

Cotswold District Local Plan

SA Report to accompany the Local Plan Submission Draft
(as updated by Focussed Changes)

Non-Technical Summary

12 January 2017

Quality information

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Revision History

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Non-Technical Summary

NTS 1: What is sustainability appraisal?

Cotswold District Council (CDC) is currently preparing a new Local Plan to replace the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011. The new Local Plan, which will cover the period to 2031, will be the key planning policy document for the district and will guide decisions on the use and development of land. It is currently anticipated that the Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State and then undergo an independent Examination in Public later in 2016.

A sustainability appraisal (SA) has been undertaken to inform the development of the Cotswold District Local Plan.

SA is a process that Local Planning Authorities such as CDC are legally bound to undertake for their Local Plans. The SA has incorporated a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process as required by the SEA Regulations and to satisfy the requirements of the European Union's SEA Directive. Local Planning Authorities use SA to assess Local Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the appraisal is to help avoid negative environmental and socio-economic effects and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of Cotswold District and the prosperity and quality of life of the district's residents through the Local Plan.

This SA Report accompanies the six-week period of consultation concentrating on Focussed Changes to the Local Plan Submission Draft, which is being undertaken from Monday 16th January to 27th February 2017. It updates the SA Report which accompanied consultation on the Local Plan undertaken between June and August 2016.

NTS2: Details of the Cotswold District Local Plan

Cotswold District Council (CDC) is currently preparing a new Local Plan to replace the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011. The new Local Plan, which will cover the period to 2031, will be the key planning policy document for the district and will guide decisions on the use and development of land. It is currently anticipated that the Local Plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination later in 2016.

CDC is currently consulting on a series of Focussed Changes for the Local Plan, which, with the Local Plan Submission Draft, is the version of the Local Plan CDC view is ready for examination. Key information relating to the Cotswold District Local Plan is presented in Table NTS2.1.

Table NTS2.1: Key facts relating to the Cotswold District Local Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Cotswold District Council
Title of Plan	Cotswold District Local Plan
Subject	Spatial plan
Purpose	The Cotswold District Local Plan will set out the strategy for the future growth within Cotswold District in the period to 2031. It will replace the saved policies of previous Cotswold District Local Plan, which was adopted in April 2006.
Timescale	To 2031
Area covered by the plan	Cotswold district (see map below)
Summary of content	The Cotswold District Local Plan will present the spatial vision for the district, strategic planning policies, development management policies, site specific allocations and proposals maps.
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NTS3: Purpose of the SA Report

The SA Report, which accompanies the current consultation on the Focussed Changes for the Local Plan, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SA process.

The purpose of this SA Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Local Plan as updated by the Focussed Changes and any reasonable alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SA process.

The SA Report contains the following elements:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Local Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- A description of the current state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions against which the Local Plan document has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the Local Plan;
- The likely significant effects of the Local Plan, as updated by the Focussed Changes;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Local Plan; and
- The next steps for the Local Plan and the accompanying SA process.

NTS4: Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for the Local Plan

A key requirement of the SEA Regulations is to appraise 'reasonable alternatives' for the Local Plan. To address this requirement, a number of alternative approaches have been considered in relation to the location and distribution of new housing development to be taken forward through the Local Plan.

More specifically, reasonable alternatives have been considered in regard to the following elements

1. Consideration of options for the preferred development strategy for the Local Plan, including which settlements in the district are appropriate for Local Plan allocations
2. Consideration of strategic options for potential development areas in each settlement
3. Detailed consideration through the SA of site options for strategic scale development in the district
4. Detailed consideration through the SA of site options for non-strategic scale development in the district
5. Detailed consideration through the SA of site options for gypsy and traveller accommodation.

The reasonable alternatives, and the narrative of plan making in relation to the appraisal of reasonable alternatives undertaken through the SA process, are presented below.

Detailed findings of the appraisal of reasonable alternatives are presented in Part 1 of the SA Report.

Housing numbers for the Cotswold District Local Plan

In December 2016, an updated estimate of objectively assessed need (OAN) for Cotswold District was undertaken.¹

The OAN has established a need for 8,100 dwellings over the 20 year plan period. This comprises an average of 405 dwellings per annum.

The Local Plan seeks to deliver this number within the boundaries of Cotswold District. As agreed with Cotswold District Council's Duty to Co-operate partners in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, there are currently no requests for Cotswold District to meet the unmet OAN of neighbouring authorities.

Given these factors, and that a range of figures has not been provided for OAN for the district, it has not been deemed appropriate to consider alternative housing numbers as 'reasonable alternatives' through the SA process.

Development of the preferred development strategy for the Local Plan, including choice of settlements

Earlier work on the (then) Cotswold Core Strategy had established a series of nine provisional 'Spatial Strategy Options' for the development strategy for the district. These were as follows:

- SS1: Focus development in and around Cirencester
- SS2: Locate development in Cirencester, Market Towns, Small Towns and Larger Local Service Centres
- SS3: Spread development to any settlement

¹ NMSS (December 2016) The Objectively Assessed Housing Needs of Cotswold District

- SS4: Spread development across Cirencester, Market Towns, Small Towns and those Local Service Centres with a reasonable level of facilities
- SS5: Use public transport routes and transport corridors as the main guiding factor when locating development
- SS6: New settlements or expanded settlements, e.g. large brownfield sites
- SS7: Areas outside of AONB to be prioritised
- SS8: Focus on settlements that welcome further development
- SS9: Development across Cirencester, Market Towns, Small Towns and those Local Service Centres with a reasonable level of facilities including Employment.

These Spatial Strategy Options were considered by CDC in relation to which towns and villages in the district were most suited to development in terms of their existing facilities and services. The options were also appraised through the SA process.

Following this evaluation, the following Spatial Strategy Options were taken forward for consultation in the Second Issues and Options Paper, December 2010:

- SS2: Locate development in Cirencester, Market Towns, Small Towns and Larger Local Service Centres
- SS3: Spread development to any settlement
- SS9: Development across Cirencester, Market Towns, Small Towns and those Local Service Centres with a reasonable level of facilities including Employment.

The full rationale for taking forward these Spatial Strategy Options over the remaining Spatial Strategy Options was presented in the *Second Issues and Options- Supporting Information* document (December 2010).

Once the broad spatial strategy for the district had been framed following consultation on the Second Issues and Options Paper, 31 settlements in the district were suggested for potential inclusion in the proposed development strategy. These settlements were then considered through the *Role and Function of Settlements Study* (July 2012).

In order to explore how different settlements ranked in terms of their overall social and economic sustainability, scores were applied to the conclusions from the *Role and Function of Settlements Study* in respect of the following categories:

- Employment
- Retailing
- Community facilities
- Sustainable travel

In addition, evidence related to flood risk, landscape, conservation areas, archaeological sites, public rights of way, wildlife sites and other environmental considerations was considered.

Likely capacities of the candidate settlements were also assessed, taking account of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). On this basis, it was decided that the development strategy would not take forward settlements where the SHLAA had demonstrated limited capacities (i.e. less than 40 housing units).

Following this process, 17 out of the 31 settlements were taken forward for the preferred development strategy for the district. The full justification for including these 17 settlements in the preferred development strategy is presented in the *Development Strategy Evidence Paper*.

Subsequent to the publication of the latest review of the SHLAA, Down Ampney was added to the settlements to take forward for the development strategy, giving a total of 18 settlements. The decision to include Down Ampney was taken by the Council in December 2013.

On the basis of the above process, the 18 settlements taken forward for the development strategy for the Local Plan were as follows:

Andoversford	Blockley
Bourton-on-the-Water	Chipping Campden
Cirencester	Down Ampney
Fairford	Kemble
Lechlade	Mickleton
Moreton-in-Marsh	Northleach
Siddington	South Cerney
Stow-on-the-Wold	Tetbury
Upper Rissington	Willersey

Subsequent work on site allocations revealed that there were no realistic opportunities to deliver significant development at Siddington village over the remainder of the Plan period. Moreover, only a few dwellings have been built or committed since 2011. This led to the conclusion that Siddington should be deleted from the Development Strategy, thus reducing the number of named settlements from 18 to 17.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for potential development areas in the vicinity of the chosen settlements

To support the process of considering where in each of the (initial) 18 settlements site allocations might be appropriate, the SA team considered the existing environmental constraints within a series of broad areas surrounding each settlement. The analysis evaluated the key environmental constraints present in each of the broad areas identified. These included biodiversity, flood risk, the historic environment, landscape quality, water and agricultural land quality.

Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for strategic scale development

At the time of producing the Core Strategy, the planning policy document PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning) allowed for the identification of areas of strategic significance.² The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West also presented a presumption that a concentration of growth on the periphery of 'Strategically Significant Cities and Towns' was the most sustainable solution to growth.

When considering locations for a 'strategic' (or larger) scale of development, it was considered that Cirencester was the only location in the district with the capacity for such development. In this context, the principle of choosing Cirencester as the sole location in the district where strategic scale development is appropriate was based on the following considerations:

- Cirencester is the district's largest town by a significant margin and is home to almost a quarter of the district's population.

² Paragraph 4.6 – "Core Strategies may allocate strategic sites for development. These should be those sites considered central to the achievement of the strategy. Progress on the Core Strategy should not be held up by the inclusion of non-strategic sites."

- The town has an extensive range of services, facilities and employment opportunities, and dominates much of the southern half of the district. Its service centre role extends beyond the district and county boundaries into neighbouring areas.
- Meeting housing requirements in the district would lead to an over-development of the main service centres if a significant proportion of the housing allocation were not directed to Cirencester. Sharing this amount of housing more equally between Cirencester and the other market towns would result in disproportionate growth in these smaller towns.
- Larger scale development is needed in the town to support the community and infrastructure projects included in the Cirencester Community Plan. These projects are of sufficient significance and scale to benefit large parts of the district.
- Strategic scale development would support the regeneration of Cirencester town centre. Larger scale development would enable a proportion of developer contributions to be used as match funding, and additional housing would further enable services, facilities and cultural opportunities to survive due to increased use of town centre services.

In response to this, the SA process considered a range of site packages for delivering strategic-scale allocations in the vicinity of Cirencester. Four principal locations were proposed:

- Land at Chesterton
- Hare Bushes
- Land east of Kingshill Lane
- Land at Worm's Farm

In addition to appraising each of these locations individually, the SA process appraised eleven potential 'combinations' of these locations.

Following this appraisal it was concluded by CDC that taking forward the Land at Chesterton option would be the most appropriate for the purposes of a strategic-scale allocation in the Local Plan.

Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for sites of a non-strategic scale

In early 2014, facilitated engagement was undertaken with communities from the 18 settlements identified for the preferred development strategy. Working groups from each of those settlements examined potential non-strategic sites (including reasonable alternatives where they existed) and submitted views on these, taking account of local issues, infrastructure requirements and other factors. A number of additional sites were also put forward by communities where there were realistic chances of development.

Following this process, 125 potential sites of a non-strategic scale were considered in terms of their suitability for taking forward through the Local Plan. To support this process, the SA process undertook an appraisal of each of these sites with the aim of informing the proposed allocations of sites of a non-strategic scale.

Following the consideration of the 125 sites (informed by the SA process), it was decided to take forward 67 proposed housing and employment sites through consultation on the *Development Strategy and Site Allocations* Local Plan document in January 2015. These included:

- 'Preferred Sites' for the Local Plan; and
- 'Reserve Sites' designed to deliver district-wide allocations if current housing or employment requirements increased.

Subsequent to the completion of consultation on the *Development Strategy and Site Allocations* document and the subsequent *Planning Policies* document undertaken later in 2015, these sites were further refined to:

- 23 Preferred Sites for housing allocations;
- 7 Preferred Sites for employment allocations; and
- 2 Preferred Sites for mixed use (in addition to the strategic scale site at Cirencester)

These sites are as follows:

Table NTS4.1: Housing sites taken forward for the purposes of the Local Plan

Site	Location
A_2 Land to rear of Templefields and Crossfields (25 dwellings)	Andoversford
BK_8 Land at Sheafhouse Farm (13 dwellings)	Blockley
BK_14A The Limes, Station Road (16 dwellings)	Blockley
C_17 42-54 Querns Lane (6 dwellings)	Cirencester
C_39 Austin Road Flats (9 dwellings)	Cirencester
C_101A Magistrates Court (5 dwellings)	Cirencester
C_97 Memorial Hospital (11 dwellings)	Cirencester
CC 23B Land at Aston Road (34 dwellings)	Chipping Campden
CC_23C Land at Aston Road (80 dwellings)	Chipping Campden
CC_40A Barrells Pitch and Land north of Cherry Trees, Aston Road (6 dwellings)	Chipping Campden
DA_2 Dukes Field (10 dwellings)	Down Ampney
DA_5A Buildings at Rooktree Farm (8 dwellings)	Down Ampney
DA_8 Land at Broadleaze (10 dwellings)	Down Ampney
K_2 Land at Station Road (12 dwellings)	Kemble
L_18B Land west of Orchard Close, Downington (9 dwellings);	Lechlade-on-Thames
L_19 Land south of Butler's Court (9 dwellings).	Lechlade-on-Thames
M_60 Former Hospital site (21 dwellings)	Moreton-in-Marsh
N_13B Land north west of Hammond Drive and Midwinter Road (5 dwellings)	Northleach
N_14B Land adjoining East End and Nostle Road (17 dwellings)	Northleach
S_8A Stow Agricultural Services, Lower Swell Road (10 dwellings)	Stow-on-the-Wold
T_24B Former Matbro Site (9 dwellings)	Tetbury
T_51 Northfield Garage (18 dwellings)	Tetbury
W_1A and W_1B Garage Workshop and Garden behind the Nook, Main Street (5 dwellings)	Willesley

Table NTS4.2: Employment sites taken forward for the purposes of the Local Plan

Site	Location
BOW_E1 Land north of Bourton Industrial Estate / Business Park (3.38 ha)	Bourton-on-the-Water
CCN_E1 Battle Brook / Extension to Campden Business Park (0.67 ha)	Chipping Campden
CIR_13B Sheep Street Island (0.96 ha)	Cirencester
CIR_E10 Forum Car park (0.54 ha)	Cirencester
CIR_E16A Brewery Car Park	Cirencester
LEC_E1 Land north of Butler's Court (1.25 ha)	Lechlade-on-Thames
MOR_E6 Fire Service College B (7.13 ha)	Moreton-in-Marsh

Table NTS4.3: Mixed use sites taken forward for the purposes of the Local Plan

Site	Location
CIR_E14 Waterloo car park (0.67 ha) - mixed car parking and office provision;	Cirencester
W_7A/WIL_E1C - Land north of B4632 and east of employment estate (49 dwellings, 1.97 ha for B1, B2 and/or B8 use class employment land)	Willersey

Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for gypsy, traveller and travelling show people sites

As part of the development of the Local Plan, in 2014/15 Cotswold District Council identified ten potential sites for allocating gypsy, traveler and travelling show people pitches. These sites were as follows:

- Shorncote, South Cerney
- Hill View, Icomb
- Land adjacent to Cirencester Road, Seven Springs, Coberley (x2 sites)
- Old Dairy, Dudgrove Lane, Kempsford
- Meadowland Caravan Site, Fosseyway, Bourton-on-the-Water
- Land at Aston Road, Chipping Campden
- Land East of Cirencester Road, South Cerney
- Land adjacent to Down Ampney Football Club, Down Ampney
- Land to the rear of Green's Close, Great Rissington, Cheltenham

The potential sites for allocating gypsy, traveller and travelling show people pitches were considered in terms of their suitability for taking forward through the Local Plan. To support this process, the SA process undertook an appraisal of each of these sites, with the aim of informing the proposed allocation of pitches.

Following the consideration of the ten potential sites (including as informed by the SA process), the pitches at the following sites were allocated in the latest version of the Local Plan:

- Shorncote, South Cerney – 2 pitches
- Seven Springs, Coberley – 1 pitch

- Meadowland Caravan Site, Fosseyway, Bourton-on-the-Water – 4 pitches
- Land to the rear of Green's Close, Great Rissington – 2 pitches

In addition, the latest version of the Local Plan allocates the following reserve site if any shortfall is identified in the supply of gypsy and traveller accommodation:

- Seven Springs, Coberley (second site) – 2 pitches.

NTS5: Development of planning policies for the Local Plan

Local Plan planning policies

The *Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation: Planning Policies* document was released for consultation in November 2015. The *Planning Policies* document set out a series of proposed criteria by which planning applications and site allocations would be considered and determined in the district. These were developed to reflect the various evidence studies prepared to support the development of the Local Plan to date and also to reflect the findings of the appraisal of the preferred development strategy and reasonable alternatives through the SA process.

Appraisal of draft planning policies

The *Planning Policies* consultation was accompanied by an Interim SA Report. This was designed to inform the consultation through presenting an appraisal of the proposed planning policies presented in the *Planning Policies* document.

In addition to presenting an appraisal of the draft planning policies for the Local Plan, the Interim SA Report presented a series of recommendations for consideration during the preparation of the Local Plan Submission Draft consultation. These recommendations were then considered through the updates to the plan following consultation on the *Planning Policies* document.

NTS6: Appraisal of the current version of the Local Plan

The current SA Report presents an appraisal of the latest version of the Local Plan. As such the latest version of the policies presented through the Local Plan by the Local Plan Submission Draft (as updated by the Focussed Changes) has been appraised alongside the proposed development strategy for the Local Plan in **Part 2** of the SA Report.

The table below presents a summary of the key potential significant effects identified through the appraisal of the proposed planning policies. These have been presented under eight sustainability themes.

Detailed findings of the appraisal of the current version of the Local Plan are presented in **Part 2** of the SA Report.

Table NTS6.1 Potential significant effects resulting from the Local Plan

Likely significant effect

Environmental Quality

Enhancements to air quality in the district

Enhancements to noise quality in the district

Enhancements to water quality in the district

Biodiversity

Improved ecological connectivity

Improved ecological resilience

'Wider' ecological benefits

Increased habitat and greenspace through green infrastructure enhancements

Climate Change

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through reducing need to travel and modal shift

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from development of renewable energy installations

Carbon sequestration and provision of woodfuel through extension of wood planting

Historic Environment and Landscape

Enhanced landscape and townscape character

Protection and enhancement of heritage assets, including repair and reuse where appropriate

Protection and enhancement of Cirencester town centre, a key historic environment resource

Increased accessibility of heritage assets through promotion of sustainable transport improvements

Land, Soil and Water Resources

Enhancements to water quality in the district

Sustainable water management

Population and Communities

Housing provision takes full account of housing need.

Increased delivery of affordable housing.

Provide for gypsy and traveller sites to meet projected need.

Improved access to services and facilities.

Increased use of sustainable transport modes, including public transport and walking and cycling.

Increased provision of community infrastructure.

Provision of improved accessibility to multi-functional open spaces.

Reduced dependency on the private car

Health and Wellbeing

Improvements in mental and physical health through enhancement of the quality of the built environment and public realm

Likely significant effect

Improvements to mental and physical health through prioritising transport modes other than cars and improving accessibility to services and facilities.

Enhancements to strategic and local green infrastructure networks, helping to address existing deficiencies in the district.

Economy and Enterprise

Enhancement of landscape character and other key attributes of the district will support tourism growth

Increase in tourism through a well-planned approach, including provision of supporting infrastructure

Maintain and enhance the vitality of communities by securing the delivery of community infrastructure

Maintain and enhance the vitality of communities by securing supporting infrastructure as part of new development

Employment in rural areas.

No additional mitigation measures or recommendations have been proposed relating to the potential significant effects identified. This reflects the carefully designed spatial strategy and robust policy approaches which are put forward through the Local Plan. In particular the Local Plan will help limit the magnitude and scale of the potential negative environmental effects associated with the delivery of in the region of 8,400 houses and 27ha of employment land in the period to 2031.

It should be noted however that the policies put forward through the current version of the plan do not prevent the likelihood of negative effects taking place, including those highlighted in the SA Report for the proposed site allocations. Instead they enable the significant negative effects of new development in Cotswold District to be avoided. It should also be noted that the delivery of housing and employment allocations in Cotswold District will require inevitable trade-offs to take place between the various environmental, social and economic elements which have been highlighted through the SA process to date.

NTS7: Next Steps

This SA Report accompanies the current consultation on Focussed Changes for the Local Plan.

Consultation will conclude in February 2017. The Local Plan document and accompanying information (including consultation responses and the SA Report) will subsequently be submitted by Cotswold District Council to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination later in 2017.

