 10.28 This duty is reinforced by national planning policy, which expects planning authorities to have regard to the demand for self-build and custom build housing¹¹² when preparing development plans and making decisions, and make provision for a sufficient supply of serviced plots to meet the level of demand recorded on the Council's Self-build and Custom Build Register.

- 10.29 The HENA identifies Cotswold as the District with the highest demand for self-build and custom build housing across Gloucestershire. The rate of demand in Cotswold is 167 per 100,000. With a population of 91,660, this equates to an overall need of 153 over. Furthermore, the HENA identifies an arising annual need for self and custom build to be 19 homes per annum in Cotswold, A shortfall in the supply of self and custom build homes of 32 dwellings over the past 9 years is also identified from the self and custom housebuilding register, including this in the supply of self and custom build homes equates to a need for 355 homes over the plan period to 2043¹¹³.
- 10.30 The HENA identifies that self- and custom build homes are best delivered on larger strategic sites where there is a greater chance of them coming forward and being part of a greater mix of homes, alongside new infrastructure and services and facilities. Therefore, they should only be required on strategic sites in the Plan (i.e. sites over 350 dwellings). Where such provision is required, developers should have regard to the Council's Self Build and Custom Build Register when determining the type and specification of plots.

¹¹² Self-build and custom build homes can be either market or affordable housing.

¹¹³ Housing Need Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

- 10.31 **Core Policy 43: Self-build and Custom-build Housing** requires development sites over 350 dwellings, to make some provision (5%) of self and/or custom-build plots, inclusive of consideration for affordable housing to ensure the overall requirement is met.
- 10.32 Self build and custom build plots must be made available and appropriately marketed for a minimum period of 12 months. Plots that remain unsold may continue to be offered on the open market or be made available to the Council or a Registered Provider at market value before being built out by the developer. Plot specific planning permissions will be secured through legal agreement, requiring completion of self build homes within three years of plot purchase.

Core Policy 43: Self-build and Custom-build Housing

To support the Council's duties under the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015), developments of 350 or more dwellings shall provide 5% of serviced plots for self or custom build, subject to viability and site-specific considerations, unless demand indicated on the Council's Register justifies a lower provision.

All plots set aside for self-build or custom build housing (secured via a legal agreement or planning condition) must include:

- a) legal access onto a public highway
- b) water, foul and other drainage, broadband connection, and electricity supply available at the plot boundary
- c) sufficient space to build without compromising neighbouring properties and their amenity and the amenity of future occupiers, and
- d) an agreed design code for the plots.

Plots that remain unsold may continue to be offered on the open market or be made available to the Council or a Registered Provider at market value before being built out by the developer. Plots must be made available and appropriately marketed for a minimum period of 12 months.

Specialist Accommodation

10.33 The HENA identifies a substantial and accelerating need for specialist housing in Cotswold, driven by demographic change and rising levels of disability and frailty. The population aged 65+ is projected to increase by 14,936 people between 2024 and 2046, a 59% rise. The population aged 85+ is projected to more than double (+126%) over the same period. This demographic shift will significantly increase demand for specialist accommodation, sheltered and extra care housing, and residential and nursing care.

10.34 The evidence from the HENA also shows a sharp rise in age related disabilities in Cotswold between 2024 and 2046, with dementia projected to increase by 92%, mobility problems by 80%, learning disabilities by 58% and autistic spectrum disorders by 56%. This substantial growth in conditions affecting independence and mobility provides a clear justification for requiring new homes to meet M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, with a proportion delivered as M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings under **Core Policy 41: Standard for New Residential Development**.

Table 10.2: Specialist Housing Need for Older Persons in Cotswold District, 2026-43.

Housing type	Housing demand per 1,000 75+	Current supply	Current demand	Current shortfall/surplus (-ve)	Additional demand to 2043	Need by 2043
Market (with Support)	63	977	879	-98	526	428
Affordable (with Support)	43	877	591	-286	354	68
Total (with Support)	106	1,854	1,469	-385	880	496
Market (with Care)	27	319	379	60	227	287
Affordable (with Care)	11	60	150	90	90	180
Total (with care)	38	379	529	150	317	467
Residential care bedspaces	34	192	470	278	282	560
Nursing care bedspaces	38	721	529	-192	317	125
Total bedspaces	72	913	999	86	598	685

10.35 A substantial need for specialist older persons housing in Cotswold between 2024 and 2043 has been identified, including 496 additional units of housing with support and 467 units of housing with care, alongside a requirement for 560 residential care beds and 125 nursing care beds (C2 use class), totalling 685 additional care bedspaces¹¹⁴. The delivery of specialist accommodation contributes to the delivery of the overall Local Plan housing requirement, as identified by **Core Policy 2: Meeting Housing Needs in Cotswold District – Strategic Allocations**.

10.36 The assessment also highlights an existing shortfall in both market and affordable housing with support, reinforcing the need for sustained delivery of specialist accommodation across the District. The requirement figures provide a need figure at the point that the Local Plan was adopted and applicants must refer to the Council’s latest evidence, such as future updates to the HENA and the Council’s Residential Land Monitoring Statistics report, when submitting planning applications, to determine the need for each type of specialist housing and accommodation and identify how they are going to meet that need. Consideration should also be given to vacant units within existing stock, especially in the location the development is proposed.

10.37 **Core Policy 44: Specialist Accommodation** sets out the criteria for assessing proposals for specialist accommodation for older people including sheltered housing; extra care accommodation; and care homes.

10.38 Residential care accommodation should normally be located within settlements where there is easy access to a range of services, e.g. shops, healthcare and social facilities. This should enable non-car access to local facilities for residents and staff.

10.39 Enabling opportunities for active lifestyles and older peoples’ engagement in community life may, for example, include the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, allotments, services and facilities and a layout that encourages walking and cycling. These matters will be especially important to address where there are identified health and well-being needs.

10.40 A key challenge in delivering specialist accommodation for older and disabled people is the viability of providing affordable housing, particularly where schemes fall within Use Class C2. Proposals will therefore be assessed on whether they constitute C2 or C3 development, taking account of the level of care, staffing and the scale of communal facilities. In such cases, the affordable housing requirement will be applied on a case by case basis, informed by a robust viability assessment to determine an appropriate contribution.

114 Housing Need Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

Core Policy 44: Specialist Accommodation

Strategic site allocations (over 350 dwellings) must provide for specialist older persons housing (e.g. extra care, housing with support), reflecting the Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA)-identified need for additional accommodation for older people, people with disabilities, learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, dementia, and those requiring care or support.

Proposals for specialist accommodation at the Main and Principal Settlements will be supported, provided that it:

- a) contributes towards meeting identified needs for the type of accommodation in the District
- b) is designed to meet the particular requirements of residents with social, physical, mental and/or health care needs
- c) is easily accessible to public transport, shops, local services, community facilities and social networks for residents, carers and their visitors
- d) adheres to good practice in design principles, especially taking account of design for people with dementia, and
- e) integrates with the surrounding community and increases the opportunity for older people to engage in community life and have active lifestyles.

Strategic allocations and major developments should consider the inclusion of specialist housing as part of a mixed and balanced community. Where appropriate, the Council may require:

- i. a proportion of specialist older persons housing
- ii. serviced land for extra care or supported housing, or
- iii. specific provision for wheelchair accessible homes.

Where specialist accommodation is provided on a freehold or leasehold basis, affordable housing should be delivered in accordance with **Core Policy 42: Affordable Housing**. The affordable housing requirement will be applied having regard to whether the proposal falls within Use Class C2 or C3, taking account of the level of care and communal provision. Where provision is demonstrably challenging, the requirement will be informed by a viability assessment to determine an appropriate contribution. A mix of tenures will be encouraged in sheltered and extra care schemes. Where a development site is phased or subdivided, the affordable housing requirement will apply to the site as a whole.

The Council will apply this policy flexibly. Variations may be appropriate where justified by:

- iv. site characteristics
- v. local evidence of need
- vi. the availability of services, or
- vii. viability evidence.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

- 10.41 Gypsies and Travellers (collectively referred to as Travellers in this Plan) have traditionally led a nomadic way of life and form part of the UK’s diverse communities. Whilst some households continue to travel for work, cultural or family reasons, others have become more settled whilst maintaining their cultural identity. Travelling Showpeople are members of a distinct community who travel as part of their business and have traditionally been involved in the organisation and operation of fairs, circuses and other travelling entertainment.
- 10.42 National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires Local Planning Authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and to plan positively for meeting those needs through the preparation of Local Plans and the identification of suitable sites. The Gloucestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Needs Assessment (GTANA) identifies an existing supply of 15 Traveller pitches within Cotswold District that contribute towards meeting the District’s identified Traveller accommodation needs during the Plan period (2026-2043¹¹⁵). These pitches are listed in **Table 10.3**.

- 10.43 Taking account of these existing commitments, the GTANA identifies a residual need for 32 additional Traveller pitches within the District over the Plan period. A distribution of this need across the Plan period is set out in **Table 10.4**.
- 10.44 The GTANA concludes there is no identified need for accommodation for Travelling Showpeople or Boat Dwellers within the District during the Plan period.
- 10.45 The GTANA recognises that additional accommodation needs may form households not identified through the assessment process, for example households residing on unauthorised developments and unauthorised encampments due to in-migration, as well as those

Table 10.3: Traveller Pitch Supply Within GTANA Need Figure 2026–43 (Pitches).

Site	Pitches
Vacant pitches on existing sites	
Households on sites expected to leave the area	2
Households on sites expected to move into housing	1
Four Acres, Shorncote, near South Cerney	2
Sites with extant planning permission yet to be completed	
Oakfields, Cricklade Road, Cirencester, GL7 5QE (Site 1: 25/01079/FUL)	5
Oakfields, Cricklade Road, Cirencester, GL7 5QE (Site 2: 26/00190/FUL)	5
Total	15

Source: GTANA 2026

Table 10.4: Summary of Permanent Traveller Accommodation Needs (Pitches) for Cotswold District 2026–43.

Period	Pitches
2026-31	12
2031-36	8
2036-41	8
2041-43	4
Total	32

Source: GTANA 2026

115 Gloucestershire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (RRR Consultancy, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/m35hxtvu/gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-needs-assessment-rrr-and-cdc-july-2026.pdf>

residing in brick-and-mortar accommodation, should be considered separately from the identified need and be met through windfall developments.

- 10.46 To meet the identified residual need of 32 pitches, the Plan allocates four sites capable of delivering a total of 37 Traveller pitches over the Plan period. In addition, the Plan makes an allowance for 5 pitches to come forward on windfall sites over the Plan period. Together, the allocations and windfall allowance provide a total supply of 42 pitches. This provides sufficient flexibility to ensure that identified accommodation needs can be met and maintained throughout the Plan period. These sites are allocated by **Core Policy 45: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation** are set out in Table 10.4.
- 10.47 **Core Policy 45: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation** establishes the framework for meeting identified Traveller accommodation needs within the District. Alongside the allocated sites and windfall allowance, the policy sets out a sequential approach for assessing proposals that come forward to meet any additional or emerging needs during the Plan period.
- 10.48 Traveller pitches, together with up-to-date evidence of accommodation need, will be monitored throughout the Plan period. Where monitoring indicates that identified needs are not being met, or circumstances change significantly, an early review of **Core Policy 41: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation** will be carried out if necessary to ensure that identified needs continue to be met in accordance with the PPTS.

Core Policy 45: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Taking account of existing commitments, there is a requirement for 32 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be delivered in the District in the Plan period between 2026 and 2043.

Safeguarding Existing Provision

Existing authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites within the District will be safeguarded for Traveller use where there remains an identified need for such accommodation.

Allocated Sites

The following sites, indicated on the Policies Maps and in **Appendix 10**, are allocated for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and will contribute towards meeting the identified need for Traveller pitches within the District.

Table 10.5: Allocated traveller pitches over the plan period

Site name	Traveller pitch allocation to 2043
Quarry Farm, Cricklade Road, South Cerney (GT-013)	9
Oakfields, Cricklade Road, GL7 5QE (Site 3) (GT-015)	8
Strategic site at Land south of Driffield (GT-018)	10
Strategic site at Land south of The Steadings (GT-020)	10
Windfall allowance	5
Total	42

Sequential Approach

The following approach will be used to determine the acceptability, in principle, of proposals for Traveller development:

- a) first preference will be sites specifically allocated in this Plan for Travellers
- b) second preference will be to designate additional pitches / plots within the boundaries of existing suitable Traveller sites, including sites that have already been identified for this use, where this can be achieved without unacceptable impacts on living conditions, local amenity, landscape character or the environment
- c) third preference will be to extend existing suitable Traveller sites adjacent to existing boundaries where land is available adjacent to the site and the proposal would represent a sustainable form of development, and
- d) where a sufficient supply of pitches or plots cannot be achieved at the above locations new sites will be considered.

Criteria for New or Extended Sites

Proposals for new or extended Traveller sites will be permitted where they:

- e) demonstrate an identified accommodation need
- f) provide safe and suitable access to the highway network
- g) are reasonably accessible to local services and facilities, including education, healthcare, employment opportunities and public transport
- h) would not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenities of existing or future occupiers, neighbouring uses, landscape character, biodiversity, heritage assets or other environmental interests
- i) provide a safe, healthy and inclusive living environment for future occupiers, and
- j) make appropriate provision for essential infrastructure and services, including utilities, waste management and surface water drainage.

Windfall Sites

Proposals for windfall Traveller sites that meet an identified need and accord with the sequential approach and criteria set out in this policy will be supported where they contribute towards maintaining an adequate supply of Traveller accommodation within the District.

Rural Exception Sites

- 10.49 Rural exception housing can play a vital role in meeting the needs of communities across Cotswold District. Settlements can experience high house prices, limited turnover of existing stock and a shortage of smaller, more affordable homes. As a result, households with strong local connections can struggle to remain within their communities. **Development Policy 1: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites** provides a mechanism to deliver affordable housing in locations where it would not normally be permitted, ensuring that settlements remain socially and economically sustainable.
- 10.50 Rural Exception Sites must be based on a clearly evidenced local need. This is normally demonstrated through a parish or multi parish housing needs survey, undertaken in partnership with the Council, Registered Providers or community-led organisations. Surveys should be up to date and proportionate to the scale of the settlement. The evidence must show that the identified need cannot reasonably be met within existing development boundaries, through allocated sites, or through the existing housing stock.
- 10.51 Cotswold District is characterised by a dispersed pattern of rural settlements, many of which have limited services and infrastructure. Rural Exception Sites must therefore be small in scale and well-related to the built-up area of a Main, Principal or Non-Principal Settlement. This ensures that

new residents can access local facilities safely and conveniently, and that development does not result in isolated dwellings in the countryside. Proposals should demonstrate a strong physical and functional relationship with the settlement, including safe pedestrian access.

- 10.52 The primary purpose of Rural Exception Sites is to deliver affordable housing for local people. All affordable homes must therefore remain affordable in perpetuity, with occupancy prioritised for households with a local connection in accordance with the Local Plan Glossary (**Appendix 21**).
- 10.53 Rural Exception Sites will normally provide 100% affordable housing. National planning policy allows for a limited amount of market housing on Rural Exception Sites where this is required to support scheme viability. Any market housing must be the minimum necessary and form part of a single, integrated development. Applicants must provide open book viability evidence demonstrating the funding gap and the minimum number of market homes required to close it. The Council will scrutinise this evidence to ensure that the affordable housing remains the dominant element of the scheme and that the proposal continues to qualify as a Rural Exception Site.
- 10.54 Given the high landscape sensitivity within Cotswold District, including the Cotswolds National Landscape, Rural Exception Sites must be carefully designed to respect local character, settlement form and the wider landscape setting. Proposals should

demonstrate how they minimise visual impact, integrate with existing built form, and provide safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Applicants must also show that the site can be appropriately serviced, including foul drainage, without causing harm to the environment or placing undue pressure on local infrastructure.

- 10.55 Rural Exception Sites can be delivered through a range of mechanisms, including Registered Providers, community land trusts and other community led organisations. These models can help ensure long term stewardship, local involvement and affordability. The Council encourages early engagement with local communities and parish councils to build support for schemes and ensure that proposals respond directly to identified needs.

Development Policy 1: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

Development proposals for affordable housing within Rural Areas to meet local needs, including community-led development where appropriate, will be permitted as an exception subject to all of the following criteria being met:

- a) a demonstrable local community need for affordable housing has been established through a local housing needs survey or other relevant study
- b) occupancy is controlled through a local connection mechanism
- c) the number, size and tenure of the dwellings are suitable to meet the identified need
- d) the development proposal is located adjacent to, and well-related to, an existing settlement
- e) the development proposal is of small scale and proportionate in size to the adjoining settlement
- f) the development is designed to respect the characteristics of the local area, including the countryside setting, and
- g) schools and health facilities with capacity, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance by sustainable modes.

A development appraisal should accompany the application that clearly demonstrates how the above criteria have been met. A proportion of market housing will only be permitted where it is demonstrated to be essential to enable the delivery of the affordable housing with the cross-subsidisation of the affordable homes with some market homes. The number of market homes must be the minimum necessary to viably deliver the affordable housing, which will be informed by a PPG-compliant developer-funded viability assessment agreed with the Council (through an open book approach).

Community-led Housing

- 10.56 Community-led housing is where future residents form into a 'building group' who contribute to the design and development of new genuinely affordable housing to meet their longer-term needs. It can include development (new-build or refurbishment) by community land trusts, housing co-operatives, self-help housing or cohousing initiatives¹¹⁶.
- 10.57 Community-led housing proposals come in many forms, but, at application, they should have the following characteristics:
- meaningful community engagement occurs through the development process
 - the local community group or organisation will own, manage or provide stewardship of the homes in a manner of their choosing once development is complete, and
 - the benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined through meaningful community engagement and legally protected in perpetuity by a Section 106 or similar legal agreement.

- 10.58 The Localism Act allows for certain community organisations to bring forward a Community Right to Build Order (CRTBO), which permits smaller-scale development on a specific site without the need for planning permission, subject to a community referendum. However, where the latter does not apply, the Council recognises that community-led housing can provide a type of good quality housing that is genuinely affordable, which can enable local people on low incomes to stay local, and which can respond positively to the climate and ecological emergencies.
- 10.59 Given that development projects can be complex and time consuming to deliver, community groups may partner with organisations such as housing associations, landowners and agents, which are able to help deliver legitimate community-led housing.
- 10.60 Community-led housing schemes may include affordable housing, co-housing, community self-build or housing for people with specific needs such as older people or those with disabilities. They may also include, as part of the proposal, community buildings, recreational areas, space for growing food or for supporting wildlife.

¹¹⁶ Community land trusts are legal entities set up by communities to provide assets such as allotments or affordable housing. Housing co-operatives are controlled and managed by residents, and self-help housing usually refers to projects bringing empty properties back into use, often using volunteers or trainees.

Development Policy 2: Community-led Housing

Community-led housing proposals will be supported, provided that they:

- a) can demonstrate they are from a community-led organisation (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)), including organisations that are democratically controlled by their members and operate on a not-for-profit basis, either independently or in partnership with other delivery bodies
- b) can demonstrate the benefits to the local area and/or specified community are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity
- c) are 'physically' (i.e. in layout) or 'socially' integrated with existing neighbourhoods in terms of layout, design and social function and support mixed and inclusive communities
- d) proportionate in scale to the settlement and appropriate to its context, and
- e) prioritise occupation by households with a local connection (as defined by the Local Plan **Glossary: Appendix 21**), with flexibility where needed to ensure homes remain occupied.

Community-led organisations will be a means of delivering affordable housing on suitable Rural Exception Sites.



Dwellings for Rural Workers Outside Development Boundaries

- 10.61 The Cotswold countryside, besides being attractive, is also a place of work. Alongside agriculture and forestry, there are many other rural businesses. For the most part, people employed on the land or in businesses can live in nearby towns and villages and travel to work. However, from time to time, an essential need for a dwelling at a place of work can be clearly established. The essential need will be assessed having regard to:
- the functional requirements of the enterprise, and
 - the financial viability of the business.
- 10.62 Proposals for isolated dwellings in the open countryside should be avoided. To promote sustainability, development should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. However, from time-to-time, there may be special circumstances that justify new homes outside Development Boundaries: for example, it may be essential for a rural worker to live permanently at or very near their place of work. Whether this is essential will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals concerned. In such instances, where criteria a, b, and d set out in **Development Policy 3** are met, consideration will be given to the siting of a mobile home for a three-year temporary permission, where renewal would only be considered to provide continued occupation whilst a permanent dwelling is constructed on a site permitted for such a purpose.

- 10.63 When considering such applications, the history of the holding, the recent pattern of land use and building and, recent disposals of land and property, will be taken into account. The recent sale of land and property could constitute evidence of lack of need.
- 10.64 Proposals must demonstrate a genuine functional need requiring a full-time worker to be present at or near the site. The nature of employment alone will not be determinative.
- 10.65 Where an essential need for a rural workers dwelling is proven, a condition will be included within the planning permission limiting the occupancy of the new dwelling to those employed in the type of business in question.

Development Policy 3: Dwellings for Rural Workers Outside Development Boundaries

Outside Development Boundaries, new dwellings for rural workers will be permitted where:

- a) it is demonstrated that there is an essential need for a worker to live permanently at or near their place of occupation in the countryside
- b) a new dwelling cannot be provided by adapting an existing building on the holding
- c) a suitable alternative dwelling to meet the essential need is not available within a 20-minute walking or public transport journey time of the application site
- d) the proposed dwelling is located within or adjacent to the existing enterprise or other buildings on the holding
- e) the size of the proposed dwelling and any subsequent extension is proportionate to the essential need of the enterprise, and
- f) occupancy is limited by way of a planning condition or obligation.

For a proposed business or expansion of an existing business, where permission is first sought for a dwelling outside a Development Boundary and where criteria a, b and d are met, a temporary permission only will be granted, for a period of maximum of 3 years, to allow the siting of a mobile home to allow the applicant to demonstrate that the business is viable. Renewal of the temporary permission will only be allowed once and will only be considered to provide continued occupation whilst a permanent dwelling is constructed on a site permitted for such a purpose and there is evidence that building work has commenced.

Extensions to dwellings for rural workers will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the size of the extension is proportionate to the essential need of the enterprise.

Replacement rural workers' dwellings will be permitted where:

- g) a building within the existing holding cannot be adapted to accommodate the essential need
- h) the replacement dwelling is located on the site of the existing dwelling
- i) the size of the replacement dwelling is commensurate with the reasonable living requirements of the individual occupying the dwelling as an essential need, and
- j) occupancy will be limited by way of a planning condition or obligation.

Removal of Occupancy Conditions

- 10.66 Over time, the situation that made it essential to provide a new dwelling with a restrictive occupancy condition can change. When this happens, a planning application may be made to remove the occupancy condition so that the property can be sold on the open market.
- 10.67 The criteria for assessing proposals for new dwellings in the countryside are rigorous; thus, similar care will be taken in dealing with applications for the removal of occupancy conditions.
- 10.68 It is important to ensure that the removal of occupancy conditions for holiday homes and equestrian and rural workers' dwellings is not undertaken lightly as this would undermine the sustainability principles that underpin the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy. Applicants will need to demonstrate that there is no other functional need for an equestrian or rural workers dwelling in the locality, including affordable housing, or a tourism or need for a holiday let or annex before releasing the property on the open market.

- 10.69 In assessing applications for the removal of occupancy conditions, the Council will take a proportionate, evidence-led approach. Significant weight will be given to the length of time the dwelling has been occupied in accordance with the condition, alongside evidence of sustained marketing at a price reflecting the restriction and the absence of any ongoing functional need. This approach ensures that conditions are not removed prematurely where they continue to serve a planning purpose, while avoiding reliance on arbitrary time-based thresholds. It also helps to prevent the unjustified release of market housing in locations where new unrestricted dwellings would not normally be supported, as outlined in **Development Policy 3: Dwellings for Rural Workers Outside Development Boundaries** and **Development Policy 5: Replacement Dwellings**.

Development Policy 4: Removal of Occupancy Conditions

Removal of occupancy conditions – equestrian and rural workers

Outside Development Boundaries, removal of an occupancy condition attached to an equestrian workers dwelling or a rural workers dwelling will be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that the original justification for the condition no longer exists and all of the following criteria are demonstrated:

- a) that there is no longer an essential need for the dwelling on the holding or premises, and there is not likely to be within the foreseeable future
- b) that a reasonable and sustained attempt has been made to market and sell the property with its occupancy condition at a realistically reduced value, and no prospective buyer has come forward (a minimum period of 12 months)
- c) where there is a need for affordable housing in the locality, the dwelling could not be used for affordable housing on either a temporary or permanent basis to help meet this need, and
- d) significant weight will be given to the length of time the dwelling has been occupied under the restriction.

Removal of occupancy conditions – holiday lets and annexes

Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions on holiday accommodation or annexes, which have been built or converted for that purpose, outside Development Boundaries or Non-Principal Settlements will only be permitted where it is clearly demonstrated that the original justification for the condition no longer exists and the removal would not undermine the Local Plan Spatial Strategy or sustainability objectives.

The removal of occupancy conditions on holiday accommodation or annexes (C3 Use Class) will only be permitted where the dwelling complies with the Nationally Described Space Standard and is located within Development Boundaries or Non-Principal Settlements.

Replacement Dwellings

- 10.70 The erection of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a period of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of individual properties and the surrounding countryside. The replacement of small rural dwellings with larger houses can radically change the character of an area to one of a more suburban nature and also reduce the supply of smaller rural dwellings. To help protect the character of the countryside, extensions and replacements of dwellings need to be controlled in terms of scale and design.
- 10.71 If smaller dwellings are replaced with properties that are much larger, then, over time, the District’s stock of smaller properties in the countryside will diminish. Cotswold District has an acute housing affordability issue, which has got worse in recent years. There is a need to retain a stock of smaller house types, as they are generally more affordable. The HENA¹¹⁷ will continue to be used to monitor the housing market need and demand.
- 10.72 Provision of replacement dwellings provides an opportunity to include flood resistant or resilience measures into the design of replacement dwellings in existing flood risk areas. In some instances, there

may be an opportunity to re-site the dwelling within the existing residential curtilage to reduce flood risk or to achieve landscape or biodiversity benefits.

- 10.73 Proposals are sometimes made to replace a building or structure that may once have been a dwelling, but has subsequently been abandoned¹¹⁸. Such proposals need to be considered in the light of the general presumption against new dwellings in the countryside. Over the centuries, many properties have been abandoned and fallen into disrepair until virtually all trace of them has gone. The Council sees nothing wrong in this, unless the property concerned is a listed building, or crucial to the appearance of a Conservation Area. The Council will not permit such ruins, or derelict buildings, to be used as a pretext for a new dwelling in the open countryside (i.e., in **Development Policy 5: Replacement Dwellings**).
- 10.74 Whilst there may be instances where a modest difference in size can be acceptable, it may be appropriate to attach conditions removing permitted development rights to extend the property further. There will be a presumption against replacing temporary or mobile dwellings with permanent structures unless there is a clear planning justification.

117 Housing Need Evidence (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>
118 A building that has previously been used as a dwelling will not be regarded as an existing dwelling where such use has been abandoned. The recognised tests of abandonment are the physical condition of the building, any intervening use other than residential, the length of time the building has not been lived in, and the intentions of the owner over the years.

Development Policy 5: Replacement Dwellings

Where demolition and rebuild supports the principles of achieving sustainable development, replacement dwellings will be permitted where:

- a) the building to be replaced is not a listed building
- b) the scale, form and footprint of the replacement dwelling is smaller than, or of a similar size and scale (not materially larger) to the existing dwelling (including any extensions)
- c) the replacement dwelling is located on or closely related to the footprint of the existing dwelling, unless relocation would deliver significant and demonstrable benefits in terms of flood risk, landscape or biodiversity and the design does not detract from the character or appearance of its surroundings
- d) the original dwelling does not fulfil a social housing need according to the most up to date housing evidence
- e) the proposal does not result in the loss of a dwelling that contributes to meeting identified local housing needs without appropriate justification, and
- f) the development does not involve a building that has recently been converted to residential use, where the demolition and replacement would undermine the purpose of the original permission.

Where the replacement dwelling is to be built alongside or does not otherwise overlap the existing footprint of the dwelling that it is to replace, the Council will impose a condition on the planning permission, or seek a planning obligation, requiring that the original building be demolished and the site cleared within a specific period. The rebuilding anywhere on the site or wider landholding of demolished dwellings once the new dwelling is occupied (i.e. to create two dwellings on the site) will not be permitted.

Conditions may be imposed to remove permitted development rights on future extensions or alterations to the replacement dwelling where considered necessary.

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Chapter eleven

Economy, Retail and Tourism

Introduction

- 11.1 The Plan seeks to provide a positive policy framework, which supports jobs, businesses and investment, to build a strong and competitive economy. It sets a framework to reflect the different drivers within Cotswold's economy with the aim to build and sustain a vibrant, diverse and resilient local economy, that encourages both large- and small-scale opportunities throughout Cotswold in appropriate locations. This is set out in our **Spatial Strategy** (Chapter 4) and **Area Strategies** (Chapters 5 to 7).
- 11.2 This Chapter sets out the more detailed policies that will be used to determine planning applications relating to the economy (including tourism and tourists and visitor accommodation) and for retail.
- 11.3 This Chapter includes the following policies:
- **Core Policy 46: New Employment Development**
 - **Core Policy 47: Safeguarding Established Employment Sites**
 - **Core Policy 48: Ancillary Uses on Employment Sites**

- **Core Policy 49: Development of Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions**
- **Core Policy 50: Tourist and Visitor Accommodation**
- **Core Policy 51: Town Centre Uses**
- **Core Policy 52: New Local Centres**
- **Development Policy 6: Rural Diversification**
- **Development Policy 7: Conversion of Rural Buildings**
- **Development Policy 8: New Agricultural and Forestry Development**
- **Development Policy 9: Equestrian Related Development.**

Employment Development

- 11.4 Cotswold District has many established and successful employment sites both within and outside towns and villages. The Established Employment Sites make an important contribution to the employment stock of the District and **Core Policy 46: New Employment Development** provides a strong steer on how planning applications will be considered to support their continued role and function by permitting proposals for employment development.
- 11.5 The Spatial Strategy outlines a need for 68.5ha of new employment land to provide for an identified need for Class B2, B8 and E(g) uses, principally industrial land and office space, to support the growth that is predicted in these sectors across the plan period. The current stock of employment land in established employment sites is insufficient to accommodate the forecasted need for the District.

The Local Plan therefore allocates an additional 32.7ha of employment land to deliver the employment land needs over the Plan Period. This is covered in more detail in **Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy**.

- 11.6 **Core Policy 46: New Employment Development** seeks to provide a positive policy framework by which new employment development that comes forward can be assessed to support the strategic objectives of the Plan and the Cotswold Green Economic Strategy 2025¹¹⁹.
- 11.7 Due to the environmental constraints within the District, and the need to locate employment development in the most sustainable locations, it is important that best use is made of sites in the Main Settlement (Cirencester) and Principal Settlements.
- 11.8 However, the Council also recognises the importance of the rural economy to Cotswold District, therefore **Core Policy 46: New Employment Development** enables small-scale employment development appropriate to rural areas. Rural business units represent an important element of the employment portfolio of Cotswold District. The policy encourages the positive development of small rural employment premises in appropriate locations. Sensitive, small-scale employment development helps to sustain the rural economy and create local employment opportunities. Proposals, however, must be in keeping in terms of scale, size and function with the location.

¹¹⁹ Cotswold District Green Economic Growth Strategy (2025-2029) (Cotswold District Council, 2025): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/mzldjpqc/cotswold-green-economic-strategy-2025.pdf>

Core Policy 46: New Employment Development

Employment development will be permitted:

- a) within Established Employment Sites (as identified by the Policies Map and **Appendix 11**), for Class B2, B8 and Class E(g) proposals, with a condition restricting to these uses, including intensification of the site
- b) for extensions to Established Employment Sites, for Class B2, B8 and Class E(g) proposals, with a condition restricting to these uses, subject to amenity and transport impacts, or
- c) in principle, within Development Boundaries, on sites that are not currently identified as an Established Employment Site.

Outside Development Boundaries, and outside Established Employment Sites, proposals for small-scale employment development appropriate to the rural area will be permitted where they:

- d) do not entail residential use as anything other than ancillary to the business
- e) are justified by a business case, demonstrating that the business is viable or facilitate the retention or growth of a local employment opportunity, and
- f) are not large-scale, unless it is in accordance with other policies that expressly deal with large-scale development in such locations.

All employment development should:

- i) enable opportunities for more sustainable working practices, including home-working, and encourages travelling to and from work by transport modes other than private vehicles
- j) maintain and enhance the vitality of the rural economy
- k) support and improve the vitality and viability of Town Centres, and
- l) support sustainable tourism in ways that enable the District to attract higher numbers of longer-stay visitors.

Safeguarding Established Employment Sites

- 11.9 Established Employment Sites, both within and beyond settlements, play a critical role in meeting the District's economic and business needs. Protection of such sites and support for their potential intensification, where appropriate, is critical in ensuring that existing businesses are retained and have the opportunity to grow.
- 11.10 Established employment sites play a critical role in meeting the needs of the District and as such need to be safeguarded for their continued use and function. Established Employment Sites are listed in **Appendix 11** of this Plan.
- 11.11 These sites are considered valuable employment locations and should be safeguarded for that purpose. Sites allocated in **Core Policy 5: Meeting Business and Employment Needs in Cotswold District** (set out in Chapter 4) for B Class and Class E(g) employment uses are also safeguarded as they are required to enable the delivery of forecast B2, B8 and E(g) job growth over the Plan period. Once development is completed on sites allocated for Class B2, B8 and E(g) class employment uses in the Local Plan, the sites will automatically become Established Employment Sites.
- 11.12 **Core Policy 47: Safeguarding Established Employment Sites** seeks to retain sites for local employment. The economic analysis demonstrates that while there are a few declining employment sectors, there is an increased land requirement

to enable the economic potential of the area to be achieved. The issue, however, is more complex than simple numbers. Several larger, well established, industrial estates within the District provide opportunities for a range of employment developments, including those that may not be acceptable within residential areas. They provide the main opportunities for uses such as manufacturing. If lost to other uses, the relocation of such estates elsewhere could be extremely difficult.

- 11.13 **Core Policy 47: Safeguarding Established Employment Sites** seeks to prevent the loss of individual units within an Established Employment Site, as well as the loss of the Established Employment Site as a whole. The policy recognises that there will sometimes be occasions when there is no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for an employment use within an Established Employment Site or a site allocated in the Local Plan. In this situation, evidence must be submitted to demonstrate that the site has been continually, actively and effectively marketed for at least 12 months and that the use is no longer of commercial interest. The Council may also take consideration of other evidence, including the marketing of similar sites in the area.

- 11.14 There are several well-established employment sites in the wider rural area beyond the Development Boundaries. These are a key element of the District's economy. Therefore, **Core Policy 47: Safeguarding Established Employment Sites** seeks to support these sites by permitting proposals for employment development.

- 11.15 The aim, therefore, is to maintain and enhance the role of Established Employment Sites, where they are well located, through the development of further employment uses and the prevention of changes to other uses. The preparation of development proposals that would result in the loss of a site currently used for employment must be made in accordance with policies that support the overall Local Plan strategy.

Core Policy 47: Safeguarding Established Employment Sites

Established Employment Sites as identified on the Policies Map and in **Appendix 11** will be safeguarded for offices, warehouses, workshops, industrial and complimentary sui generis uses i.e. B2, B8, E(g) and sui generis use¹²⁰.

The Council will apply a presumption in favour of retaining all existing employment land, including allocated employment sites, for Class B2, B8 and Class E(g) employment uses.

Proposals that involve the loss of existing or allocated employment land or floorspace, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that continued employment use is no longer practical or viable, taking account of the following considerations:

- the potential for other employment uses
- whether the building or use meets, or could meet, a specific local business requirement, such as providing low cost start up accommodation
- the physical adaptation or reuse of the building/site for employment uses is unviable and unsustainable
- its loss would not conflict with the strategic need to increase employment land supply and balance homes and jobs in the District, and
- the suitability of the access arrangements for the site/buildings, by road and public transport.

Proposals that involve the loss of employment use will be expected to demonstrate that the factors set out above have been satisfactorily addressed. As part of the assessment of proposals, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the site has been appropriately marketed for potential employment uses for at least 12 months.

Appendix 11 identifies Established Employment Sites that are important for general or heavy industry, waste management, storage and distribution, or a mix of such uses. These sites and their locations are likely to raise compatibility issues with residential use and proposals for change of use need to be scrutinised carefully. Consequently, to safeguard both the employment uses and the living conditions of any prospective residential occupiers of converted premises, an assessment of residential amenity will be required for all change of use applications converting a building in employment use to residential use.

¹²⁰ Established Employment Sites are integral to the Local Plan economic strategy and the economic sustainability of the district. They are also important for the employment self-containment of the district and individual settlements within the district, helping to provide local job opportunities and avoid the need for long-distance commuting. It is therefore important that they are safeguarded.

Ancillary Uses on Employment Sites

- 11.16 Providing uses that are ancillary to the main employment uses on large employment sites can improve the attractiveness of business units and help to provide a more sustainable and higher quality working experience for employees. Many of the Districts large employment sites are located either on the edge of settlements or in rural areas and co-locating complimentary uses can help to reduce traffic movements on the highway network and reduce trip generated carbon emissions.
- 11.17 It is important that any ancillary uses are necessary to support the main employment uses as set out by **Core Policy 48: Ancillary Uses on Employment**

Sites. Where there is sufficient demand, amenities for employees may include small-scale shops and cafes, a gymnasium and/or early years childcare facilities.

- 11.18 The provision of larger scale retailing, leisure or other main town centre uses that would function as destination uses in their own right, will not be supported. In some instances, it may be necessary to limit the floorspace, opening hours or range of goods sold to ensure that the ancillary uses proposed do not adversely impact the vitality and viability of any Town Centre (including allocated Local Centres).

Core Policy 48: Ancillary Uses on Employment Sites

Proposals for uses other than E(g), B2 and B8 business uses on allocated or Established Employment Sites will only be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) the use is ancillary to the main business or employment function of the wider site
- b) the proposal would not prejudice the primary employment function of the site or undermine the availability of land and premises for E (g), B2 or B8 uses
- c) demonstrate that there is sufficient demand for the use (s) being proposed, and
- d) the use, either alone or combined with other existing or proposed uses, would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centre or shopping centre (including local centres) or the social and community vitality of a nearby village.

Conditions may be imposed to limit the scale of the operation and to restrict the range of activities proposed or goods sold, where necessary, to ensure that the criteria set out above are met.

Development of Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions

- 11.19 Tourism is a key employment sector in the District, with an estimated turnover of £380 million in 2022¹²¹. In 2022, there were 7,300 jobs in tourism-related sectors in Cotswold which accounts for approximately 13% of all jobs in the District. The main categories of visitor spend are: accommodation; shopping; food and drink; attractions and entertainment; and travel¹²². Cultural activity also has high economic value and brings in tourist trade.
- 11.20 The Destination Management Plan for Tourism Across the Cotswolds, April 2026¹²³ vision is: ‘To ensure that the Cotswolds is a vibrant year-round destination where visitors enjoy high quality, authentic experiences and tourism makes an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the local economy’.
- 11.21 The Local Plan helps to ensure that new tourism development is effectively and appropriately controlled to protect the high quality natural and built environment of the District, especially in the Cotswolds National Landscape. This is especially important for the special qualities of the Cotswold National Landscape, heritage assets and the character and appearance of settlements and the countryside. **Core Policy 49: Development of Tourist Facilities**

and Visitor Attractions seeks to minimise the impact of new tourist facilities and visitor attractions on the character and special features of the District’s historic settlements and countryside.

- 11.22 Tourist facilities and visitor attractions should demonstrate a functional relationship with their proposed location and be compatible with the character of the surrounding area. The nature of the attraction should rely on its location within and special relationship with the District. For the purposes of **Core Policies 49: Development of Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions** and **Core Policy 50: Tourist and Visitor Accommodation**, the main tourist routes are defined as A417(T), A417, A419(T), A419, A40(T), A429, A424, A44, A433, A435, A436 and the Cotswold Lakes Spine Roads (shown by **Appendix 12**).
- 11.23 Development which helps to address current weaknesses in the tourist economy should be encouraged where appropriate. For example, low impact family attractions, such as farm activity visits. The area’s popularity with visitors is not a sufficient justification, in itself, for the location of new tourist attractions. Any large-scale visitor development will generally be considered to be unacceptable if it would harm the landscape or features of historic interest or have a harmful impact on the transport network.

121 The Economic Impact of Gloucestershire’s Visitor Economy 2024 (The South West Research Company, 2025): https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/cotswolds/Gloucestershire_districts_2024_ad1ad4c1-14dc-4cac-9964-92b4259f9b7d.pdf

122 Employment Study 2012 – Paragraph 3.2.19 (Cotswold District Council, last updated 2016): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/gsuflv2/a4-1-05-economy-study-part-2-volume-2-employment-study-part-1-apr-2016.pdf>

123 Cotswold Tourism Destination Management Plan (2026): https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/cotswolds/Cotswolds_Tourism_Destination_Management_Plan_2022_25_831b002c-4fff-4d08-865f-e5fcefb36e7.pdf

Core Policy 49: Development of Tourist Facilities and Visitor Attractions

Tourist facilities and visitor attractions, and improvements and associated development to existing visitor attractions, will be supported where the proposals are in accordance with the development plan, promote the rural economy and contribute positively towards the ongoing protection and enhancement of the countryside, provided that:

- a. the proposals is viable without the provision of visitor accommodation

b. the proposal has a functional relationship, and is in keeping with the historic and natural heritage of the area, and can demonstrate how the proposal will minimise impacts on the local environment, by its location, scale and detailed design

c. it is demonstrated how the proposal contributes to the local economy

d. the proposal is well related to the main tourist routes, as defined on the Policies Map and **Appendix 12**, and a traffic assessment and travel plan assessing the highway impacts of the proposals, and how they will be mitigated, is submitted as part of a planning application that demonstrates that the proposal is accessible by a range of transport modes appropriate to its scale and location and any transport impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated
- e. it can be identified that the proposal is an opportunity that is not met by existing facilities

f. as far as possible, use is made of existing buildings, particularly agricultural buildings in the countryside, proposals involving new buildings should provide justification as to why it is not feasible to use existing buildings and demonstrate how the number and scale of new buildings has been kept to a minimum, and

g. within the National Landscape, major development¹²⁴ will only be permitted where exceptional circumstances are the public interest can be demonstrated, having regard to National Policy and the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan¹²⁵.

124 In accordance with footnote 67 of the NPPF (2024), ‘major development’ in this context is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

125 Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030 (Cotswolds National Landscape Board): CNL-MANAGEMENT-PLAN_2025-30-FINAL.pdf

Tourist and Visitor Accommodation

- 11.24 The Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2026)¹²⁶ identifies the District as having significant numbers of serviced and self-catering accommodation of visitors, the highest levels within Gloucestershire. There are currently a high number of hotels that are considered to be ‘main town centre uses’ as defined in the NPPF (2024)¹²⁷. Development of new-build hotels and other serviced accommodation together with extensions to existing facilities will normally be acceptable within the Town Centre, Local Centres identified in **Core Policy 50: Tourist and Visitor Accommodation**.

11.25 The role of the traditional high street has changed significantly in recent years, and continues to evolve, thus directing tourist and visitor accommodation to the Town and Local Centres will greatly assist in helping them to diversify and benefit from a broader mix of uses. Town Centres can become less active during the evening, and uses of this type, can counteract that. Moreover, the concentration of visitor accommodation in areas where associated facilities are in walkable distance, such as restaurants and bars, reduces the need for travel by vehicle.

11.26 Proposals for new-build hotel or other serviced accommodation outside of town centres but within Development Boundaries will still be subject to the sequential test and a test of their impact on the town centre in line with the requirements of **Core**
- Policy 51: Town Centre Uses.** Proposals which cannot satisfy the sequential and impact tests will be contrary to **Core Policy 51** and will not be supported.

11.27 Extensions to existing facilities could potentially result in a large building with an accompanying change in the scale or nature of the enterprise. This could have an unwelcome and unpredictable impact on local amenities and infrastructure and therefore needs to be controlled. For this reason, extensions that result in an increase of more than 1,000sqm in floor area, including any previous extensions, are subject to the same main town centre use policy context as applies to new build facilities. A proposal of similar scale to extend an existing hotel located in the countryside and out of centre will need to satisfy the sequential test for main town centre uses and demonstrate that there are material planning considerations that justify an exception to the policy. Small scale extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

11.28 Self-catering is particularly popular in rural areas, with high season and short-break holidays offering attractions for a significant number of holiday-makers. It can make a valuable contribution to the rural economy.

11.29 The Local Plan encourages the development of alternative visitor accommodation, such as sites for glamping or eco pods and shepherd’s huts,

126 Gloucestershire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (Iceni, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-DevelopmentStrategy/>

127 National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

provided it can be sensitively located; avoids out-of-the-way places accessed by sub-standard or single track roads, has minimal environmental impact, is successfully integrated with and contributes to the Local Plan’s ‘green’ objectives, and being at an appropriate scale. This will help broaden the tourist offer and encourage day visitors to stay longer, thus increasing the benefits to the local economy. Consideration will be given to proposals that incorporate innovation, particularly in respect of sustainability and addressing the climate change and biodiversity emergencies, and a variety of camping opportunities.

11.30 Tourist and visitor accommodation referred to in **Core Policy 50: Tourist and Visitor Accommodation** falls within the following use classes:

- Hotels and Serviced Accommodation: Class C1
- Holiday lets: Class C3, and
- Hostels, caravans, glamping facilities, Shepherd’s Huts and similar temporary accommodation: Sui Generis.

Core Policy 50: Tourist and Visitor Accommodation

Hotels, Serviced Accommodation and Hostels:

Within Town and Local Centres, as defined on the Policies Map and identified in **Core Policy 51: Town Centres**, and **Core Policy 52: Local Centres**, proposals for new hotels, serviced accommodation and hostels will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) they are of an appropriate scale and design that complements the character of the area, and
- b) there is a need for a new hotel or serviced accommodation.

Proposals that seek the extension of existing hotels, serviced accommodation or hostels that exceeds 1,000sqm (including any pre-existing extension(s)), and including outside of the Town and Local Centres, will be subject to the same considerations regarding scale and design as applies in **Core Policy 51: Town Centre Uses** and **Core Policy 52: New Local Centres**.

Proposals for extensions to existing hotels and serviced accommodation of less than 1,000sqm floor area (including any pre-existing extension(s)), will be determined on a case-by-case basis having regard to the same considerations as applies **Core Policy 51: Town Centre Uses**.

Self-catering Accommodation and Holiday Lets:

Within the Development Boundaries of Main and Principal Settlements, proposals for the creation of new self contained holiday accommodation units, whether through conversion or new build, will only be permitted where proposals demonstrate that:

- c) the accommodation will not result in the loss of an existing dwelling suitable for permanent residential use
- d) the use will not lead to unacceptable levels of noise, disturbance or impacts on neighbouring residential amenity, and
- e) sufficient management arrangements are in place to mitigate any adverse impacts on the local area.

Outside the Development Boundaries of Main and Principal Settlements, proposals for self-catering accommodation or holiday lets, will be supported, where they are provided through the renovation of a suitable existing building that is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension, in line with the requirements of **Development Policy 7: Conversion of Rural Buildings**.

Temporary and/or mobile accommodation: Touring Caravan and Camping Sites, Glamping Pods, Shepherd’s Huts and similar facilities:

The development of sites for temporary and/or mobile accommodation will be permitted where the proposed facility:

- f) is well-related to the main visitor and tourist routes, as defined by on the Policies Map and **Appendix 12**, and a traffic assessment and travel plan assessing the highway impacts of the proposal, and how they will be mitigated, is submitted as part of a planning application that demonstrates that the proposal is accessible by a range of transport modes appropriate to its scale and location and any transport impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated
- g) is located such that local services and attractions can readily be accessed by sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling, and
- h) does not require new buildings and is able to use sensitively renovated and converted existing buildings of appropriate scale for facilities provision where these are required.

Town Centre and Retail

- 11.31 Town Centres provide the day-to-day shopping and services for residents of the District, and in doing so create employment for people living around them. The concentration of a variety of retail, service, leisure, entertainment and other commercial uses within a Town Centre is a major component of maintaining its vitality and viability. Growth, appropriate diversification and enhancement within defined centres, are considered to be the most effective strategy for improving the overall economic performance and competitiveness of the District.
- 11.32 While the pace of change in Cotswold District has perhaps been more gradual than in other parts of the country, in recent years the role of many town centres has evolved considerably. This is due, in large part, to the increasing prominence of online retailing (which accounts for around 20% of spending in the District)¹²⁸. Some Town Centres have experienced shop closures, including many long-established national chains. Former emphasis placed on the primacy of retail as the key town centre use is no longer a sound planning policy stance. This is evident through Government policy which seeks to provide greater flexibility in respect of commercial uses on the high street. Despite this, Town Centres across the District are in good overall health and remain vital and viable.
- 11.33 Centres which support a mix of uses, often including retail, services, food and drink, and residential, are more likely to thrive. It is important that this mix responds to local circumstances and the needs of the catchment area which the centre serves. Equally, the compatibility of a mixed-use centre can be challenging. Encouraging a more vibrant evening economy, for instance, can affect the well-being of a growing residential population and vice versa. The mix of uses needs to be carefully planned and balanced.
- 11.34 The Council recognises that successful town centres increasingly perform a broader role than simply providing retail and commercial services. In addition to shops, leisure and food and drink uses, town centres are expected to accommodate a wider range of activities including housing, health and wellbeing facilities, community services, flexible workspace, co-working hubs, cultural uses and public services. These uses can increase footfall throughout the day, support local businesses, strengthen the resilience of centres and contribute to their long-term vitality and viability. Proposals that diversify and enhance the function of town centres in a manner appropriate to their scale and character will be supported.
- 11.35 The 2011-2031 Local Plan included a four-tier hierarchy of Town Centre types. The Town Centre and Retail Study (May 2026)¹²⁹ recommends that this is simplified for two reasons: (a) the spatial strategy only operates three main tiers (Main, Principal and Non-Principal Settlements); and (b) there are

¹²⁸ Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus Planning, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>
¹²⁹ Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus Planning, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>

no fundamental differences between many of the settlements in town centre land use terms. On this basis, **Core Policy 51** now identifies a single category of ‘Town Centres’ in this Local Plan.

Cirencester

- 11.36 Cirencester has the largest catchment of all the Town Centres in the District, drawing trade from across the southern half of the District. It generates an annual turnover of almost £120m through retail (comparison/ convenience) and food/ beverage. Vacancies in the town centre have decreased slightly between 2021 and 2025 and now occupy around 10% of all surveyed units. This is below the national average of town centre vacancies of 14%¹³⁰. Around one third of spending in non-food stores in the town derives from visitors (living outside the study zone) and tourists.
- 11.37 Beyond Cirencester, the five largest Centres (Bourton-on-the-Water, Chipping Campden, Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury) have the widest variety of shops, facilities and services. These settlements will be promoted and enhanced as locations in the District for ‘main town centre uses’. ‘Main town centre uses’ are defined in the NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary)¹³¹ and include retail development, leisure, entertainment facilities, intensive sport and recreation uses, offices and arts, culture and tourism development.
- 11.38 Fairford and Lechlade-on-Thames function as important service centres for the majority of needs of their respective localised catchment areas, which is particularly important for those, such as the elderly, where travelling further afield is less likely. This complementary focus should enable these centres to meet the majority of the needs of people in their local catchments, while relying on Cirencester or other larger Town Centres to provide those services which cannot reasonably be catered for locally because of issues of scale.
- 11.39 The smaller centres of Northleach and South Cerney, provide a more limited range of services and facilities within their centres, but play an important role in providing for the daily needs of the settlement and the surrounding rural area.
- 11.40 There are several Principal and Non-Principal Settlements with a low level of dispersed main town centre uses, and therefore defining a Town Centre boundary would not be appropriate. These settlements are Blockley, Kemble, Mickleton and Siddington. Given the absence of defined Town Centre boundaries in these settlements, proposals for small-scale main town centre uses within Development Boundaries will not normally be required to demonstrate compliance with the sequential approach. However, proposals will require an impact assessment if over the threshold size (see **Core Policy 51**) and should meet the requirements of the policy and other policies of the Plan.

¹³⁰ Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus Planning, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>
¹³¹ National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Sequential Test

- 11.41 The requirements for a sequential test and retail or leisure impact assessment will apply to proposals for ‘main town centre uses’ beyond the identified town centre boundary (noting that the relevant area of consequence for the sequential test is different for retail (the primary shopping area) and other main town centre uses (Town Centre boundary)). The requirement will not apply to proposals which are consistent with site allocations for main town centre uses in the Plan.
- 11.42 The Council will support main Town Centre use proposals that improve the vitality, viability and resilience of any of the town centres. Firstly, seeking to focus development within the centre itself, or on suitable sites located at the edge of centre, followed by out of centre sites which may be appropriate in a considered sequential approach. By supporting a concentrated variety of appropriate uses, the vitality and viability of Town Centres can be protected and enhanced, and ‘main town centre’ uses can contribute to healthy and lively centres and communities. What constitutes an adverse effect on the vitality and viability of, and investment within, a Centre will be based on the circumstances of each case. The cumulative impact of the proposal considered together with recent developments may also be a relevant consideration for the impact assessment.

Retail and Leisure Impact Assessment

- 11.43 The NPPF requires that when assessing applications

¹³² Retail and Town Centres Study (Nexus Planning, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Retail>

for retail and leisure development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, Local Planning Authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally-set floorspace threshold.

- 11.44 The average unit size across all centres is reasonably small. Floorspace data for Stow-on-the-Wold, Tetbury and Cirencester shows average (retail and service) unit sizes of 90sqm, 130sqm and 15sqm¹³² respectively. The other Town Centres across the District have a similar profile of units and are more likely to be similar to the average size of unit in Tetbury and Stow-on-the-Wold. Therefore, the threshold set out in this Local Plan is 200sqm gross, which will allow development management decisions to concentrate upon edge and out of centre proposals which are most likely to compete with the larger component of units that provide the most support for the role, function and attractiveness of the identified Town Centres in the District.
- 11.45 Where impact assessments indicate significant adverse impacts on the vitality and viability of an existing centre, development will be refused. Where the evidence shows there is no significant adverse impact, the positive and negative effects of the proposal will be balanced, together with locational and other considerations, to reach an overall judgement. For clarity, the impact assessment test also applies to proposals on established employment sites, and within the identified Development Boundaries.

Core Policy 51: Town Centre Uses

The following Main and Principal Settlements have designated Town Centres (as indicated on the Policies Map and **Appendix 13**):

- Bourton-on-the-Water
- Chipping Campden
- Cirencester (and Primary Shopping Area)
- Fairford
- Lechlade-on-Thames
- Moreton-in-Marsh
- Northleach
- South Cerney
- Stow-on-the-Wold
- Tetbury.

The preferred sequence of locations for Main Town Centre uses (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)) are:

- Primary Shopping Area (retail uses only; and applies only to Cirencester)
- Town Centres
- Edge of Town Centres¹³³
- Out of Town Centres¹³⁴ .

Proposals for retail development outside of Cirencester’s Primary Shopping Area and proposals for Main Town Centre uses outside of designated Town Centres should demonstrate that there are no sequentially preferable sites or premises to accommodate the proposed development, taking into account the need for flexibility in the scale and format of proposals. Applicants should demonstrate flexibility in respect of scale and format when considering sequentially preferable sites.

- All proposals for Main Town Centre uses must:
- a) be accessible and well connected to the centre by public transport and active travel links
 - b) complement and enhance the vitality and viability of the Town Centre/ settlement
 - c) help maintain an appropriate mix of uses including, where appropriate, residential use
 - d) maintain or improve, where possible, the health and wellbeing of the District’s residents through increased choice and quality of shopping, leisure, recreation, arts, cultural and community facilities
 - e) contribute to the quality, attractiveness, character, and heritage of the settlement, including the Centre, and the street frontage within which the site is located
 - f) be designed to minimise the impact of development on designated heritage assets and Conservation Areas, and
 - g) ensure where feasible that where ground floor redevelopment or alterations are proposed, that access to the upper floors is unaffected or enhanced to enable their availability for other permissible uses.

¹³³ For retail uses, a location that is well connected to, and up to 300 metres from, the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

¹³⁴ A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

In addition to designated Town Centres, proposals for small-scale (under 200sqm gross) retail or services will be supported, within the development boundaries of the following settlements:

- Blockley
- Kemble
- Mickleton
- Siddington

Proposals outside of the defined Town Centres that result in a 200sqm net increase in gross retail floorspace or a 2,500sqm net increase in gross leisure floorspace must be supported by a Retail or Leisure Impact Assessment to assess their impact on the health and investment potential of defined Town Centre.

New Local Centres

- 11.46 The spatial strategy proposes a substantial increase to the size and function of a number of settlements across the District, proposing strategic allocations and one entirely new settlement to meet local housing, employment and other needs. To ensure that sustainable communities are developed in these locations, it will be essential to anchor the new communities with local centres that provide retail opportunities, convenience and community services.
- 11.47 The Local Plan proposes new Local Centres within nine of the strategic allocations. **Core Policy 52: New Local Centres** seeks to ensure that the Local Centres are brought forward that contribute to the sense of place and sustainability in new communities.
- 11.48 The role of local centres continues to evolve in response to changing patterns of work, service provision and community needs. In addition to convenience retail and community facilities, local centres can provide an important focus for flexible employment space, co-working facilities, health and wellbeing services, childcare provision, cafés and other complementary uses that help reduce the need to travel and support day-to-day needs locally. Such uses can increase activity throughout the day, support local businesses and services, and contribute to the creation of sustainable and self-contained communities. Proposals that broaden the function of Local Centres in a manner proportionate to the scale of the development they serve will be supported.

Core Policy 52: New Local Centres

New Local Centres which contain and/or partly contain a convenience/ food store (up to 1,000sqm gross) and community uses¹³⁵ and other appropriate local services will be required as part of the following strategic allocations:

- Strategic extension to the east of Kingshill Lane (food store up to 500sqm gross)
- Strategic extension to the north, east and south of Down Ampney
- New settlement to the south of Driffield
- Strategic extension to the north-east of Fairford (food store up to 1,500sqm net)
- Strategic extension to the south-west of Kemble
- Strategic extension to the north & west of Mickleton
- Strategic extension to the south of Preston
- Strategic extension to the south of the Steadings.

- Proposals for new Local Centres at these locations should:
- a) adhere to the scale, type and layout of strategic development sites (as set out in the Site Development Frameworks)
 - b) be located centrally within the strategic allocation to maximise the opportunity for sustainable travel (walking, and cycling) for the majority of proposed/ new dwellings on the site and provide opportunities to link to the existing public transport network, in accordance with the Site Development Frameworks
 - c) provide the scale and type of uses that do not undermine the role, function, vitality and viability of existing Town Centres, set out in **Core Policy 51: Town Centre Uses**
 - d) create a focal point for the community, where appropriate, through the co-location of open space, public realm, community facilities and other complementary uses
 - e) demonstrate that servicing and refuse can be accommodated in the design of the local centre, and
 - f) provide opportunities, where appropriate to the scale and function of the Local Centre, for flexible workspace, co-working facilities, health services, childcare provision and other complementary uses that support the creation of a sustainable and self-contained community.

¹³⁵ Community uses are defined as provision of a creche, a public library or reading room, local shops, Hall or meeting place for local use and Local Halls.

Rural Diversification

- 11.49 Agriculture underpins the District’s rural economy and supports a considerable number of ancillary businesses. Changes in agriculture have made diversification increasingly important to the economic viability of farm units. The Council seeks to support the vitality of existing enterprises with policies that are sufficiently flexible to meet the anticipated challenges in agriculture and the rural economy. The Local Plan sets out policy criteria against which individual proposals will be judged.
- 11.50 To maintain the character of the countryside, new built development is generally kept to a minimum. Where permission is required for development on agricultural land, proposals should therefore use existing buildings where possible and provide justification where this is not the case. Diversification may require additional built development or redevelopment. Where necessary to justify the proposal, applicants may be required to provide supporting information, including:
- the history of the farm and its locality
 - existing buildings and their uses
 - features of biodiversity or landscape interest
 - archaeological sites, information on the historic landscape of the farm, the reasons for diversification and the viability of the proposal, and
 - details of the proposal’s projected employment, environment and traffic implications.

- 11.51 Diversification proposals should be compatible with existing farming and forestry operations and should not give rise to conflicts that could prejudice the efficient operation of the holding. For example, farms may cause environmental health problems to some high-quality business use developments, or a new industrial use could lead to outdoor storage requirements, causing circulation problems on the farm.
- 11.52 The continued viability of farm holdings is important to the rural economy. Where proposals affect a significant part of the farm holding, information may be requested on its extent, and what is proposed for the remainder of the holding. In some cases, this may include evidence that, following the proposed development, the holding will continue to operate viably.
- 11.53 Care should be taken to ensure that diversification proposals retain a genuine functional relationship with the existing rural enterprise and are not in use as a means of securing development that would otherwise be unacceptable in the countryside. The Local Plan Development Strategy does not support new build housing in open countryside. It is therefore important that new buildings to be used for agriculture or other rural land-centred activity are only built when they are needed and are not built with the intention of converting the building to residential or other uses soon after, which would not otherwise be granted planning permission.

- 11.54 Proposals that attract visitors to the farm (e.g. retailing, cafes, visitor activities, education and leisure activities) are considered under **Core Policy 49: Development of Tourism and Visitor Attractions. Proposals** for equestrian development will be considered under **Development Policy 9: Equestrian Development.**

- 11.55 Mitigation measures such as the retention of existing hedgerows at field boundaries and making space for wildlife in buildings (e.g. the installation of bird boxes, bat bricks, or house martin ledges) should be incorporated into the proposals wherever possible to help create new opportunities for wildlife.

Development Policy 6: Rural Diversification

Rural diversification of an existing farm, agricultural estate, or other land-based rural business will generally be supported and should make use of existing buildings where practical and suitable for the proposed use. Proposals for rural diversification will be permitted provided that:

- a) they do not cause conflict with the existing farming or forestry operation including severance or disruption to the agricultural holding that would prejudice its continued viable operation
- b) if a new building is required, the development integrates with existing buildings on the holding and is positioned as to minimise its impact on both the surrounding and wider environment
- c) in the case of a freestanding building which is separate from existing buildings, it is supported by a statement setting out why the erection of a building is necessary in the location proposed and demonstrates why it cannot be located adjacent to existing buildings

- d) the scale and design of the development contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area
- e) where a new building is proposed, it should be demonstrated that the development is genuinely required to support the diversification of the existing rural business and is not intended primarily to facilitate future residential development
- f) there is access by means of an existing road, it would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the local road network, and road improvements incompatible with the character of the surrounding area are not required, and
- g) sufficient utilities and other infrastructure are available or can be provided.

Diversification proposals that support the development of a low carbon economy will generally be supported subject to acceptable impacts on the local environment.

Conversion of Rural Buildings

- 11.56 In an area of high quality built and natural environment, it is important to keep new building in the open countryside to a minimum. The large, but diminishing, stock of rural buildings in the District should be used in the most positive way to assist in sustaining the rural economy. For the most part, these buildings were originally built as workplaces, or to support the business or community needs of the area. This function should, wherever possible, continue so that rural buildings are given a new lease of life.
- 11.57 **Development Policy 7: Conversion of Rural Buildings** applies to proposals for the re-use of rural buildings that require planning permission. The policy applies both to traditional and modern (permanent) buildings and it is important to ensure that new uses are sympathetic to the rural character of the area, respecting local building styles and materials, in keeping with their surroundings, without creating adverse environmental effects due to, for example, nuisance or traffic generation. The proposal should secure a meaningful enhancement to the immediate setting of the building. The enhancement of the immediate setting must be substantive and should not rely on garden planting alone.

- 11.58 A planning application should be accompanied by a coloured plan(s) and photographs, which clearly shows the elements of the existing building that are to be retained.
- 11.59 Where an extension is proposed, it will need to be demonstrated that the building is capable of conversion without relying upon the proposed extension to facilitate conversion. Subject to this, extensions or alterations will be permitted where they do not significantly harm the character of the building, its setting, and/or the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 11.60 The term ‘substantial completion’ for the purpose of this policy means when the converted building or extension is capable of being lived in (e.g. when the roof and windows are fitted and the inside of the building is ready to be inhabited).

Development Policy 7: Conversion of Rural Buildings

- The conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses will be permitted provided:
- a) the building is structurally sound, suitable for and capable of conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or re-building
 - b) its form, bulk and design is in keeping with its surroundings and retains and responds positively to the buildings agricultural or rural character and historic form
 - c) it would not cause conflict with existing farming or equestrian operations or a business, including severance or disruption to the farm or equestrian holding or business that would prejudice its continued viable operation
 - d) the development would enhance visual amenity and not harm ecological functions (e.g. bat roosts)
 - e) the development proposal is compatible with extant uses on the site and existing and planned uses in close proximity to the site, and

- f) the building is not converted to residential use within a period of 10 years dating from whichever is the latter of either:
 - i. the substantial completion of the building now proposed for conversion or the first use of the building, or
 - ii. the substantial completion of any subsequent extensions to the original building, unless a significant material change in circumstances has been demonstrated.

Unless the original use of the building was for unrestricted residential use, permission for the conversion of rural buildings to self-catering accommodation and holiday lets will be conditional upon short-term visitor use only and be subject to an occupancy condition or planning obligation to prevent its use as a permanent, secondary or principal place of residence.

Agricultural and Forestry Buildings.

- 11.61 Agriculture and forestry are an integral part of the rural economy of the District. New agricultural and forestry buildings can be needed to support farming and forestry operations. Various types of agricultural and forestry building are permitted development¹³⁶, although some require planning permission, especially when they are larger in scale.

- 11.62 **Development Policy 8: New Agricultural and Forestry Development** relates to buildings required in connection with an agricultural or forestry business. Cotswold District has a highly sensitive landscape, and it is essential that new agricultural and forestry buildings are only permitted where a demonstrable functional or operational need exists. Modern agricultural and forestry buildings can be obtrusive features in the rural landscape if their impact is not mitigated. It is also important that the design and location of new buildings reduce the

¹³⁶ Planning permission for farms: Permitted development: <https://www.gov.uk/planning-permissions-for-farms/permitted-development>

impact of the development as much as possible, whilst also contributing towards tackling climate change and improving biodiversity. Proposals must demonstrate that they have taken account of the surrounding landscape, highways and residential amenity, as well as considering and, where possible, enhancing local habitat and biodiversity.

- 11.63 In demonstrating the need for the building, applicants should demonstrate that the proposed building is required having regard to the availability, suitability and operational effectiveness of existing buildings within the holding.
- 11.64 The sustainability and suitability of the proposal and its location should be carefully considered. In doing so, there are other policies and guidance that are likely to be relevant to proposals for the conversion of rural buildings. New buildings in the countryside must consider the requirements of **Development Policy 7: Conversion of Rural Buildings** which seeks to ensure that new buildings are not constructed with the intention of converting to residential uses soon after, for a use that would otherwise not be granted planning permission.
- 11.65 Proposals will be required to submit a landscaping scheme which, for example, should consider the shape and slope of the site, the buildings and surroundings, the colour and use of materials, and respect local buildings styles (i.e. traditional Cotswold materials, dark stained timber or unobtrusive, non-reflective materials in dark colours, usually grey, brown or green).

Development Policy 8: New Agricultural and Forestry Development

Proposals for new or extended agricultural and forestry development must:

- be designed for agricultural or forestry purposes only
- demonstrate that there is a functional or operational need for the building for an agricultural or forestry purpose
- visually integrate with existing buildings on the holding and be positioned to minimise their impact on both the surrounding and wider environment. The design should be sympathetic to the rural character of the area, in keeping with the surroundings, blend with the landscape and buildings and should avoid visually prominent skyline locations unless it can be demonstrated that no suitable alternative exists and impacts are satisfactorily mitigated
- in the case of a freestanding building which is separate from existing buildings, be supported by an operational needs statement setting out why the erection of a building is necessary in the location proposed and demonstrate why it cannot be located adjacent to existing buildings, and
- incorporate mitigation and enhancement measures such as the retention of existing hedgerows at field boundaries and making space for wildlife in buildings (e.g. the installation of house martin next cups, house sparrow terraces, swift bricks and open next boxes) into the proposals wherever possible to help create new opportunities for wildlife.

Equestrian Related Development

- 11.66 The Cotswold District is a popular area for equestrian activities. The attractive landscape and villages, good bridleway network, nearby large centres of population and the area's tradition of field sports, studs and training facilities all contribute towards its popularity.
- 11.67 Existing farmsteads and groups of traditional farm buildings are likely to become available because of the changes occurring in agriculture, both in terms of the restructuring of holdings and the redundancy of traditional buildings unsuited to modern farming methods. New equestrian enterprises should be located in, or based on, existing buildings of this kind, both to help ensure new uses for traditional buildings and reduce the pressure for new, remote buildings in the countryside, particularly in the Cotswolds National Landscape.
- 11.68 In general, new development should normally be located adjacent or close to existing buildings unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative location would better minimise landscape, amenity or operational impacts.
- 11.69 Equestrian related development (including stables, tack rooms, feed stores, ménages) are prominent and visible uses in rural areas and need to be balanced with their potential (including cumulative) impact on the character and appearance of the rural environment. Proposals must demonstrate that they have taken account of the surrounding landscape, highways and residential amenity, as well

as enhancements for local habitat and biodiversity.

- 11.70 Mitigation measures such as the retention of existing hedgerows at field boundaries and making space for wildlife in stable buildings (e.g. the installation of bird boxes, bat bricks, or house martin ledges) should be incorporated into the proposals wherever possible to help create new opportunities for wildlife.
- 11.71 A comprehensive landscaping scheme will also be required with the application, especially if it is within the Cotswolds National Landscape or in a Special Landscape Area and should be demonstrably maintainable. Equestrian related development should be designed (in combination with landscaping) to be sympathetic to the rural character of the area, in keeping with the surroundings and blend with the landscape. The design of proposals should have regard to relevant industry guidance, including that published by the British Horse Society (BHS), including complying with the space standards for stables as recommended by the BHS, to ensure equestrian developments also address' horse welfare, and/or the relevant specific national governing body e.g. the British Polo Association.
- 11.72 Signing and lighting of any equestrian establishment should be minimal and not be intrusive. Proposals should not harm the surrounding landscape, nor any residential amenity, including that of a single dwelling and, for example, not have an adverse impact in terms of noise, odour, light, or disturbance etc. The policy should also be taken together with other relevant policies in the Development Plan.

11.73 There are many visible signs of equine use and consideration should also be given to the impact of other equestrian paraphernalia such as horse boxes, jumps, post and rail fences. Relevant conditions or S.106 agreements may be imposed on planning permissions where necessary. Where these could have a harmful effect on the landscape, particularly traditional boundaries, the Council may impose conditions withdrawing certain permitted development rights.

11.74 Equestrian related development should not have an adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the public highway or Public Rights of Way. Where conflicts between riders and walkers or motorists are likely to arise, it should include mitigation proposals from the applicant about how these might be overcome, such as new gates, but the fact that part of a route for riders runs along a road should not, itself, rule out the proposal.



Development Policy 9: Equestrian Related Development

The development of new or further development of existing equestrian establishments, where the proposal does not entail a residential component, will be permitted having regard to the following criteria:

- a. where the development involves either a change of use of existing farm or agricultural estate buildings or other existing rural buildings or if new buildings are proposed, it is located close or adjacent to such buildings
- b. where it can be demonstrated that the proposal makes best use of existing infrastructure, most notably existing vehicular and field access, tracks, bridleways, byways, utilities and buildings
- c. where the proposed development can demonstrate through a landscaping scheme that it does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape, when considering the cumulative impact of the development with other similar enterprises in the area
- d. does not cause material harm to hedgerows and arable field margins and where appropriate enhances existing hedgerows
- e. artificial lighting will only be permitted where it is essential for operational, safety or welfare reasons and where impacts upon landscape character, dark skies, ecology and residential amenity are acceptable, and
- f. proposals should not result in unacceptable impacts on the safety and capacity of the public highway or Public Rights of Way. Where the enterprise will involve significantly increased use by riders of bridleways and roads in the locality, a plan must be submitted showing the bridleway network and highlighting those routes which riders are most likely to use.



Chapter twelve

Historic Environment

Introduction

12.1 Cotswold District's distinctive historic environment is central to its sense of place, quality of life and long-term sustainability. This chapter sets out how the Local Plan will protect, conserve and enhance these assets whilst also supporting the District's response to the climate and ecological emergencies. It brings together policies relating to heritage to ensure that future development respects local character, strengthens ecological resilience, and contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of communities. Taken together, these policies guide how growth can be accommodated sensitively, securing lasting benefits for people, nature and place.

12.2 This chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 53: The Historic Environment**
- **Core Policy 54: Listed Buildings**
- **Core Policy 55: Conservation Areas**
- **Core Policy 56: Non-Designated Heritage Assets**
- **Core Policy 57: Archaeological Assets**
- **Core Policy 58: Registered Parks and Gardens**
- **Core Policy 59: The Conservation of Non-Domestic Historic Buildings (Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets).**

The Historic Environment

12.3 As discussed in **Chapter 2**, Cotswold District has one of the richest resources of heritage assets of any area in England. These include:

- individual buildings from modest cottages in the Cotswold vernacular style to grand, polite and country houses
- archaeological remains both visible, such as hill forts and field patterns and buried, including the Roman remains beneath Cirencester
- historic settlements from small hamlets and villages within the Cotswolds National Landscape to the formal townscapes of Chipping Campden and Cirencester
- historic parks and gardens from historic deer parks, such as Lodge Park, to twentieth century gardens, such as Barnsley House, and
- a registered Civil War battlefield at Stow-on-the-Wold.

12.4 The policies in the Local Plan, taken together, take a proactive approach to sensitively handling the current pressures on this valued resource through managing change sensitively and enhancing and promoting the historic environment where opportunity arises. The Council has a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment. These measures include:

- the inclusion of the high quality and internationally recognised historic environment as a vital part of the Vision for the District
- a series of historic environment policies which target heritage asset types, which are of particular local concern, including: listed buildings, conservation areas (of which there are 144 in the District), scheduled monuments, registered landscapes, and non-designated heritage assets (including non-scheduled archaeological assets)
- robust criteria for the identification of non-designated heritage assets, given the high number of such assets in the District
- landscape and design policies which address the important inter-relationship between the historic, built and natural environment
- careful analysis of allocated sites to ensure that the historic environment is fully considered and that these sites can contribute to the enhancement of the environment or where, having taken into account measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate harm, there is residual harm which is found to be outweighed by other benefits

- the Cotswold Design Code which will ensure high quality of design across the District for all scales of development, over the Plan period and beyond, and
- consideration for the role of the historic environment in underpinning the economy (including tourism) and the need for promotion in that regard. Unlike many areas of the country there are no key areas of the District that require wholesale regeneration, but the Local Plan does support projects that address historic environment issues, particularly for structures that are no longer in use or where the use has changed, for example the Old Goods Shed at Tetbury and the Thames and Severn Canal.

12.5 The Council cannot work alone to deliver improvements to the historic environment. It pro-actively supports a number of other organisations to do this, through financial support for the Cotswolds Conservation Board, in the provision of guidance on the historic environment and wider landscape issues and on initiatives to retain and repair historic landscape features, such as dry-stone walls. Support for community planning is also a key priority. Guidance on historic environment issues has been prepared and made available to local communities¹³⁷. Council Officers also provide advice and guidance to those producing neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood design statements, which can include:

- promoting the production of local design guidance
- protecting and conserving designated heritage assets
- encouraging the compilation of local lists of non-designated heritage assets, and
- supporting the use of local CIL allocations to fund environmental improvement projects.

12.6 The Council also works with the owners and stakeholders of heritage assets to help them conserve and enhance their properties appropriately, through the provision of pre-application and planning advice and recommendations, the availability of guidance on the Council's web-site and by encouraging them to use both the Cotswold Design Code and local design guidance even when proposed works are permitted development.

12.7 There are relatively few heritage assets at risk in the District. Those that are at risk include rural churches, tombstones, milestones and other buildings/structures for which a new, more current use is difficult to achieve through appropriate conversion. The other main area of heritage at risk is scheduled monuments where agricultural activities are damaging the historic remains, however this lies outside the control of planning.

12.8 Legislation together with national policies seeks to sustain the significance of heritage assets including any contribution from their setting. The council considers that a local policy is necessary to reinforce

this, especially given the important significance of the historic environment to the Cotswold District. A key consideration is the potential harm that might be caused to the significance of a heritage asset including through change to the asset itself or its setting and that great weight should be given to its conservation, which is proportionate to its level of significance, and how that is balanced against the proposed public benefits of development proposals. The balancing principles referred to in **Core Policy 53: The Historic Environment** support national policy, which also emphasises the importance of the opportunity for new development to better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

12.9 The Council's Historic Environment Strategy¹³⁸ highlights a range of evidence and information such as the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record and Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans which will be used to inform the consideration of future development including potential assessment required, the need for avoidance, reduction or mitigation of harm, and conservation and enhancement measures.

¹³⁷ Cotswold design guidance (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/cotswold-design-guidance/>

¹³⁸ Historic buildings and conservation areas (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/historic-buildings-and-conservation-areas/>

Core Policy 53: The Historic Environment

All development proposals should conserve, and where appropriate enhance, the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of Cotswold District’s historic environment. This should include conserving heritage assets and their setting in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance, and in a viable use that is consistent with their conservation.

Applications for development proposals which impact the significance of heritage assets will be determined in accordance with legislation requirements and the balancing principles setout in national policy and guidance.

All applications which affect or have the potential to affect heritage assets will be required to provide a heritage statement using appropriate expertise to describe the significance of the assets, their setting and landscape context at a level of detail proportionate to the significance of the asset or area, and the nature of the works proposed, using recognised methodologies.

The Historic Environment Record should be consulted as a minimum. The level of assessment should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset’s historic interest, character and setting.

Listed Buildings

12.10 The listed buildings within Cotswold District are generally comparatively homogenous, their character being strongly influenced by the predominant use of Cotswold Limestone, and stone tile roofs, which influenced the character of early vernacular buildings, with steep roof slopes (45-55 degrees) and prominent use of gables and usually stone-mullioned windows. In the north of the District, many buildings were originally thatched with long straw, a number survive in areas such as around Broad Campden. From the 18th century, blue slate roofs became increasingly common, especially on more polite, higher-status buildings, and lower-status buildings became simpler and more linear in form with fewer gables and roofs of stone tile, or even blue slate, and often with timber casements, although stone mullions also reoccurred. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there was also some limited use of red brick (such as around Mickleton), and limited use of clay, Roman or double-Roman tiles occurred, more commonly upon agricultural buildings. The District also has a limited number of timber-framed buildings. The walls of Cotswold stone buildings were commonly protected from the weather, by limewash, plaster, or rough-cast render; the stripping of these coverings to expose the stone is a more modern phenomenon.

12.11 When considering the special architectural or historic interests of a listed building, a number of factors can contribute towards significance, and will be taken into account, including: the architectural design, which includes the scale, form, massing, elevational appearance, proportions, fenestration patterns, internal plan-form, internal spaces, horizontal and vertical circulation routes, construction materials and techniques, finishes and features, functional and decorative, and subsequent historic additions and phases of evolution. Proposals to remove more modern additions which detract from the significance of the building with a view to enhancing or better revealing the significance of the heritage asset (e.g. the replacement of modern windows), will normally be supported, providing that the design and materials are appropriate to the building.

12.12 Proposals for the conversion of a listed building to a new use may result in a form of development which would not normally be allowed, e.g. conversion into a dwelling outside development limits. Such a proposal may be approved if the applicant can demonstrate that the conversion scheme is the most sympathetic way to secure the viable future of the listed building (the ‘Optimum Viable Use’), and the conversion can be carried out in a sympathetic manner without damage to the fabric, setting or architectural and historic interest of the building. The Optimum Viable Use is the viable use that least harms the significance of the building, not the most economically profitable use. An options appraisal may be required in order to assess the Optimum Viable Use.

Core Policy 54: Listed Buildings

Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a listed building (including partial demolition) or for development within the historic curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a listed building, should:

- a) seek to preserve the special architectural or historic interest and sustain the significance of the building, its setting, any curtilage-listed structures or any features of special interest
- b) resist the demolition of listed buildings in whole or in part, or the removal or modification of features of architectural importance, both internal and external
- c) require the preservation of original architectural features, and later features of interest, both internal and external
- d) take opportunities to reinstate internal and external features of special architectural or historic significance
- e) resist the change of use of a listed building that would materially harm its significance
- f) require any work to a listed building to sustain the significance of the heritage asset and as such strongly encourage any works to a listed building to be carried out in a correct, traditional manner by appropriately skilled specialists, and
- g) resist any proposals within the listed building’s historic curtilage or wider landscape or townscape setting, that would harm its significance, or any contribution to that significance accrued from group value.

The retrofitting of a listed building to improve its energy efficiency, which includes the installation of renewable energy technologies, should follow the Whole Building Approach, and will usually be acceptable if the following criteria are met:

- h) the measures respect the historic fabric and finishes of the building, and its traditional construction, having due regard to unwanted effects such as condensation
- i) there would be no harm to any architecturally principal or otherwise visually important elevations, the roof-line/silhouette of the building, or any key views of the building (designed or fortuitous), or to any features of architectural importance, either internal or external
- j) any physical impact upon significant historic fabric is fully reversible, and
- k) locations other than on a listed building have been considered and dismissed as being impracticable, or otherwise harmful to the building’s setting.

Conservation Areas

- 12.15 Conservation areas form a very special part of the character of the villages and towns of the District in terms of their buildings, the open spaces within them, and their surroundings, and the Council considers that a local policy is necessary to sensitively manage any changes to them. **Core Policy 55** relates to both conservation areas and their settings.
- 12.16 The Council has carried out a series of conservation area appraisals leading to management plans and communities can produce their own design advice through Town and Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans. It is important that development pressures on the District are managed in ways that protect and enhance the built environment, new development will be expected to comply with this advice. The Council has applied Article 4 Directions in some settlements to limit certain permitted development rights.
- 12.17 The Council is responsible for designating new conservation areas. Prior to designation, a conservation area appraisal should be undertaken to identify the merits of such a designation. The Council will work with local communities to consider whether the designation of any new conservation areas within the District is appropriate.

- 12.18 Within a conservation area, some renewable energy equipment can be installed on or within the curtilage of a non-listed building without planning permission. Where planning permission is required, the policies in **Chapter 8** should also be considered, along with **Core Policy 55**, which seeks to preserve or enhance the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area. Applicants should always first check with the Council to determine if permission is required.
- 12.19 Development adjacent to, or some distance from a conservation area, or affecting key views into or out of the conservation area, may impact upon its setting, and subsequently its significance as a designated heritage asset. Applications for development outside the conservation area, which could impact upon its character, appearance and setting should give due regard to the respective conservation area appraisals, where these are available.

Core Policy 55: Conservation Areas

Development proposals, including demolition, that would affect Conservation Areas and their settings, will be permitted provided they:

- a) seek to preserve or enhance the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area
- b) resist the change of use of any building where the current use contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area and to its sense of place
- c) respects the character of the conservation area or the surrounding part of the conservation area, in terms of use, siting, scale and height, density, form, layout, proportion, design, materials, open spaces, access and circulation routes, and the retention of positive features
- d) include hard and soft landscape proposals and boundary treatments, where appropriate, that respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- e) will not result in the loss of open spaces, including garden areas and village greens, orchards or paddocks, or gaps between buildings, which make a valuable contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, or allow important views into or out of the Conservation Area
- f) have regard to the relevant conservation area appraisal (where available)
- g) do not include inappropriate or internally illuminated advertisement signage, or the removal of historic shopfronts, and
- h) applications for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where:
 - i. it has been demonstrated that the building harms or otherwise makes a negative contribution to the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area, and
 - ii. the proposed replacement building, through its scale, design, quality and materials, would preserve or enhance the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 12.20 The District benefits from a wealth of non-designated heritage assets that are considered to be locally significant and make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of Cotswold District. This may be due to their historic, aesthetic, evidential or communal value, or a combination of these factors. This may include houses, shops, schools, village halls, churches, protected lanes, and even important walls, railings or fingerposts.
- 12.21 Whilst in some parts of the country there are local lists of non-designated heritage assets, in Cotswold District a comprehensive list is not available. Non-designated heritage assets will continue to be identified as part of the planning application process and will be given appropriate consideration. Table 12.1 provides clarity on the types of buildings, sites and structures that the Council considers to be non-designated heritage assets.

Core Policy 56: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset will be permitted where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its features, character and setting.

Development will seek to sustain or enhance the significance of the non-designated heritage assets. Proposals that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets will be subject to a balanced assessment taking into account the significance of the asset and the scale of harm or loss.

The assessment of whether a site, feature or structure is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, will be guided by the criteria set out in **Table 12.1** and may be identified as part of the application process.

Table 12.1: Criteria for Deciding whether a Building, Site or Structure should be considered as a Non-designated Heritage Asset in Cotswold District.

Type of asset	Criteria for selection as a non-designated heritage asset (Note: it is not necessary for an asset to meet all relevant criteria)
Buildings and structures	Based on guidance produced by Historic England for both local (and national) listing: - Architectural interest - Historic interest - Archaeological interest - Age - Rarity - Aesthetic merits - Selectivity or representativeness. - Integrity or “sense of completeness” - Historic association - Landmark status - Group value - Known architect/designer/builder - Social or communal value
Sites, structures or buildings already recognised as non-designated heritage assets	A number of heritage assets have already been identified as non-designated heritage assets via: - Serving of Article 4 Directions - Recognition as positive buildings or structures within Conservation Area appraisals - Through previous planning applications or pre-application advice - Previous analysis, for example, the work of the GGLT - Neighbourhood Development Plans.
Assets of archaeological interest	Within Cotswold District the guidance set out in the PPG as to what can be considered as a non-designated site of archaeological interest will be followed. These non-designated sites may be included in the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.
Historic parks and gardens	These criteria are based on those developed by the Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust: - Historic parks and gardens - Historic interest - Proportion of the original layout still in evidence - Influence on the development of taste whether through reputation or reference in literature - Early or representative of a style of layout - Work of a designer of local importance - Association with significant persons or historical events - Strong group value.

Note: State of repair is not a relevant consideration when deciding whether a building, site or structure is a heritage asset or not.

Archaeological Assets

- 12.22 There are a number of scheduled monuments in the District. Any work which might affect a scheduled monument either above or below ground level will require consent from Historic England. Within the District, there are also a number of sites of archaeological interest that are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Gloucestershire County Council. However, these Historic Environment Record represents only a fraction of the total. Many potentially important sites remain undiscovered and unrecorded. Archaeological sites are a finite and non-renewable resource. As a result, it is important to make sure that they are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed.
- 12.23 The desirability of preserving an scheduled monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether the monument is scheduled or unscheduled. There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important sites and their settings. The need for development affecting archaeological remains of lesser significance will be weighed against the relative significance of the archaeology.

- 12.24 Applicants proposing development affecting a scheduled monument or site of archaeological significance need to consult Historic England’s National List for England (NHLE)212 and explain how the significance of the heritage asset will be affected. The developer will be expected to fund the pre-application survey work and any agreed preservation and recording work.
- 12.25 Where an archaeological or heritage assessment is required by **Core Policy 57: Archaeological Assets** and/ or **Core Policy 58: Registered Parks and Gardens**, the assessment must, as a minimum, define the significance of the assets including any contribution made to their setting and the impact of the proposed development, thus allowing an informed and reasonable planning decision to be made. Such assessment should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified professional.

Core Policy 57: Archaeological Assets

Development which could adversely affect scheduled monuments or non-designated assets of archaeological interest, and their settings will require a suitable desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation that should be submitted as part of any planning application.

Where scheduled monuments and their settings would be affected by proposed development there will be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ, for example through modification of design, layout, drainage, landscaping or the siting and location of foundations. This presumption will be applied unless it can be demonstrated that public benefits will be secured which outweigh that harm or loss in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. In such circumstances, a programme for excavation, investigation and recording will be required to be submitted and agreed by way of a precommencement condition.

Opportunities to improve understanding, interpretation and public appreciation of archaeological assets will be supported where appropriate.

Historic Parks and Gardens

12.26 Cotswold District contains a significant concentration of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes, including nationally important Registered Parks and Gardens such as Cirencester Park, Westonbirt Arboretum and Lodge Park. These assets make an important contribution to the District’s landscape character, cultural heritage, biodiversity and tourism economy. Their significance often derives not only from buildings and structures, but also from designed views, planting patterns, avenues, water features, parkland, estate landscapes and their wider setting. Development proposals should therefore take account of the significance of the asset as a whole and seek opportunities for its conservation and enhancement.

Core Policy 58: Registered Parks and Gardens

Development proposals within or surrounding a Registered Park and Garden should be designed to preserve the significance of the asset, taking account of the landscape setting and any key views either within the asset, or between the asset and its wider environs. Where new landscaping is proposed as mitigation against the impact of development on a Registered Park and Garden, this should be reflective of the pattern and identity of the existing landscaping within the asset.

Proposals which contribute to or better reveal the significance of a Registered Park and Garden will be supported, including the removal of structures and uses that detract from the special historic interest of these historic parks.

The Conservation of Non-Domestic Historic Buildings

12.27 The conversion of historic buildings (both designated and non-designated heritage assets) to other uses is a key local issue. To retain these important assets, having regard to the provisions of national policy, it may be necessary to allow development that might otherwise be inappropriate, for example, the conversion of a traditional barn to a new house in an unsustainable location, where it can be demonstrated that the proposed use is the Optimum Viable Use (the most benign/sympathetic viable use, not necessarily the most profitable use). Conversions must be carefully controlled to ensure that the asset’s historic importance, character and landscape setting are all conserved.

Core Policy 59: The Conservation of Non-Domestic Historic Buildings (Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets)

Proposals for the conversion of non-domestic historic buildings to alternative uses will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the conversion would secure the future of a heritage asset, and/or its setting, which would otherwise be at risk
- b) the proposed conversion would sustain the significance of the asset (including its form, features, character and setting)
- c) the heritage asset is structurally sound
- d) the heritage asset is suitable for, and capable of, conversion to the proposed use without substantial alteration, extension or rebuilding which would be tantamount to the erection of a new building, and
- e) an appropriate/ proportionate record is made and submitted to the Gloucestershire Historic Environment/ Record.

Proposals to extend or alter heritage assets that have previously been converted, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed works would sustain the significance of the asset (including its form and features), its setting and/or the character or the appearance of the surrounding landscape in a manner that is proportionate to the significance of the asset.

Particular support will be given to proposals that secure the repair, restoration, beneficial reuse or long-term conservation of heritage assets that are vacant, deteriorating or identified as being at risk.





Chapter thirteen

Natural Environment

Introduction

13.1 Cotswold District’s distinctive natural environment is central to its sense of place, quality of life and long-term sustainability. This chapter sets out how the Local Plan will protect, conserve and enhance these assets while supporting the District’s response to the climate and ecological emergencies. It brings together policies on landscape, biodiversity, water management and environmental quality to ensure that future development respects local character, strengthens ecological resilience, and contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of communities. Taken together, these policies guide how growth can be accommodated sensitively, securing lasting benefits for people, nature and place.

139 Cotswold Beechwoods SAC mitigation strategy (Footprint Ecology, 2022): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/0m5bwtv2/cotswold-beechwoods-mitigation-strategy-110522.pdf> and North Meadow SAC mitigation strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2023): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/hmvfdoos/north-meadow-sac-mitigation-strategy-final-2023.pdf>

13.2 This chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 60: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**
- **Core Policy 61: Local Green Space**
- **Core Policy 62: Landscape**
- **Core Policy 63: Managing Flood Risk**
- **Core Policy 64: Water Management Infrastructure**
- **Core Policy 65: Watercourses**
- **Core Policy 66: Pollution and Contaminated Land**
- **Core Policy 67: Air Quality**
- **Development Policy 10: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands**
- **Development Policy 11: Dark Skies.**

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

13.3 Cotswold District has a diverse range of habitats and species. Some areas are of international significance, including the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Many other areas are important at national or local level. Designated sites are listed below and shown on the Policies Map and are shown by **Appendices 16** and **17**. Additional sites may be designated during the lifetime of this plan. There are also international sites that lie outside the administrative area of the District, which could potentially be affected by development within it. The potential impacts of this Local Plan have been considered in the relevant Habitats Regulations Assessment¹³⁹.

- 13.4 The Internationally designated nature conservation sites, previously known as International Sites and now known as Habitat Sites in or near Cotswold District are:
- Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Severn Estuary Ramsar
 - Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Bredon Hill SAC
 - Dixon Wood SAC
 - Cotswold Beechwoods SAC
 - Rodborough Common SAC
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC.
- 13.5 The nationally designated sites within the District consist of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and have been designated for their biodiversity or geodiversity value. Locally designated sites in the District include Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves.
- 13.6 Local Wildlife Sites are areas with a rich diversity of habitats that provide refuges and corridors for wildlife across Gloucestershire. They are found on both public and private land and include a great variety of valuable semi-natural habitats such as ancient woodland, species-rich grasslands, river valleys, heathland and hedgerows.
- 13.7 Functionally Linked Land (FLL) describes areas of land or sea outside a designated site which are critical to or necessary for the ecological or behavioural functions of that site¹⁴⁰. Within the District, this includes the Cotswold Lakes SSSI, which is used by birds from Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar. Other habitats may also be used by SPA/Ramsar birds for foraging.
- 13.8 Where development is permitted, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will seek, through the use of appropriate conditions or legal obligations, to ensure that:
- it enhances nature conservation interests
 - that damaging impacts are prevented
 - that long-term protection and management is secured, and
 - and that necessary compensation is provided.
- 13.9 Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. Where there are opportunities for enhancements which benefit nature conservation and biodiversity, appropriate measures to secure them will be sought. Development that would cause significant harm to biodiversity which cannot be mitigated or (as a last resort) adequately compensated for, will be refused.
- 13.10 The impacts of climate change and habitat loss and/ or fragmentation are of key concern. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that ecological networks, especially those that include and support designated sites and European protected species, are protected and enhanced. This could take place, for example, by supporting landscape-scale nature

140 Habitats Regulations Assessment Appendix E (LUC, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/ts3npund/habitats-regulations-assessment-luc-july-2026.pdf>

- recovery through delivering the potential measures identified in the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)¹⁴¹. To do so may entail working across administrative boundaries, in co-operation with other Local Authorities and partners, and in particular with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership.
- 13.11 The Partnership had previously designated three Nature Improvement Areas, which are now covered by the LNRS (shown by **Appendix 17**). These were the Cotswold Scarp, Cotswold Valleys and Cotswold Lakes, which are wholly or partially within the District, but are now all incorporated in the LNRS which maps the Nature Recovery Network¹⁴².
- 13.12 Where a development proposal is likely to result in adverse effects on the integrity on a Habitat site, the LPA, as Competent Authority, will undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment. Applicant(s) will be required to provide the LPA with such information as is necessary for it to satisfactorily undertake the assessment. Determination of the development proposal will be subject to the findings of the Assessment and following due process under the Habitats Regulations. These considerations relate also to potential Special Protection Areas, proposed Special Areas of Conservation, listed or proposed Ramsar sites, and sites identified or acquired for compensatory measures for adverse effects on these sites or on designated European sites, now more commonly known as 'Habitats Sites'.
- 13.13 To enable development to come forward that might otherwise cause likely significant recreational effects on the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC or the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC, the Council has worked with Natural England and neighbouring Local Authorities to prepare recreation mitigation strategies for the SACs. These strategies identify the harm caused by various recreational pressures and the mitigation required to address those impacts. They also provide data on the areas from which visitors come to the sites, enabling a Zone of Influence to be defined (**Figure 13.1**). All relevant applications within the Zones of Influence are subject to a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). For most applications, applicants can make a financial contribution to the mitigation to deliver mitigation consistent with the adopted strategy, ensuring that any potential impacts are satisfactorily mitigated, in accordance with **Core Policy 60**¹⁴³ and **Core Policy 71**. In some instances, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace will have to be provided within the development site.
- 13.14 Where Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) mitigation measures are required for residential development, the Council will

141 Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/ecology-and-landscape/gloucestershire-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

142 Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Map (Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership): <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>

143 Cotswold Beechwoods SAC mitigation strategy (Footprint Ecology, 2022): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/0m5bwtv2/cotswold-beechwoods-mitigation-strategy-110522.pdf> and North Meadow SAC mitigation strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2023): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/hmvfdoos/north-meadow-sac-mitigation-strategy-final-2023.pdf>

follow a consistent approach to mitigation, based on the zone of influence (as identified on the Policies Map). The approach is set out in **Core Policy 60**. The zones of influence for the North Meadow SAC are defined as:

- a straight-line distance of between 0 and 4.2 kilometres from the SAC boundary. Within this zone, measures must be provided for all residential proposals for 1 or more net new dwellings to ensure that the integrity of the SAC is protected. Mitigation measures will be based on a combination of the provision of ANRG and SAMM measures and will be delivered prior to occupation and managed in perpetuity in accordance with the ANRG Management Plan, and
- a straight-line distance of between 4.2 and 9.4 kilometres from the SAC boundary. Within this zone, measures must be provided for all residential proposals for 1 or more net new dwellings to ensure that the integrity of the SAC is protected. For most developments, mitigation measures will be limited to SAMM measures, however larger developments may need to provide additional mitigation in the form of ANRG as advised by Natural England on a case-by-case basis

13.15 The NPPF, together with other legislation and guidance, highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity assets and networks. The degree of protection should be commensurate with the importance of the

asset and its contribution to ecological networks. The protection of internationally designated sites will be the overriding policy consideration where development may cause an adverse effect. To ensure the long-term resilience of the biodiversity resource it is vital that development not only ensures no net loss but makes a contribution to enhancement of biodiversity through habitat creation and land management.

- 13.16 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development management that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before the development took place. At least 10% net gain is required by the Environment Act 2021.
- 13.17 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are an England-wide system of spatial strategies. Gloucestershire's LNRS was published by GCC in February 2026 and endorsed by CDC Cabinet in March 2026. All strategies establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery, expand and connect existing habitat, and provide wider environmental benefits.

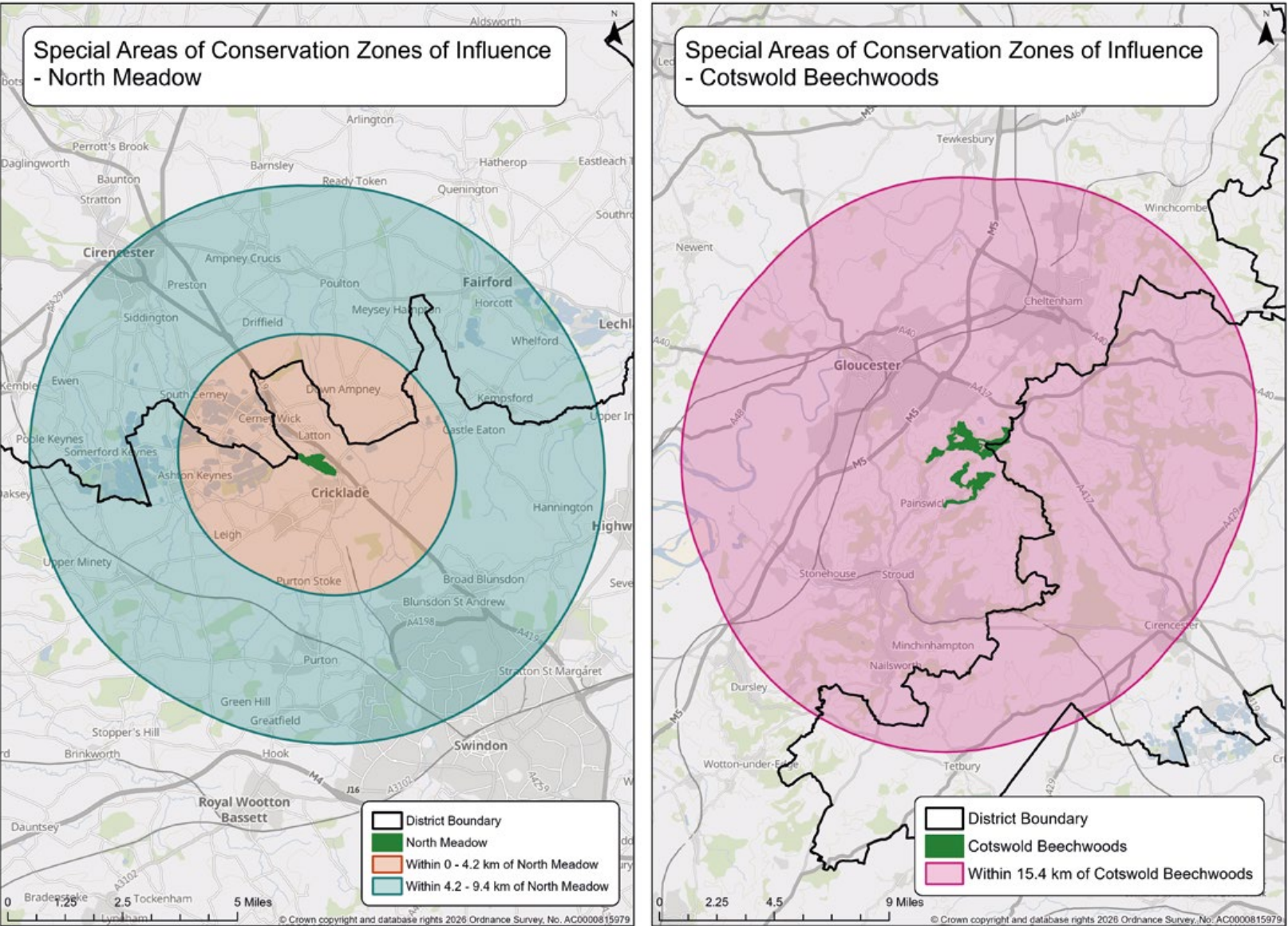


Figure 13.1: SAC Zones of Influence..

Core Policy 60: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Development proposals will be supported where they protect and enhance sites internationally, nationally and/ or locally designated for their importance to nature conservation, ecological or geological value as well as non-designated sites of ecological or geological value. An Ecological Impact Assessment is required to be submitted with the application if the proposed development affects or has the potential to affect any site of biodiversity or geodiversity interest, including:

- a) any internationally designated Habitats Sites including Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site
- b) any statutory designated site, for example: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves
- c) any non-statutory designated site, for example: Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites and Special Roadside Verges
- d) priority habitats and species, and
- e) species listed as threatened on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List, along with habitats capable of supporting these species.

Habitats Sites

The highest level of protection will be given to Habitat Sites (formerly known as European Sites). Development will not be permitted if it would adversely affect the integrity of a Habitats Site either alone or in combination with other developments, and directly or via functionally linked habitats. Proposals having a harmful impact on the integrity of Habitats Sites that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated will not be permitted.

To mitigate the impacts of development on the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC and the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC, financial contributions can be secured to fund the mitigation measures identified in the adopted strategies. Alternatively, applicants may submit their own shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), demonstrating the likely recreational impacts arising from the development and setting out the mitigation measures that will be implemented for the lifetime of the development to address those impacts.

Mitigation will be required for all new development resulting in a net increase in housing and/or holiday accommodation within the identified Zones of Influence, as shown on the Policies Map and **Figure 13.1**, including Permitted Development which is required to comply with the Habitats Regulations.

Other Biodiveristy and Geodiversity

Development proposals which would result in significant harm to any other biodiversity or geodiversity interest will only be considered for approval after alternative sites that would result in less or no harm have been considered, and it has been demonstrated sequentially that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed.

To ensure that mitigation or compensation measures take place, which may include Biodiversity Offsetting, these will be secured by conditions or planning obligations and will need to include financial support for continued maintenance.

If significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity cannot be adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, permission will be refused.

The design of development should incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity and geodiversity of the development site. Such measures should include making a contribution to the wider ecological network, including open spaces and green infrastructure and water bodies which make links between habitats and support wildlife. Measures should also attempt to link wildlife habitats together, improving access to, between and across them. These measures will be secured by conditions or planning obligations and many need to include a biodiversity management plan and financial support for continued maintenance.

A biosecurity protocol method statement will be required for all development proposals where there is potential to impact sites protected for biodiversity importance to ensure the introduction, and/ or spread of invasive non-native species of both flora and fauna is prevented.

Measures to enhance biodiversity should be designed so as not to increase the risk from bird strike to the operation of aircraft at Kemble Airport and RAF Fairford. Where appropriate, the implementation of a Bird Hazard Management Plan will be secured by condition or planning obligation.

Irreplaceable Habitats

Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, according to the latest Defra Biodiversity Metric, will be refused, save for where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated and appropriate mitigation and compensation is provided, including but not limited to:

- Ancient woodland
- Ancient or veteran trees.



Local Green Spaces

13.18 The NPPF makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to those communities, where development will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, where the green areas meet the criteria set out in national policy. These Local Green Spaces can be designated through a Local Plan or through Neighbourhood Plans. Local Green Spaces identified in **Core Policy 61** are the result of extensive work with local communities and are deemed to meet the appropriate requirements to be designated¹⁴⁴. The designated Local Green Spaces have been assessed against the criteria set out in national policy, including their proximity to the community they serve, their particular local significance and their local character, and are not extensive tracts of land. The Local Green Spaces allocated in this Plan are shown on the Policies Map and are set out in **Appendix 15**.

13.19 LGS1 (Blockley Mill - also known as the Water Board site) is an operational site as it contains water infrastructure facilities. Whilst designated as a Local Green Space, the site remains operational water infrastructure. The designation is not intended to prevent operational development, engineering works, maintenance activities or the extension, alteration or replacement of buildings and structures required for the continued operation of the facility. As well as being designated as a Local Green Space, Manor Fields in Bourton-on-the-Water (LGS2) is used as a public car park for up to 42 days per calendar year.

¹⁴⁴ Local Green Space Evidence Paper (CDC, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>

Core Policy 61: Local Green Spaces (LGS)

The following areas (shown on the Policies Map and set out in **Appendix 15**) were designated as Local Green Spaces in the 2011-2031 Local Plan:

- LGS1: Blockley – Blockley Mill (also known as Water Board site)*
- LGS2: Bourton-on-the-Water – Manor Fields
- LGS3: Church Westcote – Land adjacent to Close Cottage
- LGS4: Cirencester – The Humpty Dumps
- LGS5: Kemble – Green at West Lane
- LGS6: Kemble – Community Gardens at Station Road
- LGS7: Kemble – Playing field
- LGS8: Lechlade – Eric Richardson and Phyllis Amey Nature Reserve
- LGS9: Siddington – Allotments, Ashton Road
- LGS10: Siddington – Playing Fields, Park Way
- LGS11: South Cerney – Church Lane Allotments
- LGS12: South Cerney – Upper Up Playing Fields

The following areas (shown on the Policies Map and set out in **Appendix 15**) are identified as designated as Local Green Spaces in the 2026-2043 Local Plan:

- LGS13: Ampney Crusis - The Cricket Field and Woodland next to the Cricket Field
- LGS14: Bibury – The Upper and Lower Kitchen Garden
- LGS15: Bledington – The land next to the village shop
- LGS16: Bourton on the Water - Springvale Allotments, Conigers footpath – Ridge and
- LGS17: Farrow Field, Burghfield House Field, Bourton Chase – Phase 3 – Public Open Space

- LGS18: Coates – Coates Meadow
- LGS19: Didmarton - Didmarton Playing Field
- LGS 20: Donnington - Stonehill Quarry
- LGS 21: Ebrington - Saxon Fields
- LGS 22: Fairford - The Park Close/ Park Close Pocket Park, Faulkers Close, Honeybone Green Space & Play Area, Keble Fields, Milking Path
- LGS 23: Kempsford - Hazel View Recreation Ground, Wakefield Green
- LGS 24: Kingscote - The Matara
- LGS 25: Leighterton - Play Space
- LGS 26: Little Rissington - Sweeting Corner
- LGS 27: Naunton - Naunton Playing Field
- LGS 28: Poulton - Ranbury Site B & C
- LGS 29: Tetbury - Preston Park, Berkeley Wood, The Knapp
- LGS 30: Weston Sub Edge – Land on the corner of Friday and Church Street
- LGS 31: Willersey - Orchard Ley

Development will only be permitted within a Local Green Space where there are very special circumstances, which outweigh the harm to the Local Green Space. Particular attention will be paid to the evidence presented by the local community when assessing development proposals that are likely to affect a designated Local Green Space.

*Whilst LGS1 is designated, it contains water infrastructure. The designation is not intended to limit its operational use or prohibitive extensions to buildings necessary for its successful operation.

Landscape

- 13.20 The landscape makes a significant contribution to the distinctiveness of the District, providing a sense of place, heritage, and tranquillity. A high-quality landscape does not only have aesthetic value, but can also provide wider benefits, such as habitats for wildlife, opportunities for healthier lifestyles and recreation, supports the local economy, and can also increase our resilience to adapting to the effects of climate change. The landscape should be taken into account in a holistic way alongside other related topic areas in the Local Plan such as green infrastructure, biodiversity, economy, tourism and climate change.
- 13.21 The Local Plan policies, taken as a whole, set out how development and use of land will help to address the climate and ecological emergencies through mitigation and adaptation. **Core Policy 62** focuses on the conservation and enhancement of the existing landscape. The provision of, for example, multi-functional green infrastructure, housing development or renewable energy installations, are the focus of other policies within the Local Plan.
- 13.22 The landscape of the District is widely recognised for its natural and historic value. Landscape designations cover a large proportion of the District (80% of the administrative area falls within the Cotswolds National Landscape, with a further 6% included within Special Landscape Areas and 6% within the Cotswold Lakes. It is vital that the character, visual quality and historic value of the landscape of the District is conserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- 13.23 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands play a major part in establishing the character of the Cotswold landscape and make a valuable contribution to the ecological balance of the area, particularly veteran trees, ancient woodland and hedgerows.
- 13.24 Many of the special qualities of the Cotswolds are shared by the rest of the District, including the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape. The Cotswolds National Character Area, as delineated by Natural England, covers a wider area than that formally designated as National Landscape. The other two National Character Areas within the District, the Upper Thames Clay Vale and the Severn and Avon Vales, also exhibit many of these “Cotswold” characteristics. Detailed landscape and historic landscape characterisation have been carried out for the entire District¹⁴⁵. The resulting assessments emphasise the high landscape and historic quality of the whole area and the need to ensure its protection and enhancement.
- 13.25 Within and outside the designated landscapes there is a range of individual landscape assets and features, including key views, skyline features, settlement patterns, field boundaries and early cultivation systems. Such features are worthy of conservation and enhancement.
- 13.26 A particularly important issue for the Cotswolds National Landscape and other parts of the District is the conservation and enhancement of the setting of historic settlements. This includes individual farmsteads, as well as towns and villages.

¹⁴⁵ National Character Area Profiles (Natural England): <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

Development pressure over recent decades has resulted in some inappropriately designed and located modern developments that have had a detrimental impact on the edges of settlements. Opportunities should be taken for new development to reverse this negative impact by being of design quality that fully respects the local landscape and historic character. **Core Policy 69** together with the Cotswold Design Code is relevant in this respect.

- 13.27 Some aspects of landscape quality, such as the tranquillity of an area, are difficult to define but important to protect as a key element of the character of the District. National policy says that tranquil areas are those that are “relatively undisturbed by noise from human caused sources that undermine the intrinsic character of the area. Such areas are likely to be already valued for their tranquillity, including the ability to perceive and enjoy natural soundscape, and are quite likely to be seen as special for other reasons including their landscape”¹⁴⁶. Lighting can also have major impacts on landscape quality, particularly in areas of “Dark Skies” where there currently is little artificial light pollution. Applicants are advised to have regard as a starting point to available information including high-level CPRE Tranquillity Mapping, nationally-available Dark Skies mapping and the Cotswold Conservation Board’s Position Statement on “Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies”¹⁴⁷. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should include

¹⁴⁶ Planning Practice Guidance: Noise. Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 30-008-20190722: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2> and National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

¹⁴⁷ Dark Skies & Artificial Light (Cotswolds Conservation Board): <https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Cotswolds-Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Position-Statement.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ On 22nd November 2023, the Government rebranded Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) as National Landscapes. In Cotswold District the Cotswolds AONB becomes the Cotswolds National Landscape, which retains the designation to conserve and enhance its natural beauty as a ‘protected landscape’.

reference to tranquillity, lighting and Dark Skies where appropriate. The landscape policies should be read in conjunction with **Development Policy 11: Dark Skies**.

Cotswolds National Landscape

- 13.28 As covered in Chapter 2, much of the Cotswold District falls within the Cotswold National Landscape. This represent some of the most sensitive landscapes in the country and so these areas are particularly vulnerable to the effects of development and change. Many of the key issues for the Cotswolds National Landscape¹⁴⁸, are outlined in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan (2023- 2025), produced by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board in consultation with its partners including Cotswold District Council. The Management Plan has helped to inform the Local Plan policies and the special qualities of the Cotswolds identified, by the Management Plan, are shown by Figure 13.2.
- 13.29 National policy requires great weight to be given to the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty in these areas together with their wildlife and cultural heritage. It stipulates that planning permission should be refused for major developments in the National Landscape except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

13.30 Major development can be defined in quantitative terms, a threshold number of dwellings, for example. However, it follows from appreciation of the area's varied natural form that consideration of what constitutes 'major' development, whether residential or renewable energy for example, is both a matter of context and a matter of fact and degree: what is deemed to be 'major' in one area may not be deemed to be so in another. The Local Plan therefore does not provide a quantitative definition of 'major development' here as this would be misleading and inflexible within the context of a policy largely concerned with qualitative issues. It will therefore be a matter for the development management process to determine whether or not a given proposal constitutes major development.

13.31 The design of new developments should reflect the analysis of the special qualities of the National Landscape and opportunities for enhancement as described in the National Landscape Management Plan and relevant landscape character assessments (including the Cotswold Design Code). Notwithstanding the relatively uniform character of the landscape across much of the National Landscape, there are changes in landscape character and distinctiveness within it and it is important that these are recognised and reflected in the design of new development.

Figure 13.2: The Special Qualities of the Cotswold National Landscape as Identified by the Management Plan.

The area is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological and ecological features¹⁴⁹.

- the unifying character of the limestone geology, its visible presence as natural outcrops, its use as a building material and through the plant and animal communities it supports
- the Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape
- the high wolds, a large open, elevated landscape with commons, 'big' skies and long-distance views
- river valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames, with high-quality water;
- distinctive dry-stone walls
- flower-rich grasslands, particularly limestone grasslands
- ancient broadleaved woodland, particularly along the crest of the escarpment
- variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness;
- the tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution
- well-managed arable and livestock farms
- extensive dark skies
- distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular, high architectural quality and integrity
- an accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail
- significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations, and
- a vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts movement.

¹⁴⁹ Excerpt (shortened) taken from Chapter 4 of the CNL Management Plan (2023-2025).

Special Landscape Areas

13.32 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) were introduced in Gloucestershire in 1982. There are six SLAs in Cotswold District. The purpose of SLA designation is to protect locally significant and valued landscapes that have particular intrinsic qualities or character. Although not nationally designated, in some cases they provide important settings and effective buffers for the Cotswolds National Landscape.

13.33 SLA designation is based on a formal assessment of each area. The Cotswold District designations were reviewed in 2022 (and updated in 2026) and no change to the area boundaries was recommended¹⁵⁰. In assessing the impacts of development proposals on the areas' character and qualities the whole of the Council's evidence base regarding SLAs including description, key landscape qualities and justification for recommendation should be taken into account. Regard must also be had to the requirements of **Core Policy 62**.

13.34 The Special Landscape Areas in Cotswold District are shown on the Policies Map and by **Appendix 16** and are:

- Barrington Downs
- Coln Valley (north of Fairford)
- Kemble/Ewen
- Moreton-in-Marsh surrounds
- North Cirencester, and
- Norton Hall.

¹⁵⁰ Special Landscape Areas (Cotswold District Council): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>



Core Policy 62: Landscape

Development proposals should protect and enhance the character and appearance of valued landscape, the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes, or geological sites of importance through the restoration, management and enhancement of existing areas, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees, limestone species-rich grasslands and hedgerows.

Development will be expected to reflect and enhance local landscape character in accordance with the applicable guidelines to protect and conserve, manage and plan landscapes outlined for each landscape character area within the Cotswold Landscape Character Assessment (2026), particularly in settlement edge locations and Rural Areas.

Development should, in the first instance, seek to avoid damage to the local landscape Character, with appropriate mitigation secured where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.

Proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- a) cause an unacceptable visual intrusion into the Open Countryside
- b) fail to respond positively to local landscape character, settlement pattern, landform, scale, materials, views and features
- c) cause coalescence between settlements
- d) harm views to distant landmarks and landscape particularly sensitive to change

- e) harm the setting of natural and built landmark features, and
- f) reduce the historic significance of the landscapes.

All major development proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Smaller development proposals may also require an assessment to be submitted if deemed appropriate, having regard to the type, scale, location and design of the proposed development.

Cotswolds National Landscape

In determining development proposals within the National Landscape or its setting, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, its character and special qualities will be given great weight.

Major development will not be permitted within the National Landscape unless it satisfies the exceptions set out in National Policy and Guidance, and is consistent with the policies of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan.

Special Landscape Areas

Development within Special Landscape Areas (as shown on the Policies Map) will be permitted provided it does not have a detrimental impact upon the special character and key landscape qualities of the area including its tranquillity and where consistent with the rest of this policy (excluding for National Landscapes).

Managing Flood Risk

- 13.35 It is important that all forms of flood risk are fully considered in the context of any proposed development and appropriate measures utilised to avoid and minimise flood risk where appropriate.
- 13.36 The Council requires a considered approach to sustainable drainage which includes ongoing drainage management. This will include specialist input from the outset of the design and agreement of eventual ownership and management or maintenance arrangements of drainage assets. Where new development is within Flood Zones 2 or 3, it might be necessary for local infrastructure to be modified or enhanced. Developers may be required, for example, to make direct contributions to flood alleviation schemes affecting the communities close to developments. Land may also need to be safeguarded for potential flood storage areas or other water infrastructure from conflicting development in future reviews of the Local Plan.
- 13.37 When determining planning applications, the Council will seek to ensure flood risk is not increased, and where possible reduced elsewhere. **Core Policy 63** sets out that applications within Flood Zones 2 and 3, or development over 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1, will be required to be informed by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), in line with national policy. All FRAs should have regard to both parts of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) published alongside

the Local Plan¹⁵¹ and demonstrate how flood risk from all sources will be managed now and in future taking climate change into account. This will help inform the requirement for mitigation measures. Where an assessment is required, it should take into account national guidance and its scope should be agreed with the Council. It should be proportionate with the degree of flood risk, make use of available local evidence and be appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development. For all sites, the assessment should have regard to the cumulative impact of the proposed development on flood risk in relation to existing settlements, communities or allocated sites.

- 13.38 Any identified impacts of the proposed development, individual and/or cumulative, must be satisfactorily mitigated. Phasing of development should also be considered to avoid possible cumulative impacts. A detailed environmental survey may also be required at the application stage to determine the acceptability of development and inform the requirement for mitigation measures.
- 13.39 Proposals must also take account of all sources of flooding, including surface water often caused by heavy rainfall and how to manage it. Surface water should not exceed the current/ existing rates of run off and where possible achieve betterment. For example, development should ensure run-off from a site is reduced or at least neutral, and not worse than the natural situation known as the greenfield run-off rate¹⁵². Submitted site specific flood risk assessments

¹⁵¹ Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (JBA, 2026) and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Main Report (JBA, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Water>
¹⁵² Gloucestershire SuDS design and maintenance guide <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/flood-risk-management/flooding-information/information-for-developers/>

are required to confirm for example, the development will not increase flooding elsewhere and how surface water run-off will be addressed by the developer.

13.40 SuDS are particularly useful in mitigating potential increases in surface water flooding, sewer flooding and flooding from watercourses resulting from development. Opportunities should be sought to disconnect surface water from combined sewerage systems, and include the retrofitting of sustainable drainage systems to existing development where possible. Ideally there should be no net increase in flow to existing combined sewers. Surface water drainage to the foul sewer from development can be a major contributor to sewer flooding. Development should follow the hierarchy (order of preference for foul drainage connection), as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and proposals must demonstrate how the hierarchy of drainage options has been followed.

13.41 Proposals for natural flood management such as targeted land and vegetation management and planting in upper catchments and along watercourses will be supported in appropriate locations where they are consistent with national and Local Plan policies and relevant water catchment management plans to reduce flood risk and improve water quality. Proposals should aim to deliver multi benefit projects enhancing water quality, habitat and biodiversity. Proposals should have regard to sites designated and protected for their biodiversity and geodiversity importance and ensure that these are enhanced rather than damaged by the proposals.

13.42 Opportunities for property flood resilience (PFR) measures in existing buildings (such as changes of use or conversions), should be considered to mitigate residual as well as future climate change flood risk where possible. While development should be steered away from current and future flood risk areas, measures such as air brick covers or moving plug sockets higher up walls can all help to mitigate the impact of flooding if currently identified flood risk areas are in future expanded due to climate change. Other possibilities include; bedrooms not located on ground floors, hardstanding / tiled floors rather than carpets on ground floor, waterproof wall paint rather than wallpaper, raised appliances, raised letter boxes, non-return drainage pipes, and permeable paving driveways/patios for example. The NPPG includes a section on residual risk.

13.43 As noted above, SuDS may sometimes present a challenging solution. Where the challenge is insurmountable, suitable alternative approaches must be considered in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (Gloucestershire County Council).

13.44 Whilst the policies of the Local Plan should be read together, **Core Policy 63** should particularly be read in conjunction with **Core Policy 64: Water Management Infrastructure**, and **Core Policy 65: Watercourses**, as well as 'The Cotswold Design Code' for example, on the design of SuDs, such as outfall features and open flow routes, to maximise biodiversity opportunities.

Core Policy 63: Managing Flood Risk

Development proposals must avoid areas at risk of flooding and apply a sequential approach that takes account of all potential sources of flooding including fluvial, surface water, groundwater and flooding from sewers and potential cumulative impact. Proposals should not increase the level of risk to the safety of occupiers of a site, the local community or the wider environment from all sources of flood risk over the lifetime of the development.

Minimising flood risk and providing resilience to flooding will be achieved by:

- a). applying the sequential test and where necessary (in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)) applying the exception test and in that event requiring developers to demonstrate that both limbs of the exception test can be satisfied as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- b). requiring a site-specific flood risk assessment for:
 - i. proposals of one hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1
 - ii. all proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3
 - iii. in areas at risk of flooding from other sources of flooding as identified in the SFRA, including surface water, groundwater, reservoir and sewer flooding
 - iv. on land identified in the SFRA as being at increased fluvial flood risk in future
 - v. proposals situated over a culverted watercourse or where development will require controlling the flow of any watercourse, drain or ditch or the development could potentially change structures known to influence flood flow.

The design and layout of development proposals will:

- c) include, unless demonstrably inappropriate, an integrated, suitable and multi-functional Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) and ensure existing¹⁵³ run-off from a site is either demonstrably reduced or at least neutral
- d) detail how existing flood flow paths will be accommodated and how the amount of flood storage will be maintained and improved (where possible) to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere
- e) show consideration of cumulative impact assessment, including any wider benefits and opportunities, to reduce flood risk in the area and beyond
- f) ensure the development will be safe taking account of the vulnerability of its users, from all sources of flooding for its lifetime. This shall include safe access and egress;
- g) finished ground floor levels will be set a minimum of 600 mm above the 1% annual probability (1 in 100 year) river flood level plus climate change allowance. Where necessary any flood proofing/resistance measures are incorporated into the design, and
- h) take into account the latest version of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

¹⁵³ Refer to paragraph 5b.5.15 on surface water run-off; and Gloucestershire SuDS design and maintenance guide: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/flood-risk-management/flooding-information/information-for-developers/>

Where a mitigation scheme is required, opportunities for Natural Flood Management techniques should be incorporated and delivered in an appropriate way to assist with reducing overall flood risk to communities and the implementation of suitable SuDS.

Developers will fund flood management and/or mitigation measures, where required, for the expected lifetime of the development including adequate provision for on-going long-term maintenance.

Water Management Infrastructure

- 13.45 Protecting our water quality, water supply and aligning the capacity of our water and wastewater infrastructure with new development, in addition to mitigating flood risk, are important factors for the Local Plan to address. **Core Policy 64** seeks to improve water quality and water efficiency, reduce water consumption, and avoid an overload of infrastructure that can lead to sewer flooding and storm overflow discharges.
- 13.46 The Cotswold District Water Cycle Study¹⁵⁴ has assessed the capacity of infrastructure in relation to water supply, wastewater collection, wastewater treatment and water quality. This is a key part of the evidence base, alongside the Cotswold District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and should be read in conjunction with the Policy.

¹⁵⁴ Water Cycle Study (JBA, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Water>

¹⁵⁵ Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency: Approved Document G (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanitation-hot-water-safety-and-water-efficiency-approved-document-g>

¹⁵⁶ Water Cycle Study (JBA, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Water>

- 13.47 New development must ensure the provision of clean water and safe disposal of wastewater while seeking to minimise or mitigate the impact of the development on existing infrastructure.
- 13.48 In Cotswold District, new development will be required to be designed to Building Regulations water consumption standard for water scarce areas (currently 110 litres per person per day)¹⁵⁵. It will also be required to accord with demand management measures set out in the Water Resource Management Plans of the water utility company in the area of the proposed development.
- 13.49 Development can achieve a higher technical standard (for example, 100 litres per person per day), to be more resilient to future changes in water supply and demand. This should be achieved using a fittings-based approach.
- 13.50 The Water Cycle Study¹⁵⁶ and Thames Water considers that a Fittings approach increases the confidence that water efficient devices will be installed in new homes. For any non-residential development and refurbishments (that do not result in a new dwelling), a BREEAM assessment or its latest equivalent, is required, unless it is not technically feasible or viable. Improving water efficiency, such as incorporating low flow showers and kitchen taps, provision of water butts and rain/grey water harvesting systems, will also help to reduce the

volume of wastewater that the sewer system has to accommodate.

- 13.51 Site developers and promoters should engage at an early stage with the appropriate water companies and sewerage undertakers, to agree what improvements, if any, are required and how they will be funded, to prevent delays to development by ascertaining the capacity of existing water supply and wastewater infrastructure networks, and, where necessary, upgrade them.
- 13.52 It is important to not underestimate the time to deliver water/wastewater infrastructure and off-site upgrades. Thames Water state, for example it can take between 18 months to 3 years for local upgrades and 3 to 5 years plus for more strategic solutions to be delivered, and allow the water company sufficient time to undertake any necessary capacity improvement works. Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed, phasing of development or a financial contribution (via agreement between the developer and water company) may be required from the developer, towards the provision of, or improvements to, infrastructure/ network upgrades to meet the need generated by their development.
- 13.53 Existing water, sewerage systems and treatment works can become overloaded from population growth and the effects of climate change. It is essential to ensure that such infrastructure is in place ahead of development to avoid unacceptable impacts such as sewer flooding of residential property or pollution of land and watercourses. Development should only

take place where the new demand upon existing infrastructure is considered. The policy therefore requires a condition to ensure that growth is aligned or phased with delivery of additional capacity, (allowing the water company sufficient time to undertake any necessary capacity improvement works), and avoid any adverse impacts from additional demand on the existing network. This means that where there is no appropriate and deliverable mitigation to address insufficient water/wastewater infrastructure capacity, the occupancy of new homes should not be permitted.

- 13.54 In relation to water quality, the WCS finds that it is not possible for the watercourses receiving discharges from several settlements to achieve Good Ecological Status (GES) in relation to the chemical element Phosphate. The Local Plan has limited scope to improve Phosphate levels because many actions are outside planning control. However, **Core Policy 64** aims to reduce demand for water in new developments, which will assist in reducing the risk of exacerbating a deterioration in standards. This policy criterion is also effective in helping to manage demand and increase water efficiency in line with sustainable building standards and to mitigate against the potential impacts of water abstraction. The Cotswold Lakes (formerly Water Park) is a designated bathing water that has previously been at risk of deterioration; the Environment Agency states that development should not put at risk its current 'Excellent' status.

- 13.55 Groundwater feeds into both public and over 200 private water supplies in Cotswold District. These

supplies may be affected by pollution and may be depleted through surface water and drainage systems which do not allow for natural infiltration (recharge) of water through soils. The most vulnerable ground water sources are designated as Groundwater Source Protection Zones. Further details are available on the Environment Agency website. It is important that there are controls on development which may pose a risk to groundwater, to ensure an adequate and safe water supply.

- 13.56 To avoid any increase in discharge into the public sewer system and to protect the quality of the receiving watercourse and groundwater, development proposals will be encouraged to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where feasible, to reduce run-off. Careful planning of SuDS schemes in areas identified as groundwater aquifers or sensitive to groundwater contamination will be required to ensure that there is no adverse impact on groundwater quality and to maintain or improve groundwater recharge. All SuDS will be expected to be required to comply with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems¹⁵⁷, July 2025, where practicable, the Cotswold Design Code, and the Cotswold District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and from Gloucestershire County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority).

- 13.57 Where development proposals are located within sensitive areas/ zones likely to be affected by odour and nuisances from operational wastewater treatment works, developers will be expected to work with water infrastructure companies to assess the impacts and formulate appropriate mitigation. In some instances, the Council may require an Odour Impact Assessment to confirm that either: (a) there is no adverse amenity impact on future occupiers of the proposed development or (b) the development can be conditioned and mitigated to ensure that any potential for adverse amenity impact is avoided.

- 13.58 Developers of sites close to the administrative boundary of the District should consider strategic water supply and wastewater treatment demand and work with infrastructure providers, and other developers, to seek cross boundary solutions where feasible. Whilst the policies of the Local Plan should be read together, **Core Policy 64: Water Management Infrastructure** should particularly be read in conjunction with **Core Policy 63: Managing Flood Risk**.

¹⁵⁷ National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs 2025): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds>

Core Policy 64: Water Management Infrastructure

Water and Wastewater Provision

Proposals will be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve the development. Proposals must take into account the capacity of existing off-site water and wastewater infrastructure and the impact of development on it; and make satisfactory provision for improvement where a need is identified that is related to the proposal. Where such infrastructure is required, it must be in place prior to the occupation of the development, or, if it is demonstrated that delivery within that timetable is not possible, within a timeframe that has first been agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Proposals, which result in the need for off-site upgrades will be subject to conditions to ensure that the first and/or subsequent occupancy is aligned with the delivery of the necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Water Resources

Proposals must incorporate design features that:

- support recycling / re-use of water; and address sustainable water supply through the implementation of demand management measures, particularly to reduce the use of water and to prevent leakages, and are complemented by management initiatives that make efficient use of water, for example, through rainwater harvesting and grey water collection, and
- demonstrate a water efficiency standard of 100 litres per person per day can be achieved for new dwellings. A condition will be attached to all planning approvals for new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met. Non-residential development will be required to meet Building Research Establishment

Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) water-efficiency credits or their latest equivalent.

Water Quality

Proposals will be permitted that:

- do not result in a demonstrable deterioration in water quality of the water environment, as required by the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (or its successor). Development should not prevent a waterbody achieving 'Good' Status for WFD, and where possible should lead to improvements to current WFD status. Where a need for improvement or a risk of deterioration in water quality is identified, the Council will require satisfactory improvement or mitigation measures to be implemented in full prior to occupation of the development, and
- incorporate integrated, suitable and multi-functional Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in all such development, unless demonstrably inappropriate.

Proposals will be permitted that do not result in pollution of groundwater sources. Development proposals within Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1) will be designed to allow for contamination being encountered and for restrictions on deep penetrative foundation methods, together with avoidance of:

- deep borehole soakaways
- foul sewage discharge to groundwater
- direct discharge of hazardous substances to groundwater
- discharge of trade effluent to ground water, and
- underground oil storage tanks.

Development proposals that encroach upon existing wastewater treatment works will be fully assessed to avoid unacceptable impacts on future users or occupiers of the development and/or upon the operation of the treatment facility. Such proposals may be required to provide an odour impact assessment.

Watercourses

13.59 This policy seeks to ensure that development does not harm watercourses in Cotswold District. Watercourses are vital to biodiversity, provide a unique range of habitats, act as wildlife corridors, and form an important element of Cotswold District's ecological network. They make a significant contribution towards the character of the landscape and form an important part of green and blue infrastructure. Well managed watercourses with high species richness and plants provide vital ecosystem services, help improve water quality, provide drainage and flood management and can also provide places for informal recreation. Of specific note are the River Thames and the Cotswold Lakes for example, however there are many other locations where watercourses and lakes are enjoyed.

13.60 The health of all watercourses is under pressure from a variety of issues including abstraction, pollution and increased recreational pressures affecting wildlife. It is essential that watercourses are positively integrated into the design of new development from the outset to protect their ecological importance

and to retain and enhance biodiversity. Integrating watercourses into development can provide attractive riverside settings, natural areas of Blue and Green Infrastructure and areas for informal recreation.

13.61 All development proposals containing or abutting a watercourse should avoid damaging impacts and provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts. Development proposals should, where possible, enhance watercourses so they benefit biodiversity and other ecosystem services. It is important that mooring stations are only provided in settlements, for example the existing boat moorings along the River Thames at Lechlade to prevent unnecessary disturbance to wildlife.

Watercourse Buffer Zones

13.62 Watercourse buffer zones are required to avoid disturbance associated with development and can also be used to contribute towards delivering net gains for Biodiversity Net Gain. The buffer zone should be a minimum of 10 metres wide, measured from the top of each bank. Larger developments should provide further buffering which can be used for informal recreation.

13.63 Proposals should include long-term management plans for the buffer zone which retain and enhance its biodiversity value and should seek to reinstate buffer zones where previous land uses or development have not provided this. Buffer zones should be reserved as a natural or semi-natural

habitat, free from built development and formal landscaping, planted with native species that are naturally found by local riversides. Infrastructure such as pedestrian footpaths and cycle paths should be kept to a minimum. The buffer zone should not form domestic land or parking areas of any kind but may form part of the requisite Green and Blue Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain for new developments.

13.64 Where a 10-metre-wide buffer zone is demonstrated to be impossible, proposals should be accompanied by detailed plans to show how the land available will be managed to promote biodiversity and how maintenance access to the watercourse will be created.

13.65 In addition to any planning permission, consent is required from either the Environment Agency or the Lead Local Flood Authority to carry out any work within 10 metres of a watercourse.

Culverting

13.66 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 defines a culvert as "a covered channel or pipe which prevents the obstruction of a watercourse or drainage path by an artificial construction".

13.67 Culverting can have a huge impact on the ecology of the watercourse by removing habitats and fragmenting the channel and its river corridor. Culverting results in a complete loss of features within a watercourse; the continuity of the river corridor is broken, adversely affecting the landscape

and ecological value of the watercourse for migrating species. An existing or potential amenity is also lost for present and future generations.

13.68 Culverts can also clog up after a bad storm and lead to flooding along either side. Culverting can also create a less permeable bed to a watercourse and often increases the speed of water flow, possibly increasing flood risk downstream and preventing local recharge of groundwater. Culverted sections may also create or exacerbate downstream or upstream bank and bed erosion or promote sediment deposition, as a result of altered water velocities and disruption to the natural transport of sediment. New culverts therefore will not be allowed and all opportunities to de-culvert a watercourse should be taken if development is next to one and has control of the land, unless technically demonstrated to be unfeasible.

Core Policy 65: Watercourses

Development of land that contains or is close to, for example 10m, to a watercourse must protect and where possible, enhance the function and setting of the watercourse and its biodiversity. As a last resort development should provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts.

Development should include a 10m buffer zone along a watercourse to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Where a 10m wide buffer zone is not demonstrably possible, a suitable mitigation strategy will be required to prevent harm to biodiversity. Where possible the strategy should also include ecological enhancement to the watercourse.

Proposals should avoid the culverting of any watercourse. Opportunities taken to remove culverts will be supported.

Outside settlements, proposals for mooring stages will not be permitted. Proposals for posts, earthworks or facing riverbanks with piles and planking will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Environment Agency. Where it is necessary to protect a riverbank from erosion, the protective measures must be designed to maintain and enhance the special character of the river and its environment, including its biodiversity.

Major development proposals which are located within 20m of a watercourse may need an accompanying Construction Management Plan. This will be dependent upon, and in agreement with, the Council before commencement of work to ensure that the watercourse will be satisfactorily protected from damage, disturbance or pollution.

Sites for new development with existing culverts will be expected to investigate the feasibility of de-culverting the watercourse. Where bridges are proposed as an alternative to culverting, the construction method must take into account the importance of maintaining an obstruction free bank for wildlife.

Pollution and Contaminated Land

13.69 Many pollution sources are dealt with by separate legislation and regulations, but they remain material considerations in planning, in terms of potential adverse impacts on the health of the local community and the natural and built environment of the Cotswolds and contributing to climate change. The impact of potentially polluting activities can be minimised and avoided through planning policy controlling the location of potentially polluting development; controlling operations; and ensuring that incompatible uses of land are separated to avoid potential conflict.

13.70 National Policy states that Local Planning Authorities should ensure new developments are appropriate for their locations, to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution. **Core Policy 66** safeguards against development that is likely to result in unacceptable levels of pollution, such as light and noise, and any negative effects on amenity, health and the natural environment, including soils and controlled waters (such as lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, canals, groundwater etc). The potential harmful effects of such disturbance from development on local residents, neighbouring land uses and premises, wildlife and its habitats, should be considered.

13.71 Regarding air pollution, particular caution will be applied in or close to designated Air Quality Management Areas and due regard had to any air quality action plan. The air can be polluted through gaseous emissions from industrial processes or

through local traffic generation for example and may be exacerbated through local micro-climatic factors. Where there is a risk of any negative air quality impacts associated with development proposals, including cumulative impact, an assessment and, if appropriate, mitigation measures will be required to ensure that air quality has been adequately considered, and any negative impacts are minimised. The provision of Green Infrastructure is recognised as an important element of the solution to, amongst other things, addressing air pollution and improving air quality in built-up areas. Biodiversity enhancements can also deliver air quality benefits locally for example, through the introduction of green walls and roofs that trap pollutants, which in turn deliver cleaner air. The potential impacts on air quality are also considered in other policies, including those on Sustainable Transport and Health and Wellbeing.

13.72 Controlled waters can be polluted by the discharge of pollutants onto land, soakaways, or direct into groundwater or surface water courses or via other pathways. Good quality ground water and surface water is crucial for water-dependent ecosystems and wildlife and can be used as a source of drinking water, agriculture or industry. Proposed site activities and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) should, similarly have regard for best-practice, and be appropriately designed for the site (refer also to **Core Policy 64** on flood risk and design). Early discussions with the Environment Agency and other appropriate regulators are advisable.

13.73 In areas where the community values quiet enjoyment and tranquillity, noise can be similarly detrimental, as can vibration, dust, smell and the intrusion of light and heat. Inappropriate light colour, intensity and spread can have adverse environmental impacts, for example by affecting the conservation of protected species such as bats. Noise should not give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. Acceptable noise levels will vary according to the source, receptor and time, and the policy is not intended to unduly restrict existing established businesses which may need to develop.

13.74 It is important that there are controls on developments which pose a risk to groundwater, to ensure an adequate and safe water supply. Groundwater feeds into both public and over 200 private water supplies. These supplies may be affected through pollution (or pollution activities) and may be depleted through surface water and drainage systems which do not allow for natural infiltration of water through soils. The most vulnerable ground water sources are designated as Groundwater Source Protection Zones. You can view the Environment Agency's groundwater SPZs website¹⁵⁸. Development proposals located within an inner source Protection Zone (SPZ1) or at sites where aquifers are sensitive and vulnerable, where there is a risk of potential pollution to groundwater, need to be designed appropriately and in discussion with the Environment Agency.

¹⁵⁸ Groundwater source protection zones (Environment Agency, 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs>

¹⁵⁹ Land contamination risk management (Environment Agency, 2020): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-contamination-risk-management-lcrm>

13.75 Certain sites and pipelines in the District are designated as notifiable installations, by virtue of the substances stored, transmitted or used. Some development, such as housing, may be incompatible with such sites for safety reasons. The LPA holds maps showing the location of these sites.

13.76 Particular care will be taken in relation to the redevelopment of contaminated land or land that is suspected of being contaminated and in relation to activities involving hazardous substances. Where a site is affected by contamination, responsibility for securing safe development lies with the developer and/or landowner. Developers will be required to show that appropriate measures have been taken to mitigate any adverse impact of contamination and/or hazardous substances on sensitive receptors such as groundwater or end-users of the development. Developers can assess and manage the risks from land contamination following Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) Guidance¹⁵⁹.

Core Policy 66: Pollution and Contaminated Land

Development will be permitted that will not result in unacceptable risk to public health or safety, the natural environment or the amenity of existing land uses through:

- a) pollution of the air, land, surface water, or ground water sources, and/or
- b) generation of noise or light levels, or other disturbance such as spillage, flicker, vibration, dust or smell.

Unless proposals would result in no unacceptable risk to future occupiers of the development and/or the surrounding land, development will not be permitted:

- c) that is located on or in the vicinity of land that is contaminated or suspected of being contaminated, and/or
- d) on land that contains, or which potentially would create through development a pathway for migration of a potentially hazardous substance into a sensitive receptor.

In respect of affected sites, the developer and/or landowner will be required to undertake appropriate investigation(s) and to carry out necessary remedial works.

Measures to limit air pollution and protect air quality (so development has a neutral or positive impact on air quality) will be supported to protect human health and the environment in line with **Core Policy 67**.



Core Policy 67: Air Quality

Development will not be permitted if air pollution impacts lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment, or protected sites (as defined by the Environment Act 2021¹⁶⁰) or amenity, including residential amenity.

Applicants must have regard to the most up to date National Guidance¹⁶¹ and shall, where appropriate, prepare and submit an Air Quality Assessment with their application.

Applicants should demonstrate that:

- a) any identified emissions will not lead to significant adverse effects on health, the environment or amenity
- b) development will not lead to an increase in emissions, degradation of air quality or increase in exposure to pollutants at or above the health-based air quality objective and interim targets referenced in the Local Management Technical Guidance (TG22), or latest version¹⁶²
- c) any impacts on the proposed use from existing poor air quality are appropriately mitigated
- d) the development promotes sustainable transport measures and use of low emission vehicles to reduce air quality impacts of vehicles, and
- e) the development is designed in a way to encourage non-habitable rooms on roadside facades (and habitable rooms as far from roads as possible) with consideration for the Design Code requirements for solar gain/ overheating.

Where development proposals would be subject to unacceptable air quality standards or would have an unacceptable impact on air quality standards, they will be refused.

Where emissions from the proposed development may be at risk of meeting the relevant regulatory standards, the applicant will need to assess the impact on local air quality by undertaking an appropriate Air Quality Assessment. The assessment shall have regard to guidance current at the time of the application to show that the national objectives will still be achieved.

160 The Environment Act 2021, Section 110: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>
161 Guidance (Institute of Air Quality Management): <https://iaqm.co.uk/guidance/>
162 Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (DEFRA, 2022): <https://iaqm.defra.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LAQM-TG22-May-25-v2.1.pdf>



Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

13.77 **Development Policy 10** promotes the conservation and enhancement of trees, tree groups, (including orchards), woodlands, and hedgerows, ancient and veteran trees, and ancient woodland. It also requires appropriate new tree planting.

13.78 Trees and hedgerows contribute to the environment in many ways, including:

- improving the quality of the air removing dust particles and harmful gas emissions, particles and pollutants
- in urban and rural areas, by helping to reduce the heat island effect, providing much needed shading and cooling
- reducing soil erosion and flash flooding by slowing down and capturing fast flowing water
- contributing significantly to the appearance and character of the landscape, and
- improving biodiversity and play a key part in the wider Green Infrastructure of the area.

13.79 These benefits all help to improve the health and wellbeing of people and their quality of life.

13.80 The Gloucestershire Tree Strategy was published by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership in 2021. The Cotswold District currently has 13,648 ha of tree cover, 11% of the total area of the District. The Tree Strategy sets a countywide target of 20% tree cover. For Cotswold District this requires an increase of 6,600 ha, which is a 50% increase over

the existing tree cover. The Council will assist in the implementation of The Gloucestershire Tree Strategy. It will work with the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and assist partners and stakeholders, across the County, to coordinate and target their approach and actions.

- 13.81 Woodland creation will be encouraged to be on urban or urban fringe locations or on poor agricultural land to derive maximum multifunctional benefits. Natural regeneration should be encouraged, particularly when located adjacent to existing woodlands to deliver extra wildlife benefits from scrub development. The Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy should be referred to when selecting areas for woodland creation.
- 13.82 Where inappropriate forestry plantations exist on a former priority habitat (e.g. heathland, peatland, ancient woodland sites), development will be encouraged to restore these habitats by supporting plantation removal.
- 13.83 Currently the Council, like many authorities, is facing a decline in tree cover because of the increased exposure to biological and abiotic threats to tree populations. This situation makes the conservation and planting of more trees ever more important.
- 13.84 This policy does not prevent the appropriate management of trees and woodlands or the removal of trees that are not in character with their locality or trees that have been attacked from deadly tree diseases and pests.

- 13.85 In some cases, the public benefit of development may outweigh the importance of retaining the trees on the development site. In those cases, compensatory tree planting will be required on or near the site. Appropriate tree species should be selected and arrangements made for the long-term management of the new trees. Further guidance can be found in the updated Cotswold Design Code, The Gloucestershire Tree Strategy and the Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy. For the avoidance of doubt, clause (a) of part one of the policy includes trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a conservation area, clause (c) includes those meeting the criteria of hedgerow in the Hedgerow Regulations, and clause (d) includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites.

Development Policy 10: Trees, Hedgerows, and Woodlands

Where such natural assets are likely to be affected, development will not be permitted that fails to conserve and enhance:

- a) trees and groups of trees (including orchards) of landscape, amenity, ecological or historical value of arboricultural quality as defined in BS5837 (2012)¹⁶³ and later revisions
- b) ancient and veteran trees and ancient woodland
- c) hedgerows of landscape, amenity, ecological or historical value, and/or
- d) woodland of landscape, amenity, ecological or historical value.

Development proposals affected by the above criteria should, where appropriate, have regard to the potential for new tree, scrub, woodland or extended woodland planting. Where trees, woodland or hedgerows are proposed to be removed as part of development applicants must demonstrate clear and robust reasoning for any proposed losses to arboricultural features.

Ancient and veteran trees and woodlands are defined as irreplaceable habitats¹⁶⁴. The loss of veteran trees, ancient woodland and other protected trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permissible in wholly exceptional circumstances, and any proposed loss will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where losses are unavoidable, appropriate compensatory planting must be secured. Woodland planting to assist carbon sequestration, nature recovery and sourcing of biomass or biofuel should be informed by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy.

Development proposals that incorporate new tree planting should provide the appropriate measures to secure their long-term maintenance.

Applications for development that include new tree planting will be guided by the principle of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reasons.

¹⁶³ Appendix 2, Tree Survey Explanatory Notes (Keen Consultants):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66b20e18ab418ab055593375/Tree_Survey_and_Impact_Assessment_June_2024_Appendix_2_-_Explanatory_Notes.pdf

¹⁶⁴ The govt has defined irreplaceable habitats in legislation - The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/48/contents/made>

Dark Skies

13.86 Artificial light can have a significant impact on landscape character, tranquillity, biodiversity, human health and the enjoyment of the night sky. Dark skies are an important environmental asset and contribute to the distinctive character of much of the District. They provide opportunities to appreciate the natural environment and cultural heritage and are particularly important for a wide range of nocturnal species.

13.87 Dark skies are one of the recognised special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape. However, it is estimated, by the CPRE that the area of darkest night skies within the Cotswolds National Landscape has diminished by more than 40% since 1993¹⁶⁵. Increasing levels of artificial lighting have progressively reduced the extent of truly dark night skies. Careful control of external lighting is therefore necessary to minimise light pollution, conserve landscape character and tranquillity, and protect the ecological networks that depend upon dark corridors and habitats.

- 13.88 Artificial lighting can adversely affect biodiversity by fragmenting habitats and disrupting the movement, commuting and foraging behaviour of nocturnal species, including legally protected bat species. Development should therefore seek to minimise light spill and maintain dark corridors along watercourses, woodland edges, hedgerows and other ecological networks.
- 13.89 Lighting should only be provided where it is necessary for safety, security or operational purposes. Lighting schemes should be designed using the principles of the Institute of Lighting Professionals’ guidance and should minimise sky glow, glare, light trespass and energy consumption.

¹⁶⁵ Nigh Blight Mapping (CPRE, 2019): https://www.cpre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Night_Blight.pdf

Development Policy 11: Dark Skies

Development proposals that have the potential to impact upon the dark skies of the Cotswold National Landscape, must conserve and, where possible, enhance dark skies, tranquillity and the intrinsic character of the night-time environment.

The need for external lighting should be fully justified, and lighting should only be provided where it is demonstrated to be necessary for safety, security, accessibility or operational requirements.

Where external lighting is proposed, development proposals must demonstrate that the lighting scheme:

- a) minimises sky glow, glare, light spill and light trespass
- b) is of the minimum luminance, height, extent and duration necessary for its intended purpose
- c) uses directional, screened and energy-efficient fittings designed to limit illumination beyond the site boundary
- d) avoids adverse impacts on the character, tranquillity and visual amenity of the surrounding area, including views of the night sky
- e) avoids adverse impacts on biodiversity and maintains dark corridors for wildlife movement, commuting and foraging, particularly along watercourses, woodland edges, hedgerows and other ecological networks
- f) conserves and enhances the special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape, including its dark skies
- g) incorporates appropriate controls such as dimming, timers, motion sensors or curfews, where appropriate, and
- h) accords with the latest relevant professional guidance relating to lighting and dark skies.

Development proposals that would result in unacceptable levels of light pollution, individually or cumulatively, will not be permitted.



Chapter fourteen

Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Introduction

14.1 Creating healthy and sustainable communities' means ensuring that people across the Cotswold District can access the homes, services and environments that support their wellbeing, strengthen social cohesion and enable active, fulfilling lives. This chapter sets out how the Local Plan will guide development to promote health, inclusivity and resilience through well-designed places, accessible green and blue infrastructure, strong social and community facilities, and the infrastructure needed for modern, connected living. Together, these policies ensure that both new and existing communities can thrive, helping to deliver a District that is healthier, more equitable and more sustainable for the future.

14.2 This Chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 68: Planning for Health and Well-being**
- **Core Policy 69: Good Design Outcomes and Process**
- **Core Policy 69a: Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations**
- **Core Policy 70: Green and Blue Infrastructure**
- **Core Policy 71: Management of Accessible Green Open Spaces in Residential Developments**
- **Core Policy 72: Social and Community Infrastructure**
- **Core Policy 73: Telecommunications Infrastructure.**

Health and Well-being

14.3 The environment in which we live affects our health and well-being, and as a social objective, it is a key component of sustainable development. **Core Policy 68: Planning for Health and Well-being**, alongside other policies in the Local Plan, help to ensure that health considerations are central to planning decisions.

14.4 The Council will support development proposals that promote health and well-being and maximise opportunities to ensure healthy and inclusive communities for all by creating environments that encourage healthy lifestyles and appropriate health infrastructure. The Council seeks to encourage developers to prioritise health outcomes, meeting the needs of all in the community, including older,

- younger people, families, people living alone, and those with disabilities.
- 14.5 Planning has control over some of the causes of ill health, such as the provision, location and design of homes, green spaces, or health infrastructure. Many of our health outcomes are explained by factors other than healthcare or our own genetics. These factors can be complex, such as our homes, lifestyle, social networks, or natural environment, all of which combine to create the environment or society in which we live. Physical activity levels, social isolation and diet, can contribute to many of the most common health problems, including type-2 diabetes, depression, and obesity because of the impact of economic, social and environmental factors.
- 14.6 There are also often health inequalities within these factors, and avoidable ill health because of the gap between rich and poor areas, or social inequalities. A well-designed built environment can help to reduce health inequalities, improve respiratory and cardiovascular health, reduce obesity, fear, isolation and depression as well as have environmental benefits and improve opportunities for social cohesion, activity and amenity; while conversely, poor housing conditions, environmental quality or pollution can exacerbate health inequalities. National policy states planning can contribute by 'promoting healthy and inclusive communities and supporting appropriate health infrastructure'¹⁶⁶.
- 14.7 Support for health and well-being underpins two of the Council's strategic priorities, 'delivering housing' and 'supporting communities' which the Local Plan can help to deliver. The Corporate Plan states 'we want our district to be the best in the UK for health and wellbeing.' The Council recognises that planning has an important role to play in the creation of healthy, safe and inclusive communities. The policy reflects the relevant priorities in the Gloucestershire Joint Health and Well-being Strategy¹⁶⁷.
- 14.8 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Public Health England (PHE) data have also been used to inform the policy. The JSNA, via Gloucestershire 'INFORM'¹⁶⁸, looks at the current and future needs of the local population to guide the planning and provision of health, social care, and public health services and is an important evidence base. This contextual information can help with understanding our population needs, such as the ageing nature of the population, variations in health outcomes and inequalities, and barriers to accessing services, particularly in rural areas and to inform and shape development proposals. The JSNA also highlights the importance of addressing lifestyle-related factors such as physical inactivity, obesity, and social isolation.
- 14.9 **Core Policy 68** requires proposals for new development (excluding householder and other minor applications) to demonstrate careful

¹⁶⁶ Healthy and safe communities, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID:53-001-20190722 Revision date: 22 07 2019 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

¹⁶⁷ Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2030 (Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board): https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/xgmbp0ka/gcc_2596-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy_dev12a.pdf

¹⁶⁸ InformGloucestershire (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/>

- consideration of several factors, described in the following paragraphs and referenced in the policy, and use relevant guidance or principles, where possible to illustrate this in the overall design. Proposals should show they promote and support opportunities for healthy lifestyles and can contribute to the creation of healthier communities.
- 14.10 Proposals should be 'social' and encourage social interaction, providing social spaces (whether green or public realm spaces) that are accessible, well maintained and flexible in use. Social spaces can enable social cohesion and encourage social pride in an area, such as by providing front gardens and informal meeting spaces such as street benches, trees for shelter and sitting, or more formal neighbourhood squares. Frontages and pedestrian routes should be well-overlooked and welcoming. As well as encouraging healthy living through formal and informal physical activity, like recreation, active travel, rest or play, such 'social' proposals may also include multi-use development, such as community hubs, or encourage a diversity of uses in a town centre.
- 14.11 Development proposals are encouraged to be inclusive and to promote age friendly environments to meet the needs of different groups in the community, where possible aiming for dementia-friendly communities that help ensure that schemes and spaces are designed to meet the needs of all people of all ages and abilities. Inclusive proposals should provide a mix of high-quality homes and
- tenures that are accessible for all people, at all abilities and stages of their life, and that can adapt to the changing needs of people over time, enabling them to maintain their independence for longer. Formal and informal play areas should be well-designed and integrated for all ages and abilities.
- 14.12 Development proposals should also be designed to be safe, i.e., they should be well maintained and create safer streets and spaces. Safe spaces can be encouraged by improved lighting, being easy to navigate (or 'legible'), clean and uncluttered, with walkable and wheelable routes, for example. Safety should be designed 'in' to proposals to help reduce the fear and perception of crime as well as help prevent anti-social behaviour, for example by ensuring sufficient natural surveillance.
- 14.13 A sense of safety and security is integral to people's mental health and well-being, and such 'safe' proposals can help have a positive impact on people's experience of navigating streets and spaces and encourage increased footfall to shops or other facilities. In addition, the health risks caused by pollution (such as air, noise, odour, light) likely to arise from the development or from neighbouring uses or activities, microclimates or extreme weather events like heatwaves or flooding also need consideration in terms of safety and adaptability to climate change. Further details are available from the Gloucestershire Climate Vulnerability Risk Assessment¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁹ Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (Climate Leadership Gloucestershire, 2025): https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/zprggygt/glos-crva-report_final.pdf

14.14 **Core Policy 68** should, in particular, be read in conjunction with **Core Policy 69: Good Design Outcomes and Process**, the housing policies including **Core Policy 41: Standards for New Residential Development**, **Core Policy 44: Specialist Accommodation**, **Core Policy 70: Green and Blue Infrastructure**, **Core Policy 33: Sustainable Transport and Connectivity**, as well as those relating to climate change and safety such as flood risk, water quality and pollution.

Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs)

14.15 Cotswold District Council passed a motion to improve the provision of Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) on major new developments in the District and ensure better health outcomes for local people. Defibrillation (an electric shock to the heart) can restart the heart after cardiac arrest but needs to be delivered as soon as possible. Most (80%) out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in residential areas and on average, it takes 7 minutes to get to the person with cardiac arrest, but in more rural areas, this may take longer. It will be a matter for the developer to demonstrate where provision of the CPAD is not feasible, especially for example where access by an ambulance to a rural area could take more time.

14.16 The CPAD(s) will either be physically provided or secured by an agreed financial contribution. It should be registered on an appropriate defibrillator network such as 'The Circuit' (British Heart Foundation), comply with current NHS and ambulance service guidance; and be within a safe, walkable, prominent and easily accessible location; and acceptable in planning terms where consent is required, such as on a heritage asset. Ideally no part of the development should be further than 400m away. The CPAD may be located inside an open structure, such as a porch to a building or bus stop, to provide additional protection from the weather and provided with an electricity supply to ensure it is kept at the right temperature in cold weather to protect it from damage.

14.17 An agreement on the guardianship of defibrillators between the owner of the public place (usually the Town or Parish Council) where it is intended to be installed and the developer, must be demonstrated, to ensure the device is 'rescue ready' in an emergency and for the future. This should be similar to provision for example of a play area, whereby the ownership, and maintenance responsibility of which, once it is delivered by the developer, is then transferred to either the local Town or Parish Council or to a Management Company. As well as registration and the designation of a Guardian, maintenance of the CPAD should include routine checks and replacement of any item to maintain its status as "Rescue Ready" as required by The Circuit.

Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

14.18 For larger-scale development proposals, Health Impact Assessment (HIA) brings together a range of issues addressed in other policies in the Plan to focus on health impacts and outcomes. The second part of the policy requires such developments to clearly demonstrate how they have addressed some if not all the health and well-being principles set out in the first part of the policy and can form the health and well-being part of the Climate Change and Sustainability Statement.

14.19 The findings of health impact assessments can help developers understand what form their healthy development should take. Undertaking a HIA will ensure that the effects of a development on both health and health inequalities are considered and addressed during the planning process. HIAs should ideally be carried out early on so that analysis and discussion can genuinely inform site design and show proposals have considered the Cotswold Design Code/Guide.

14.20 A HIA should demonstrate how the likely significant impacts on health and well-being (both benefits and harm) of new major development will be assessed and provide mitigation where necessary to create healthy places and inclusive communities. The PPG guidance on HIAs is set in the context of meeting NPPF requirements for the consideration of health and well-being.

14.21 The Gloucestershire Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in Planning Framework¹⁷⁰ is a toolkit developed to help guide the preparation of HIAs, including scoping for the type of assessment required: rapid or comprehensive (i.e. more in-depth). While the 'major' threshold triggers the requirement for a HIA, the length and detail of the assessment should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the proposed development. Advice can also be found on HIAs for example in PHE's 'HIA in Planning Guide 2020'¹⁷¹ and 'Health Impact Assessments – a practical guide' by the Wales HIA Support Unit¹⁷².

170 Contact Gloucestershire Public Health and Communities Team, GCC publichealth@gloucestershire.gov.uk
171 Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning (Public Health England, 2020): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f93024ad3bf7f35f184eb24/HIA_in_Planning_Guide_Sept2020.pdf
172 Health Impact Assessment (HIA): A practical guide for voluntary best practice in Wales (NHS Wales, 2026): https://phwwhocc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/HIA-Vol-Guidance-for-Wales-E-Final-16_06.pdf

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Core Policy 68: Planning for Health and Well-Being

The Council will support proposals that reduce health inequalities, promote healthier lifestyles and improve the health and well-being of our existing and new communities.

All major development proposals should submit a design and access statement that demonstrates how the development contributes to shaping healthy communities and delivers high-quality sustainable places. Additionally:

- i) development proposals of 100 dwellings or more, or 5,000sqm floorspace or more, should undertake a full Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in accordance with the Gloucestershire Health Impact Assessment in Planning Framework, and
- ii) development proposals of 50 to 99 dwellings, or 1,000sqm to 4,999sqm floorspace should undertake a screening which assesses if a full HIA is required.

HIA should include, but are not limited to, demonstrating how the proposals contribute towards:

- a) addressing local health issues, outcomes, and needs, as detailed in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- b) addressing the projected health inequalities and avoiding and/ or mitigating any adverse health and sustainability impacts
- c) active street layouts and public realm, that are safe, secure and accessible by their design
- d) open spaces/ green spaces for play and recreation, sports and leisure that encourage walking and cycling
- e) good mental well-being by reducing social isolation and loneliness by encouraging the provision of social community infrastructure, including opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another
- f) access to green spaces and connection with nature, to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing and to deliver multiple benefits for people, place and the environment
- g) diversity in the residential offer that improves accessibility, affordability and promotes inter-generational connectivity and lifetime neighbourhoods
- h) a strategy for the installation, access and maintenance of community public access defibrillator(s) (CPADs), and
- i) making it easier for people to make healthier food choices by promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally sourced food by providing opportunities for food growing, for example by the inclusion of allotments.

Good Design Outcomes and Process

- 14.22 Good design is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development and addressing climate change. It is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people as well as the natural environment.
- 14.23 The Cotswolds is widely recognised as an outstandingly beautiful area, rich in the architecture of every period and style. Many towns and villages contain impressive set pieces, ranging from a scatter of cottages around a green, to gently curving town streets and market places. The design quality achieved in the past was generally very high. Local standards of traditional craftsmanship have been exceptional for hundreds of years.
- 14.24 Heritage themes that contribute to the distinctiveness of the local built environment include:
 - local stone building materials – dry-stone walls, Cotswold building stone, natural stone roof tiles
 - distinctive Cotswold vernacular
 - rural (agricultural) settlement patterns of isolated farmsteads and villages with market towns and a number of country houses with associated estates
 - key local architects including important proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, and
 - Roman archaeology of the District focused on Corinium. Obvious Roman roads, still in use as main roads through the District.

- 14.25 Well-designed development can contribute positively to the conservation, enhancement and creation of historic assets and nature recovery, including at the strategic level through, for example, the enhancement of areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity as identified in the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. High quality urban design and architecture also enables new development to integrate successfully with the historic environment, which is of particular importance for the historic towns and villages of the Cotswolds.
- 14.26 The built environment is as much about the spaces between and around the buildings, or groups of buildings in a settlement, as about the buildings themselves. For this reason, policy on Local Green Spaces is included in Chapter 13.
- 14.27 **Core Policy 69** will be applied to all aspects of design, including architectural, landscape, ecological, urban and sustainable design within developments of every scale, from conversions and small extensions to major residential sites and large employment facilities.
- 14.28 Whilst the National Model Design Code provides direction on many design considerations, such as sustainable design, connectivity, health and wellbeing, and crime prevention, it is important to ensure that the local context is also fully considered. This is particularly so in an area renowned for the quality of its built and natural environment and which features very sensitive locations such as

- the Cotswolds National Landscape together with numerous Conservation Areas and listed buildings.
- 14.29 There are several developments, particularly post-war housing schemes around some of the key settlements, where the character of the area has not been reflected in scheme design. These developments often have been built using standard house types and layouts that are not locally distinctive. The result is insensitive development that is not integrated with its surroundings either in character or in scale. However, there are elements of these developments that provide benefits such as access to green spaces, including spaces between houses, larger gardens, both at the front and back of houses as well as tree-lined streets. The design of new developments therefore, must ensure that poor building design quality is not replicated and that there is a sense of transition between the open countryside and an existing settlement's historic core and character, in terms of building heights and density, whilst ensuring that access to appropriately sized open spaces is not compromised. The updated Cotswold Design code should be read in conjunction with the Cotswold Green Infrastructure Strategy¹⁷³.
- 14.30 As well as ensuring that local character and distinctiveness are retained and enhanced, there are other key local issues that the design of development should address. These include meeting the challenge of climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as accommodating the District's

ageing population. The latter signals the need to improve the health and well-being of residents through appropriate design of homes and open spaces. One of the ways this can be achieved is by adopting the principles of providing accessible and adaptable homes capable of meeting changing needs over time. In addition, an inclusive approach to design, which ensures that new developments are integrated both physically and socially with current communities and places, should be followed.

The Cotswold Design Code.

- 14.31 The Cotswold Design Code (2026) provides important guidance to inform and continues to provide a firm basis upon which to determine planning applications.
- 14.32 The Design Code, which is expected to be adopted as a Supplementary Plan, was updated to specifically address the need to:
- reduce the energy consumption and remove carbon emissions in new buildings and support residents to retrofit their traditionally built Cotswold homes to achieve similar standards whilst respecting local character and heritage
 - create space and connections for people to walk and cycle more, increasing public transport provision and enhancing access to key destinations
 - respond to the Council's commitment to promote healthy homes and neighbourhoods

¹⁷³ Green Infrastructure Strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>

- protect air, water, landscape and future populations from the impacts of pollution and climate change
- respond to changes in national policy and guidance which emphasise the importance of delivering beauty and the UN's global sustainability goals through the planning system, and
- respond to the Council's commitment to address its ecological emergency and the need to support and aid nature recovery.

- 14.33 The Cotswold Design Code will continue to emphasise the requirement to design development so that it either follows an authentic and traditional approach (vernacular or polite), in line with the local architectural character, or that it is designed in a high quality contemporary and innovative manner, which reflects and respects local character and the need to address climate change. The decision whether to adopt a traditional or contemporary approach will depend on the type of development proposed, the site and its setting.

- 14.34 **Core Policy 69** has been updated to make clear what development 'must' and 'should' achieve. The Design Code provides guidance to inform the determining of planning applications in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policy.

Core Policy 69: Good Design Outcomes and Process

Development will be supported where proposals can clearly demonstrate compliance with appropriate national policy and guidance in respect of Design, especially the Cotswold Design Code.

Proposals must clearly demonstrate how the following ten characteristics¹⁷⁴ are addressed in the design of the scheme in a mutually supportive way:

- a) context – understand and enhance the surroundings and demonstrate how landscape character, heritage, local history, and culture have been valued and incorporated. Respond to any significant or material site constraints
- b) identity – demonstrate how the context study and analysis have helped to develop proposals that are locally informed, attractive, and distinctive
- c) built form – demonstrate how a coherent pattern of development has been achieved with appropriate building forms and types and forms including key destinations
- d) movement – demonstrate an integrated network of routes for all modes of transport which are accessible, encourage active travel and are easy to move around with well-considered parking and servicing

¹⁷⁴ National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

- e) nature – demonstrate provision of high quality, green open spaces with a variety of activities to enhance and optimise the existing Green and Blue Infrastructure and support rich and varied biodiversity and contribute to the objectives of the Gloucester Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- f) public spaces – demonstrate the creation of safe, social, well-located, attractive, high quality and inclusive public spaces that support social interaction and provide opportunity for active and healthy lifestyles (Refer to Sport England’s Active Design for guidance¹⁷⁵)
- g) uses – demonstrate a mixed and integrated community with provision of mixed uses as required and a socially inclusive mix of home tenures, types and sizes (as required by **Core Policy 41: Standards for New Residential Development**)
- h) homes and buildings – demonstrate how functional, accessible, healthy, safe, comfortable and sustainable buildings have been created with well related amenity and servicing
- i) resources – demonstrate how proposals follow the energy hierarchy and are efficient and resilient including the selection of building materials and construction techniques that minimise their environmental impact, and through the use of passive design strategies that maximise resilience, and
- j) lifespan – demonstrate how proposals are made to last and have provision to be well maintained, adaptable to changing needs, and foster a sense of ownership.

Proposals for Major Development should:

- k) prepare and submit Masterplans and Design Codes which are in accordance with national policy and guidance and the most up-to-date version of the Cotswold Design Code (s) or demonstrate compliance with the Cotswold Design Code (s) through other means, such as a Design and Access Statement, and
- l) undertake appropriate Community Engagement that informs the proposals from an early stage in accordance with relevant national and local guidance.¹⁷⁶

Strategic Allocations set out in this Plan should also comply with the requirements of **Core Policy 69a: Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations**.

Proposals for major development must also:

- m) make use of a Design Review as early in the process as possible, such as the Cotswold Quality Review Panel, or the Gloucestershire Design Review, or a Building for Healthy Life Assessment (which must be commissioned by the applicant and undertaken by a neutral third-party accredited organisation such as Design for Homes, Place Services or Design Southeast).

¹⁷⁵ Active Design (Sports England): <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>
¹⁷⁶ Statement of Community Involvement (Cotswold District Council, 2024): <https://cotswold.gov.uk/media/cwrfkbyc/statement-of-community-involvement-january-2024.pdf>

Core Policy 69a: Good Design Outcomes and Process for Strategic Allocations

In addition to the requirements of **Core Policy 69**, proposals for the strategic allocations made by this Plan should also:

- a) prepare a comprehensive Development Framework for the whole site and adjoining highway areas as relevant for approval by the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of individual planning applications to which they should conform. The Development Framework should incorporate:
 - o site-wide vision
 - o masterplan
 - o supporting statement demonstrating how the development will respond to the characteristics of the site and detailing the delivery of the uses, green infrastructure network and spaces, ecological enhancement, sustainable travel, broad design principles and infrastructure required in **Core Policies 2, 7, 12 and 19** and the **Site Development Frameworks**, and
- b) prepare a site-wide Design Code to complement the Site Development Framework for all development and land uses. This Design Code should be submitted with any initial planning application (outline or detailed) for any part of the allocation sites and should demonstrate compliance with the Cotswold Design Code.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 14.35 National policy defines Green, including blue, Infrastructure (GI) as ‘a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’.
- 14.36 Green Infrastructure (GI) already exists at numerous scales and locations, and of differing quality, within the District. At a landscape scale, Cotswold District is a significant GI resource, which benefits from numerous nationally recognised Green and Blue Infrastructure assets. These include the Cotswolds National Landscape, the Cotswold Lakes and the River Thames, all of which are shared with neighbouring authorities (see Chapter 13). At the other end of the scale, streams, ponds, gardens, allotments, parks, playing fields and sport pitches, hedgerows, woodlands and orchards represent some smaller examples of GI.
- 14.37 The location of new GI plays an important part in reconnecting or connecting GI assets throughout the District. The GI network is identified within the Cotswold District GI Strategy (2026)¹⁷⁷. This document maps the three fundamental GI elements of wellbeing, water and wildlife. In doing so, the document maps: public rights of way and cycle routes; the water elements, such as rivers; and

¹⁷⁷ Green Infrastructure Strategy (Cotswold District Council, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>

wildlife elements, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and woodlands, amongst others. The strategy identifies opportunities for how the District's existing GI assets can be linked to provide bigger, better and more joined up GI, and greater connectivity for both people and nature.

- landscape scale connectivity: better, bigger, more and more joined
- climate emergency
- our relationship with water
- the value of mixed and wilder habitats, and
- biodiversity in our developments and settlements.

14.38 New or improvements to GI should consider, and be resilient to, the impact of climate change. It should include natural solutions/measures to alleviate the impact of climate change, e.g. through carbon sequestration, natural flood/surface water management, helping with urban cooling and provision of SUDs and microclimate adaptation, among others. It can play a role in enabling species to move from less favourable habitats to more favourable ones as the climate changes.

14.39 The local approach to GI should be informed by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (GLNRS)¹⁷⁸ which sets out what sort of habitats/features are priorities for the area and in what locations. Therefore, making it easier for development to distinguish where the opportunities for restoring, enhancing, linking or creating new places for biodiversity and GI are. The spatial element of the GLNRS is structured around six key aims:

- safeguarding, managing and enhancing existing biodiversity-rich sites

14.40 To support these aims, the tool also identifies a range of Potential Measures, which are recommended actions or management options designed to deliver one or more of the 10 Biodiversity Priorities, these are:

- grassland, meadows and heathlands (open habitats)
- woodland habitats
- mixed and mosaic habitats
- open water habitats
- wetland habitats
- running water habitats
- estuarine habitats
- nature-friendly farming and forestry
- biodiversity in settlements and developments, and
- species priorities.

14.41 The purpose of **Core Policy 70: Green and Blue Infrastructure** (GBI) is to ensure that individual assets, and the integrity and connectivity of the GI network, are created, protected, enhanced, whilst also recognising that the network has multi-functional benefits that extend beyond Cotswold District.

¹⁷⁸ Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Gloucestershire County Council): <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/ecology-and-landscape/gloucestershire-local-nature-recovery-strategy/>

14.42 Development proposals are required to protect as well as contribute to new and existing GI at a level that is proportionate to the scale, type and location of the development. For example, a substantial level of GI would be required as part of a major housing scheme, but equally all development has the potential to contribute to GI improvements.

14.43 Developments will be required to contribute to local or neighbourhood Green Infrastructure GI, both on and off-site. Contributions should be proportionate to the impact and scale of development and could include improvements to the local cycle path network, enhancements of local public open space and/ or habitat creation. For example, street tree planting, rain gardens, green walls and roofs, bulb and amenity planting. The design of any new GI should reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness.

14.44 It is important that new GI is planned at the beginning of the development process. This will ensure that the development considers what GI should be on site, how it relates to existing on-site GI assets, and how the assets, old and new, interact with GI adjacent to the development. The Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership has produced a 'Strategic Framework for Green Infrastructure. The strategic principles within that document as set at **Appendix H** should be considered. To assist with this process, guidance includes, but is not limited to, the Cotswold Design Code.

Core Policy 70: Green and Blue Infrastructure

All development proposals should protect existing Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI), and where appropriate to their scale and nature, contribute towards its enhancement and expansion.

In planning for major developments, priority will be given to the role of GBI in responding to climate change, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options, supporting biodiversity and the natural environment, and ensuring open space for sports and recreation is secured for the community.

All major development must:

- demonstrate that they have taken a GBI design-led approach to development schemes, and utilised Cotswold's GBI design checklist, to ensure Green Infrastructure (GI) is fully considered and well-integrated into developments from the earliest stages
- ensure GBI, where appropriate, is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, considering the views of key stakeholders, with their early engagement
- avoid the loss and fragmentation of existing GBI networks, including within the built environment. Existing landscape features, watercourses and habitats should be integrated into development, and GBI proposals must identify opportunities to maximise their quality and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, where

- appropriate. Development proposals must protect and enhance sites that form part of the existing GBI network as well as associated landscape heritage features
- d) consider connectivity as a core principle of GBI, integrating active travel and recreational routes that connect with open space and meet accessibility, quantity and quality standards for all users, including connections to existing communities, facilities and services. Appropriate greening should be integrated into these routes to improve connections to habitat networks and to contribute to wider nature recovery
- e) protect existing trees and hedgerows during and after site preparation and construction. Where proposed development might affect trees, developers must demonstrate that an accurate assessment by a competent arboriculturist has been undertaken and protective measures put in place before commencement of development. Developers are strongly encouraged to increase tree cover using a mix of native species to include orchard and fruiting trees that are resilient to pests, diseases and climate change and support biodiversity, and
- f) provide a phased implementation plan for GI that identifies the implementation of the main structural elements in the first phase of development. The GI and landscape plan should be implemented at the earliest opportunity in alignment with the development construction phasing in order for planning to mature and for the aesthetic benefit of early occupants.

All proposals for GBI should align with the design checklist in the Cotswold Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy¹⁷⁹ and relevant sections of the Cotswold Design Code, together with Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance, the Councils Open Space Strategy, the Nature Recovery Strategies and the Gloucestershire GI Standards¹⁸⁰.

Development proposals for major developments must be accompanied by a GBI Plan for the site in accordance with the GBI Strategy. This should include stewardship arrangements for no less than 30 years to cover maintenance, management and funding arrangements. The Plan should also incorporate an appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and cover the protection of existing GI as well as any designated sites and features during construction and implementation phases with proposed mitigation measures. No development shall take place until the Plan has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

An endowment sum should be provided for the maintenance of the GBI and/ or a revenue contribution depending on the nature of the proposed GBI element, to be secured through legal agreement.

Contributions towards local GI projects as set out in the GBI Strategy will be sought where they are related to the development or where they mitigate the impacts of new development.

¹⁷⁹ Green Infrastructure Strategy (CDC, 2026): <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/LocalPlan-Landscape>
¹⁸⁰ Green Infrastructure (Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership): <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/green-infrastructure-pledge>

Management of Accessible Green Open Spaces in Residential Developments

- 14.45 The management of Accessible Green Open Spaces policy sets out the Council's approach for the management and maintenance of all open space assets in new developments. The aim of this policy is to ensure the management of public open spaces in/or adjacent to new residential developments are fit for purpose and managed effectively, efficiently and in perpetuity. It is widely recognised that open spaces provide a multitude of benefits for the environment as well as health and wellbeing, carbon capture and sequestration.
- 14.46 The NPPF (2024)¹⁸¹ defines open spaces as: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity. For the purpose of the policy, Accessible Green Open Spaces includes:
- Community Gardens and Orchards
 - Accessible Open Spaces
 - Parks and Gardens
 - Natural and Semi Natural Green Space
 - Green Corridors
 - Informal Amenity Open Space
 - Outdoor play provision for children and young people, including sports pitches
 - Allotments, and
 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs).

¹⁸¹ National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- 14.47 **Core Policy 71: Management of Accessible Green Open Spaces in Residential Developments** also recognises that areas set aside for wildlife and flood relief (but not necessarily accessible) also need to be managed.
- 14.48 Cotswold District Council does not manage any Accessible Green Open Spaces. Some publicly Accessible Green Open Spaces are managed by Town and Parish Councils, however most of the Accessible Green Open Space in recent residential developments are managed by management companies, which may or may not include representation from local residents.
- 14.49 Over recent years, local residents have highlighted concerns with sites managed by management companies, including poor management, lack of responsiveness from those managing an open space and high costs to residents (particularly where there are also high levels of usage by non-residents).
- 14.50 Sometimes the management of Accessible Green Open Spaces by companies has caused problems with the new development not providing the type and quality of infrastructure needed or envisaged for the new and/or existing surrounding communities. This has led, on some occasions, to complaints about the arrangements not being responsive to local need, a lack of clarity regarding site management and a lack of local accountability.

- 14.51

Therefore, for the reasons set out above, it is crucial that the long-term management, governance and funding of new open spaces is agreed and is in place at a very early stage of the development process. Developers will be required to provide a Statement of Community Engagement as part of the supporting application. This must outline the Accessible Green Open Space and Green Infrastructure improvements proposed as well as the implications for the long-term management of the site in question. In doing so, a Commuted Sum for Management and Maintenance is payable where the land is to be transferred to a Parish or Town Council. This payment should provide for 30 years of management and maintenance of the Accessible Green Open Space. A 30-year period is used as it is already an established period for maintenance payments in connection with securing biodiversity net gain and is within the benchmarked range of costs used by other local authorities in England. The rates agreed will be index linked from the date of the permission to the date the land is transferred. The Commuted Sum for Management and maintenance will be based on prices in Spon’s External Works and Landscape Price Book¹⁸² or later iterations.
- 14.52

The adoptable condition of the Accessible Green Open Space should be defined by the design and management plan and agreed at the earliest opportunity during the application process.
- 14.53

Alternatively, with the agreement of the Local Planning Authority, developers, who wish to retain ownership of the Accessible Green Open Space may appoint a maintenance company or land trust to manage and maintain the public open space on their behalf. Community involvement including details of any requirement for new residents to contribute to the cost of management will be required.
- 14.54

The arrangements for the long-term management of the Accessible Green Open Space will be secured by legal agreement between the developer and managing body of the Accessible Green Open Space prior to planning permission being granted.
- 14.55

Core Policy 71 should be read in conjunction with the national and local guidance, which provide overarching guidelines for good design practice¹⁸³.

182 AECOM (2026) Spon’s External Works and Landscape Price Book, 4th edn. CRC Press
183 For example: Accessible Greenspace Standard User Guide (Natural England, 2024):
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/downloads/Accessible%20Greenspace%20Standard%20User%20Guide.pdf>

Core Policy 71: Management of Accessible Green Open Spaces in Residential Developments

Where developments include Accessible Green Open Spaces, proposals must make the provision for the design and long-term management of the Accessible Green Open Spaces to be included in the new development.

Large developments are expected to provide their own Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG). Where the sites are unable to provide ANRG capacity, the option remains for large developments to provide an off-site ANRG or purchase ANRG capacity from third party providers if available and within the catchment of the development. Where a large allocation requiring a bespoke ANRG has been subdivided into smaller sites for development, developers will be encouraged to work with one another to secure a bespoke ANRG solution. Where this is not possible the option remains for these sites to provide an off-site ANRG or purchase ANRG capacity from third party providers.

Any Accessible Green Open Space to be transferred by agreement, to a Town or Parish Council, charitable or community trust will need to be in an adoptable condition. Upon adoption or transfer (whichever is the soonest), a maintenance contribution will be paid by the developer to the Town or Parish Council or appropriate charitable or community trust to cover the first 30 years of maintaining the Accessible Green Open Space.

In the event the developer retains the ownership of the Accessible Green Open Space within their development site, they will be solely responsible for ongoing management and maintenance of it (ensuring that it remains accessible to the public). In doing so, the developer will need to demonstrate, at the planning application stage, that they have made adequate provision for the financial resourcing of long-term maintenance and have adhered to the criteria for successful Accessible Green Open Spaces in the Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Cotswold Design Code.

The Council will work positively with applicants to bring forward third party ANRG and with other local authorities to implement mitigation measures.

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Social and Community Infrastructure

14.56 Many of the services and facilities within Cotswold District are concentrated within our Principal Settlements. The importance of smaller scale services and facilities in local neighbourhoods and villages, to many residents for social, wellbeing, economic and environmental reasons, is therefore recognised.

14.57 To sustain and support existing strong, vibrant and healthy communities, a wide range of facilities and services is needed. These are provided across the District by various bodies, including the public, private and voluntary sectors. The provision and location of these facilities and services plays an important role in encouraging and maintaining a sense of community and well-being. Facilities and services can be buildings or open spaces and include:

- doctors' surgeries and dental practices, day-care centres, hospitals and other healthcare/social service facilities
- education and training facilities (including adult and further education), pre-school centres and other children's services community halls/hubs, including places of worship and youth provision
- cultural facilities, such as arts centres, libraries and museums
- local shops, meeting places, and public houses
- sports facilities and open space of public or nature conservation value, and
- parks, gardens, allotments and amenity open space together with natural or semi-natural green spaces such as disused canals or railway lines.

14.58 The purpose of **Core Policy 72: Social and Community Infrastructure** is to make sure that as communities grow, supporting infrastructure can expand, adapt or change whilst maintaining provision at an appropriate level, creating more inclusive and sustainable communities.

14.59 It is important that new development, where it will add to the combined needs of the community, contributes to new or expanded facilities. For provision to be effective and to ease pressure on existing facilities, new infrastructure must be delivered by the time the new development is available for occupation. Where new development is in an area of under-supply, there may be opportunities to improve facility provision and provide wider benefits. Developers should take opportunities to integrate new provision with existing facilities. This might be achieved by extending a facility or by providing it in a location that is accessible to residents in neighbouring areas with identified needs.

14.60 The right location for a community facility will depend on its scale and function. Facilities that serve the day-to-day needs of a community should be located in local centres close to the communities they serve and should be fully accessible and inclusive. The location of higher-level facilities, such as leisure centres, should be accessible to all members of the community and directed to an allocated site (where the Local Plan makes such provision) or other appropriate site in an area of identified under-supply.

14.61 Social and community infrastructure can help to promote social interaction as well as encouraging people to lead more healthy and active lives. New facilities should be located so as to minimise the need to travel by car and reduce carbon emissions, by being safely accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This is especially important to the elderly or less mobile, those with young children and those without access to cars in more rural areas. Mixed-use developments can help ensure that houses and businesses are close to services. Facilities that are flexible and provide a range of uses can also help to generate higher levels of activity as well as making more efficient and effective use of land.

14.62 Social and community infrastructure is vitally important in ensuring the quality of life and well-being of communities. Such facilities are often at the heart of local communities, so it is important that existing facilities and services that meet people's needs are protected where possible. For this reason, the redevelopment of a community facility will only be acceptable in certain circumstances; for example, where the facility will be replaced, or where it can satisfactorily be demonstrated that there is no current or future need or demand, or where a marginal loss will result in improvement or provision of a complementary use. Regarding the loss of sporting/community facilities, including open spaces, it should be demonstrated that they are surplus to requirements.

14.63 Evidence should be provided to show that there is no local need or demand for an existing community facility, by demonstrating that it has not been viable in that use for a period of at least 12 months. Active local initiatives to bring a facility back into viable use may also be regarded as an indicator of local need or demand provided the initiatives are realistically implementable and have wider community support, including the parish or district council or other recognised community representative body. It should also be shown that there has been a material change in circumstances affecting on-going viability, for example the permanent withdrawal of funding.

Core Policy 72: Social and Community Infrastructure

Major residential developments will be required to contribute (either financially or through works undertaken) towards the development and enhancement of social and community infrastructure including community halls, libraries and pools.

Proposals for social and community facilities, including open spaces, either in their own right or as a consequential requirement of development in the area, will be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

- a. the proposal serves an identified need, informed by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), or other relevant information
- b. where associated with another development, provision is synchronised with the scale, timing/phasing and needs of the associated development
- c. account has been taken of existing facilities and services in the area, including the quantity and quality of provision
- d. the proposal is economically viable in terms of its ongoing maintenance, and other than in the case of a school or college there is demonstrable local need for it
- e. the facility or service is well-linked and accessible to the local community by foot, bicycle or public transport both at present and having regard to development proposals of the Local Plan
- f. the feasibility of multi-purpose use of the facility or service has been rigorously explored and, where possible, implemented in the proposal, and
- g. provision is made for the on-going management/maintenance of the facility or service.

Planning permission for demolition, redevelopment, or change or use, which results in the loss of a local community facility or service, including an open space, will only be permitted provided:

- h. it is demonstrated that there is no identified local and/or community need for the facility or service and no demand for an appropriate, alternative local community use for the facility, or
- i. replacement facilities or services are provided of an equivalent or better provision simultaneously with completion of the application development in an appropriate alternative location having regard to the requirements of criteria (a) above. A condition may be used to ensure an appropriate timescale for the removal or closure of any pre-existing facility prior to the provision or occupation of the new facility.

Telecommunications Infrastructure

- 14.64 National policy recognises the role advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure plays in enhancing economic growth and social well-being. **Core Policy 73: Telecommunications Infrastructure** helps to ensure high quality digital connectivity is provided as part of new development.
- 14.65 Cotswold District is a primarily rural area, and therefore the telecommunications infrastructure often has poor capacity and coverage. Some parts of the District, may experience slow broadband speed and poor telecommunication signals. Improvements to the telecommunications infrastructure can address this problem and thereby help to combat social exclusion of residents, improve access for all to services (including emergency services and local community facilities such as an online library or education services), and reduces the need to travel.
- 14.66 The benefit of digital inclusion is not just for those living in rural areas but includes wider economic and social connections; for disabled people, older people, or those on low incomes, and people with mental health challenges for example. Digital inclusion helps all people in maintaining a social network, pursuing hobbies or developing skills and confidence for employment. The ‘digital divide’ is the gap in society between those who have full access to digital technologies and those who do not. Further information can be found on the Gloucestershire ‘Digital Divides’ website¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸⁴ Appendix D: The Digital Divide in Gloucestershire (Gloucestershire County Council) <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/grow-gloucestershire/digital-gloucestershire/digital-infrastructure-inclusion-and-innovation-strategy/appendix-d-the-digital-divide-in-gloucestershire/>

- 14.67 An improved communications network also contributes to the local economy by providing people with a choice as to how and where they can operate their business, facilitating home working; and potentially attracting new employment opportunities.
- 14.68 The District’s exceptional environmental and heritage assets make it imperative that any telecommunications infrastructure improvements are undertaken sensitively. Equipment should be sympathetically placed, designed and camouflaged where appropriate, and both the individual and cumulative impact considered, to avoid any unacceptable visual harm. This, however, needs to be balanced against continuing technical developments in telecommunications. The physical structure of installations is likely to change over time, while technical considerations may dictate optimum locations to achieve good communication signals and connections. The physical structure of installations may also change over time. Hence it is important that redundant equipment is capable of being physically removed, by the developer and/or landowner, which would enable the site to be restored to its former condition and use.
- 14.69 The optimum solution for high quality digital infrastructure is usually considered to be full fibre connection. The provision of ‘future-proofed’ digital communications technology infrastructure including for residential development, will provide a greater opportunity for home working, a reduction in the need to travel and for car use. This is helpful in rural locations



and is beneficial to the environment, economic growth and social wellbeing. It will be a matter for the developer to demonstrate where the provision of future-proofed digital connectivity is not feasible.

14.70 Telecommunication developments are also required to have regard to the latest guidance from the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection¹⁸⁵. These guidelines are intended to provide protection against all established health effects.

¹⁸⁵ Publications (International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection): <https://www.icnirp.org/en/publications/index.html>

Core Policy 73: Telecommunications Infrastructure

Proposals for new development should include the provision of telecommunications infrastructure with sufficient flexibility to support the fastest available data transfer speed at the time of development. Applicants will be expected to consult with telecommunication providers to ascertain the optimum infrastructure requirements that will enable development to, where possible, ‘future-proof’ digital connectivity. Planning conditions may be imposed to ensure that such provision is met.

Telecommunications infrastructure development that is likely to have an adverse impact upon the environment (including heritage assets, biodiversity, local amenity, the landscape and its setting) will not be permitted unless:

- a. there is no suitable and available alternative location which would be less detrimental, and
- b. there is no possible technological alternative, having regard to reasonable operational considerations, which would lead to a less adverse impact, unless there are wholly expectational reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

The visual impacts of telecommunications proposals should be minimised, and development should take particular account of the requirements in **Core Policy 53: The Historic Environment**, **Core Policy 54: Listed Buildings** and **Core Policy 55: Conservation Areas**.

Where an installation becomes redundant for telecommunication purposes, the infrastructure and all associated apparatus and structures shall be removed by the developer or operator, and the site reinstated in accordance with proposals approved at the application stage.



Chapter fifteen

Monitoring and Implementation

Introduction

15.1 This chapter provides an overview of how the Council will monitor and implement the strategy set out within this Local Plan including its Strategic Vision and Policies.

15.2 This chapter includes the following policies:

- **Core Policy 74: Monitoring and Implementation**

Monitoring and Implementation

15.3 Monitoring allows us to understand whether the Plan policies are working as intended and if they are effective. Monitoring the Plan is critical in ensuring the successful delivery of the Plan and to shape the development of any future Development Plans for the District.

15.4 The Council will monitor housing delivery and maintain an up-to-date assessment of its five-year housing land supply throughout the plan period. The Authority Monitoring Report will be used to assess housing completions, Housing Delivery Test performance and progress against the Plan's housing requirement. Where monitoring indicates that housing delivery is significantly below expected levels, or that a five-year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, the Council will take appropriate action in accordance with national policy and the Monitoring Framework.

15.5 The Council will work jointly with stakeholders to deliver Local Plan objectives. This will include partnership working with public agencies and the private sector and is necessary to ensure development progresses in a manner consistent with the strategy identified in this Plan.

15.6 The Council has included a Monitoring Framework at **Appendix 20**, which identifies how the Council will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of the Cotswold Local Plan for each policy. The Council recognises that appropriate action will need to be taken if implementation of the Plan is clearly off track and triggers for action are set out within the Monitoring Framework.

15.7 The Council is also aware that the Plan needs to be resilient to changing circumstances and to be flexible and responsive if the Plan is not delivering in accordance with the Monitoring Framework. **Core Policy 74: Monitoring and Implementation**, sets out the Council's intended approach.

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Core Policy 74: Monitoring and Implementation

The Council will monitor progress towards the achievement of indicators and targets set out within the Monitoring Framework, as set out in **Appendix 20**.

The Authority Monitoring Report will be produced on an annual basis and will be used to establish whether the implementation of the Plan, either in part or as a whole, is being effectively actioned. Where there is evidence to suggest that policy specific targets listed in the Monitoring Framework have not been met, contingency measures and actions listed in the Monitoring Framework will apply.

Contingency measures may include one or more of the following:

- a) seeking to accelerate delivery on permitted or allocated sites
- b) seeking alternative sources of funding if a lack of infrastructure is delaying development or causing significant problems as a result of new development
- c) identifying alternative deliverable sites that are in general accordance with the Spatial Strategy of the Plan, and
- d) undertaking a full or partial review of the Local Plan, if investigation indicates that its strategy, either in whole or in part, is no longer appropriate.



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