



27 February 2024

e-mail – democratic@cotswold.gov.uk

CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES DECISION MEETING

A Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Decision Meeting will be held at the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX on **Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 2.00 pm.**

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Declarations of Interest**
To note any declarations of interest by the Cabinet Member, Officers and any other Members present.

2. **Neighbourhood Planning: Representation to the Cirencester Regulation 14 Draft Consultation (Pages 3 - 132)**

Purpose

To agree the Cotswold District Council representation on the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services:

1. Considers the draft representation presented at Annex B, and subject to any amendments, agrees this for submission to Cirencester Town Council.

3. **Neighbourhood Planning: Decision to make the Down Ampney Neighbourhood Development Plan (Pages 133 - 138)**

Purpose

To consider the result of the referendum held on the 29 February 2024, in line with statutory duty.

Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

1. Considers the referendum result.
2. Subject to the referendum returning a simple majority in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, agrees to make the plan.

(END)

Agenda Item 2



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES – 6 MARCH 2024
Subject	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: REPRESENTATION TO THE CIRENCESTER REGULATION 14 DRAFT CONSULTATION
Wards affected	All Cirencester Wards:, Abbey, Beeches, Chesterton, Four Acres New Mills, Stratton, St Michaels, Watermoor.
Accountable member	Cllr Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report Author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To agree the Cotswold District Council representation on the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan.
Annexes	Annex A Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan: Annex B: Draft Cotswold District Council Representation
Recommendation(s)	That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services: I. Considers the draft representation presented at Annex B, and subject to any amendments, agrees this for submission to Cirencester Town Council

Corporate priorities	<p>Supporting Communities Delivering Housing Responding to the Climate Emergency Supporting the Economy</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by or on behalf of parish councils, and express their priorities, albeit that they need to be in general conformity with the policies of the Local Plan. In this instance, the ambitions of the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan complement the Council's Corporate Priorities, as the Plan contains planning policies seeking to address climate change, promote residents' health and wellbeing and support local businesses. While the Plan does not seek to allocate sites, it has been prepared to complement the Council's emerging Cirencester Masterplan.</p>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>This report seeks agreement for a consultation response from this Council. It has been prepared with input from a number of officers with an interest in Neighbourhood Planning. Cirencester Town Council, as the body responsible for this plan, are legally bound to consult with defined statutory bodies and others whose interests are affected.</p>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to explain the purpose of submitting a representation to the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Cirencester Town Council (CTC) designated the area of the parish as a neighbourhood area, for the purposes of developing a neighbourhood plan, in 2018. CTC launched a consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') on 1 February 2024, closing on 17 March 2024 – this consultation runs in parallel with the Council's Regulation 18 Consultation on the Local Plan, and the consultation on the Framework Masterplan (FMP).

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. Cirencester designated the full extent of its parish boundary as a neighbourhood area in late 2018. This boundary encompasses the built-up area of Cirencester and Stratton, with the exception of the area in the southeast, which falls within Siddington Parish. Since then, residents and professional planning consultancy support have been developing the evidence base and draft policies for this Plan.
- 2.2. Although Officers and elected members have attended steering group meetings, and been able to support this work, this Pre-submission Consultation presents an opportunity for Council to comment formally on the Plan. The Plan has been circulated to officers from across the different Development Management disciplines.
- 2.3. The points raised in the draft representation attached at Annex 2 reflect officers' views on how the Plan fits with Policy and Regulation, and their views on whether its Policies will be usable. Officers have also commented where evidence might be lacking or subject to challenge, and where text is unclear, or where there are grammatical or typographical errors.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. None direct. Later stages in the development of the Plan require direct financial commitment from the Council, but under current arrangements, this is reimbursed by a grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Localism Act 2011 establishes that the Council has a duty to support Neighbourhood Planning activity. This is generally interpreted as a requirement to engage constructively with Neighbourhood Planning groups throughout the Plan process, rather than limited to statutory processes.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** Should the Council not respond at this stage, it misses a critical opportunity to influence the content of the emerging Plan. The risk here is twofold: should the Plan proceed with minimal changes through Regulation 16 and examination, there would be a greater risk of planning policies which are difficult to implement or interpret, creating challenges for Development Management. There would also be a greater risk that the Plan would either fail examination, or be subject to significant modifications, disappointing the Plan's supporters and at risk to the Council's reputation in carrying out its duty to support.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1** Not directly applicable to this decision. However, the Plan will need to meet the 'Basic Conditions' laid out in the Localism Act 2011 to proceed to referendum. This should ensure it recognises equalities practice in the English planning system.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** Not directly applicable to this decision. However, it is worth noting that the Plan includes a number of policies intended to address climate change, recognising the need for development to mitigate its impact and adapt to the changing climate. This includes policies directed at zero carbon construction, energy usage, and encouraging public and active transport.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

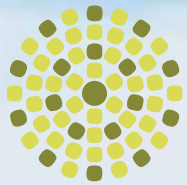
- 8.1** Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1** The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- None

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation Draft



Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan





Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan

Please send your comments on this draft Neighbourhood Plan by
Sunday 17th March 2024.

We have arranged a number of ways you can view the draft plan
and share your comments with us.

1

Visit <https://cirencesternbdplan.commonplace.is/>
or scan the QR code where you can read all about
the proposed planning policies in our draft plan and
complete a questionnaire online.



2

We will be holding an exhibition event 22nd, 23rd and 24th
February, with presentations by our Consultants, Feria Urbanism,
at the Winstone Learning Centre, Corinium Museum, Park Street,
Cirencester GL7 2BX

3

See a printed copy and pick up a paper version of the
questionnaire, at Cirencester Town Council, Local Information
Centre at Bingham House, the Cirencester Library or at one of
our exhibition events in February.

Acknowledgments

Cirencester Town Council wishes to thank the people of Cirencester whose responses and comments contributed to the Neighbourhood Development Plan policies and the dedicated group of community volunteers on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group who went above and beyond to ensure the needs of the community are reflected in the Plan.

The Town Council would also like to acknowledge the input of Richard Eastham at Feria Urbanism and the Forward Planning Team at Cotswold District Council, who have provided invaluable advice and support throughout the process.

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VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Cirencester, in the period to 2033, is to pass on to future generations a historic and vibrant, welcoming, and friendly rural market town with a strong sense of community. It will be rich in heritage, character, leisure, and cultural opportunities.

Cirencester will thrive by capitalising on its heritage and the character of its urban streets while facilitating sympathetic, high quality and sustainable economic and residential growth. This will deliver for all residents and users of the town while respecting the environment, responding to the climate emergency, and supporting employment and skills opportunities.

The town will be well connected to a series of green parks and open spaces, nature, and the surrounding countryside, which will retain key attributes with improvements where appropriate. Recreational opportunities will be accessible to all. Opportunities for safe walking and cycling connections across all areas of the town will be improved as will active travel and public transport connections to its surrounding towns, villages, and countryside.

All areas of the town will have easy and accessible access to key services, including transport, with a more diverse cultural scene and sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of a growing population.





cirencester
· town council ·

- 01** The Cirencester Context
- 02** The Cirencester of Tomorrow
- 03** Preparing the Plan
- 04** Aims & Objectives
- 05** Cirencester Town Centre
- 06** Access & Movement
- 07** Design & Built Environment
- 08** Quality Public Realm
- 09** The 20 Minute Neighbourhood
- 10** The Natural Environment
- 11** The Local Economy
- 12** Wellbeing & Community

Appendices

- *Health Impact Assessment*
- *Neighbourhood Plan Projects*
- *Neighbourhood Community Assets*
- *Local Green and Open Spaces*
- *Non-Designated Heritage Assets*



01 THE CIRENCESTER CONTEXT

This section explores the origins of the town, the activities and events from history that influenced and shaped the town we know today.

The narrative sets the scene and describes the context for the development of the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan.

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan -
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft



01

THE CIRENCESTER CONTEXT

THE CAPITAL OF THE COTSWOLDS

- 1.1 Often referred to as the Capital of the Cotswolds, the compact market town of Cirencester lies in Gloucestershire, just 5 kilometres from the Wiltshire border. To the south and east are the 180 lakes of the Cotswold Water Park whilst immediately north and west is the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.2 It is the largest town in the Cotswold district, comprising around a quarter of its population and providing almost a third of the jobs. It is an important centre of business, finance, retail, and public services both for the district and surrounding area. In 2023 the Sunday Times identified it as the best place to live in the South West of England.
- 1.3 Cirencester occupies an area of approximately 416 hectares. Beyond the historic centre, the town includes the Victorian settlements of Watermoor and parts of Stratton with the 20th century residential suburbs of Chesterton and the Beeches.
- 1.4 Cirencester is connected by major and minor road links to the nearby cities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, and Oxford, supported by the M5 and M4 corridors. Cirencester is 130 kilometres west of London, 20 kilometres north of Swindon and 18 kilometres east of Stroud.

THE LANDSCAPE

- 1.5 Cirencester lies on the lower slopes of the Cotswold hills sitting in the valley bottom of the River Churn, surrounded to the north and west by the Cotswold Hills. To the south lies the relatively flat expanse of the Upper Thames Valley. Natural drainage is into the River Churn, a tributary of the Thames, which flows roughly north to south through the eastern side of the town connecting with the Abbey Lake and joins the Thames near Cricklade 13 kilometres to the south. Its natural course was altered by the Romans and parts later covered.
- 1.6 A small tributary of the Churn, the Daglingworth Brook, drains the area around the north-west of the town. The low levels and river course have contributed to repeated flooding within the town, aggravated by post-industrial expansion of the urban environment with Flood Zone 3 (a 1 in 100 occurrence including functional flood plains) covering extensive areas at Stratton Meadows, Kingsmeadow and along the inner ring road.
- 1.7 Wrapping around the northern and western edges of Cirencester is the southern edge of the Cotswolds AONB. To the north-east of the town lies the Special Landscape Area (SLA) of Hare Bushes and Tar Barrow, designated on the grounds of its locally significant and attractive landscape.



- 1.8 Within and away from the historic town centre a variety of green spaces such as City Bank Nature Reserve, Cirencester Park (Grade I listed) and the Amphitheatre form green corridors and recreational spaces that reach deep into the town centre. Cirencester Park to the west is a private estate that dominates the landscape and provides extensive public daytime access. To the east is the Abbey Grounds, tucked behind the Market Place and the Parish Church of St John Baptist.

DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME – AD49 TO 2023

- 1.9 Cirencester is known to be an important early Roman settlement with a fort built in the area approximately AD49. It was probably located to be close to a major Iron Age settlement of which traces remain at Bagendon and the nearby Tar Barrow. It was also the point where the Fosse Way (connecting Lincoln and Exeter) crossed both the River Churn and Ermin Street (connecting Gloucester and Silchester). A Romano-British community grew up around the original fort, under the name of which, Corinium Dobunorum, was shortened to Corinium. It became second only to London in area.
- 1.10 The modern name Cirencester came from the cognate root Ciren (after the River Churn) with ‘-ester’ indicating a roman fortress or encampment. By the end of the First Century AD the town had a Roman street grid with public buildings, basilica and forum surrounded by a wall, probably originally earth, later stone in the 3rd Century, with four gates that enclosed its 100 hectares. This infrastructure effectively contained the town to the west of the River Churn and ensured a compact, higher density town grew within the confines of the wall. An Amphitheatre sat outside, the remains of which along with parts of the town wall can still be seen today.
- 1.11 Substantial Roman cemeteries have been discovered outside the town’s gates, particularly at Watermoor and Bathgate. The Roman population was thought to be about 10,000, only half that of the modern town. The Roman influence on the town remains in key parts of the road network, landscape, and underlying archaeology. Much of the town is an area identified as a sensitive scheduled monument with previous excavations revealing floor mosaics and various artefacts many now held in the Corinium Museum.

1.12 The town continued to function in the first part of the 5th Century, but archaeological evidence suggests that by the 6th Century much of it had been abandoned with no more than a few wooden huts.

1.13 The Saxon Period is less clear although archaeology suggests the Roman wall survived sufficiently to be a defensive barrier. The town was captured by the Saxons in 577 AD and later it is known that Guthrum based his Danish Viking army here for a year in 879 AD after the battle of Edington when it became a frontier settlement for the Kingdom of Mercia.

1.14 By 1086 there were references in the Domesday book to the “new market” in the settlement of Cyrescestre followed by the founding of St Mary’s Abbey by Henry I and the establishment of St John’s Hospital by Henry II in 1133. The Abbey, which was built on the site of a major Anglo-Saxon church, was dedicated in 1176. Its great wealth stemmed from its vast land holdings in the town and charters. Today the Norman arch in the Abbey Grounds is a remaining feature.

1.15 By the 12th Century the construction of the present Parish Church of St John Baptist had begun and whilst there were many struggles between the townsfolk and the Abbey to establish a borough or guild distinct from the controls of the Abbey, the town enjoyed considerable prosperity from the fourteenth century onwards as the principal outlet for Cotswold wool and as a central market town. Many traders gained wealth and prosperity, some of the proceeds of which replaced many of the timber framed buildings with stone; today the former Weavers Hall in Thomas Street remains a distinct example.

1.16 The medieval street pattern of narrow, winding streets surrounding the Market Place, dates from this period. Among them the medieval pattern of land holdings evolved, based on burgage plots, long and narrow to reduce tax. These also remain. Notable roads included the ‘Welsh Way’ used by drovers taking cattle from Wales towards Oxford and London, with the ‘White Way’ serving Roman villas in the North Cotswolds, it was also part of the ‘Salt Way’. Much of the area north and south of the Town was given over to water meadows, carefully controlled grassland which took the river’s floodwaters in the winter and provided rich grazing to fatten sheep during the spring and summer. The population around this time was 2,500.

1.17 In 1539 Henry VIII ordered the demolition of the Abbey as part of the dissolution of the monasteries and the Abbey’s property redistributed. In 1564 the Abbey Grounds on the east side of the town was sold to Dr Richard Master, the Queen’s personal physician, and in 1695 the Oakley Estate to the west side was purchased by Sir Benjamin Bathurst, for his eldest son Allen, who became the 1st Earl Bathurst. The two families were to have a profound influence on the landscape of the town with the development of the private estates based around Cirencester Mansion and Abbey House.

1.18 The 17th Century was a time of conflict with Civil War. Cirencester was on the Parliamentary side and in 1642 the coach of Lord Chandos arriving in the town to enlist men for the King’s service was destroyed, the first overt act of Civil War violence. In 1643 the town was stormed by Royalist troops led by Prince Rupert. According to some accounts several hundred local people were killed in fighting or summarily executed.

1.19 The economy of the 18th Century was dominated by corn rather than wool trade and industrialisation. Cirencester remained important as a market and providing services to the surrounding

area. Many of the honey-coloured stone buildings in the town date to this period. The opening of the local spur of the Thames and Severn Canal in 1789 meant water moved heavy haulage such as coal, timber, and salt. The establishment of seven turnpiked roads enabled rapid movement of mail and travellers, with London now reachable in a day. Today the canal has been built over and little evidence remains. The population in 1800 was about 4,000.

1.20 In 1841 the railway line opened taking passengers to Kemble for onward travel to the Great Western railway at Swindon. The station house at Cirencester was designed by Brunel and is the only part of the railway now remaining. The Midland and South Western junction opened in 1883 at Watermoor Station, linking Cirencester to the Midlands. Housing expansion followed with the town well served by its roads, two railways and canal network.

1.21 Major redevelopment of the Market Place took place around this time with buildings cleared to widen the space. The Corn Hall was opened in 1863 alongside the new Kings Head Hotel. A subscription library was also established.

1.22 In 1870 the public outdoor swimming pool opened off the river walk, one of the first in the country, a water works office was established on Lewis Lane to administer the new water supply to the town and education became compulsory. The grammar school which had opened in 1461 now moved to new buildings on Victoria Road and merged with the high school for girls, although the sexes were still separated. The Blue School (for boys) and Yellow School (for girls) also merged to form what is now known as Powell’s Primary School. The private Royal Agricultural College was established on the outskirts of the town in 1845.

1.23 The 20th Century saw leisure, culture, and arts expand through the philanthropy of Daniel Bingham who established a public library in 1905 at Bingham House, Dyer Street and in 1908 the Bingham Hall on King Street for lectures, concerts, and drama productions. The population was then about 8,000.

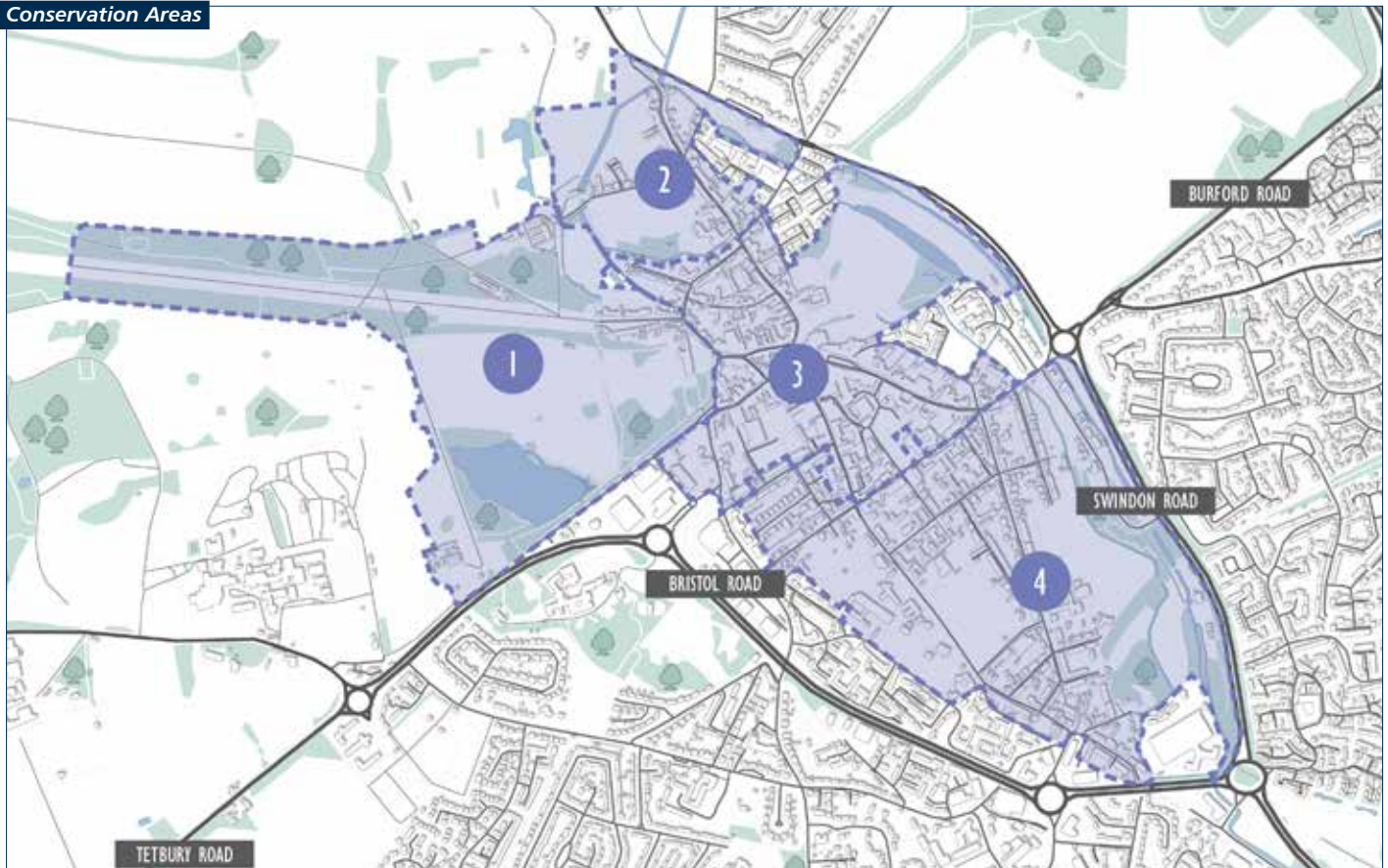




HERITAGE LANDSCAPE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 1.24 During the Second World War, the town's rifle range on the Stroud Road and some of the neighbouring parkland became two large American D-Day hospitals set up in advance of the invasion of Europe to treat potential casualties. The Nissen huts of the hospital were later used for education before the building of the later Deer Park School.
- 1.25 Post-war housing built on land owned by the Bathurst and Chester-Master families created the newer residential areas of Chesterton and Stratton and the old Golden Farm land became the Beeches. The railway was closed following the Beeching report of 1963 and in 1975 the library moved to The Waterloo from Bingham House and employment opportunities extended to the new Love Lane industrial estate.
- 1.26 The removal of the railway lines created space for a new ring road. While benefitting road transport it created a significant barrier between the town centre and its suburbs and allowed traffic at higher speed through the town creating potential for greater noise, air pollution and impact on the health of those living in the town. The dualling of the A417 in the 1990s enabled faster journeys to the M4 and M5 but cut the town off from countryside to the east. The historic Cattle Market closed in the 1990s to make way for the town's new leisure centre. The population was now 15,000.
- 1.27 The first quarter of the 21st Century saw a changing high street with the closure of traditional shops and a department store. The town also lost its cinema on Lewis Lane in 2003-04. St James's Place Wealth Management extended its presence and employment opportunities within the town with its new headquarters. There was also substantial residential growth at Kings Meadow and Chesterton and two further supermarkets. The town continued to retain its Charter Market status and saw further town centre improvements in 2017, with growth in markets and events, strong independent retail and improving footfall. The population in 2023 was circa 20,000 and is projected to grow rapidly during the next decade through The Steadings strategic housing and employment development.
- 1.28 Geologically oolitic limestone dominates the rock of the area and gives the town its distinct architecture and appearance from quarried stone. This local limestone has given a distinct identity to many of the earlier building types with a distinct change in architectural character recognisable between the northern and southern parts of the town, with few if any being listed on the later 19th and 20th Century roads of Stratton, Chesterton and Watermoor.
- 1.29 Many 20th Century developments, whilst often providing practical solutions to everyday needs, are seen by some to have diluted the design character of the town. In particular, the demolition and redevelopment of the southern end of the Market Place, the Forum and Dyer Street and parts of the Roman Querns Road. Similarly, the Abbey House within the Abbey Grounds, home of the Chester-Master family, was demolished in 1964 and replaced with a block of flats, considered by some to be lacking in sympathy to the context.
- 1.30 Developments such as these resulted in later developments meeting the needs of the user while also paying due regard to their context and setting. For example, Cotswold stone elevations are reproduced residentially where appropriate while centrally the newer style and flat roofs of St James's Place and Bath Gate Place sit sympathetically within the historic setting of the Brunel's Station House of 1841. Cirencester College opened its new Digital Skills and T-Level buildings, featuring green and blue roofs, in 2022 and 2023.
- 1.31 The iconic St John Baptist Parish Church with its tall tower in Perpendicular style, dominates and forms a major landmark viewed from many aspects including the approaching town vistas. Views from the historic roads and avenues are unlikely to change but changes to redundant central buildings and any raising of commercial rooflines could, unless protections are introduced, compromise this focal point of the Market Place.
- 1.32 Cirencester is within and immediately adjacent to a number of environmentally sensitive and valuable areas which are protected on various levels from development through planning policy and environmental designations.
- 1.33 Wrapping around the northern and western edges of Cirencester is the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which protects its special landscape qualities from harmful impacts from development.
- 1.34 Much of Cirencester is covered by four Conservation Areas which act to protect many centuries of historic development within the town centre, around Cirencester Park, Gloucester Street and Riverside Walk, and to the south of the town.
- 1.35 Furthermore, Cirencester comprises many Listed Buildings; the special architectural or historic features of which must be protected. Within the Cirencester Town Centre Conservation Area there are 179 listed buildings, two of which are Grade I listed, alongside nine Grade II* (two star) and 168 Grade II listings.
- 1.36 The historic designed landscape of Cirencester Park, an impressive swathe of Grade I historic parkland, lies to the west of the town. The park was laid out in collaboration with the poet Alexander Pope who also designed the building known as Pope's seat. To the east lies the Abbey Grounds incorporating parts of the Roman wall and the Norman arch.

Conservation Areas



1.37 The North Cirencester Special Landscape Area (SLA) lies to the northeast of the town and is designated on the grounds of its locally significant and attractive landscape, of comparable quality to areas of outstanding natural beauty. This area includes the visually and archaeologically sensitive Hare Bushes and Tar Barrow.

1.38 The influence of Cirencester's Roman period is, in the present day, felt mostly by the constraints it poses to development with many archaeological deposits lying close to the surface. Cirencester Amphitheatre, also known as the Bull Ring, is one of the largest known surviving examples from Roman times, built just outside the walls of the town in the early 2nd Century.

1.39 This area, alongside further large swathes of Cirencester are designated as Scheduled Monuments (SM) under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 which acts to ensure the resources are not needlessly destroyed or damaged.

DEMOGRAPHY AND HOUSING

1.40 The 20,200 population of Cirencester in the 2021 Census showed an increase of approximately 1,000 from 2011 with a slightly higher ratio of females than males, 95% identifying as white British. The town has an above average proportion people of 65+ years for England (23.4% vs 18%) although lower than the average for the Cotswolds. Conversely, the proportion aged under 15 at 14.7% is lower than the England average of 17%. The overall population is projected to rise considerably during the next decade on the completion of over 2,000 new houses at The Steadings strategic development.

1.41 There are 1,125 students of the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) who are temporary residents, mostly living away from home who also have high car ownership. Given the lack of university-provided accommodation on-site students rent local housing. This includes family homes converted for multi-occupancy housing.

1.42 63% of the housing stock in Cirencester is owner-occupied with the average house price being £388,000 (Rightmove, 2023). The demography of Cirencester highlights pressure on existing housing with limited entry level housing for young people or for older residents unable to downsize.

1.43 The affordability of entry-level housing is at odds with household income and the subsequent purchasing power which it allows with the average individual salary in Cirencester being £33,171 (2022). This contributes to an ageing demographic, skills shortages and increasing demands on primary care health services with frequently advertised jobs being in engineering and hospitality.

1.44 In common with the rest of Gloucestershire (GFirst LEP Local Industrial Strategy) there is a net loss of young people over 18 from the town.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1.45 An Urban District Council (UDC) replaced the Local Government Board in 1894 which managed the town's affairs. In 1974, local government reorganisation replaced the UDC with the two-tier governance of Cotswold District Council (CDC) and Cirencester Town Council (CTC). Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) layers this further with responsibility for transport, highways, health and social care, and some primary and secondary education.

LOCAL ECONOMY

- 1.46 Cirencester is best known as a market town but has a diverse local economy. With almost 500 businesses it provides a wide range of services to the local area as well as the wider economy. Almost 14,000 jobs are provided in the town with significant numbers of daily commuters from Stroud, Swindon, and North Wiltshire (Source: Cotswold District Council Economic Strategy). Unemployment is low and public sector employment is below national averages while productivity and levels of self-employment and homeworking are significantly above national averages. Employers in all sectors struggle to recruit with hospitality, digital and engineering especially problematic (Sources: Cotswold District Council/GFirst LEP/Gloucestershire Local Skills Improvement Plan). Key worker roles are also hard to fill.
- 1.47 Larger employers include St James's Place Wealth Management, Corin Medical, several specialist IT, business support and engineering firms, Cirencester College, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) and Cotswold District Council. However, these are the exceptions. Almost 90% of firms are micro businesses employing less than 10 people with the remainder mainly small companies with 10-29 employees. Gloucestershire has a high proportion of start-up businesses with a concentration around Cirencester. Key local assets are the Growth Hub which provides advice and support to businesses and Farm491, a leading innovation space focused on the future of farming and food systems; both are based at The Alliston Centre, which forms part of the RAU.
- 1.48 The town centre has a strong emphasis on hospitality and retail with independent shops being central to its attractiveness. This has been enhanced by the increase in the number of markets. While footfall in the town has held up better than most in the past decade there are several vacant stores, particularly larger units. While the number of cafes in the town has increased, Cirencester has lost over half its pubs since 1990.



- 1.49 There are several satellite retail areas on the east side of the town including co-working spaces for start-ups, such as Watermoor Point. This is also the main industrial area, which extends to Love Lane, with circa 150 businesses. Planning for these areas has not accommodated economic growth and has resulted in congested cul-de-sacs and poor connectivity to the town and other outlying industrial areas, such as in South Cerney.
- 1.50 The local economy was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, hospitality suffering from absent tourism and normal retail foot traffic. Being slow to adapt to a digital or online presence, research locally showed few embraced social media to market their business. However, during 2021-22 the local economy bounced back, and research showed Cirencester recovered more quickly than other local towns (Source: Cotswold District Council Economic Forum).

THE TOWN CENTRE

- 1.51 The town centre lies in the northern quarter of the town with a dedicated Market Place, two enclosed arcades at Bishops Walk and the Corn Hall, retail areas such as Black Jack Street, Castle Street and Cricklade Street and courtyard areas such as Swan Yard and the Woolmarket. It is characterised by a variety of shops from national retail chains to quaint independent stores that contribute to the town's attractiveness.
- 1.52 The part-pedestrianisation of the Market Place has enabled an increasing number of markets and other events to take place which have enhanced the town centre. The twice weekly Charter Market is the oldest in the country supplemented by the twice monthly Farmers' Market, arts and crafts markets and themed fairs. The Corn Hall hosts weekly Craft & Antique Markets and once a year there is a Food & Drink festival that weaves through the streets and extends to Abbey Grounds. Nearby car parks usually reach capacity at the weekend showing the town is a popular economic centre.
- 1.53 The 2018 Cirencester Town Centre Health Check reported the town centre to be one of the top 200 retail centres in the UK and the principal shopping and leisure destination in Cotswold District. The report highlighted year-on-year growth in units and floor space since 2012, a strong retail service offer, and adequate leisure service offering. Whilst vacancy rates were below the national average in 2018, there has been a local decline in national chains such as Poundland, Burton and House of Fraser which has led to some large units standing empty.

TOURISM

- 1.54 The town centre is an important tourist destination with strong links to both the Cotswolds and Water Park, with various places for overnight stays. Visitors to the Cotswolds, as a region, are considerable in number and many British tourists spend time in Cirencester, assisted by tourist information at the Corinium Museum and the Local Information Centre at Bingham House.
- 1.55 The international market is under-developed, for example, of the 50,000 Japanese tourists who visit the Cotswolds every year, few spend time in the town with most tours concentrating on the better-known tourist destinations of Bibury and Bourton-on-the-Water, along with the towns of Burford, Tetbury and Malmesbury. Reasons for this, without a tourism strategy and data for the town, are unclear but may be influenced by the lack of a coach park, a lack of tourism signage, lack of access from the town centre to the Amphitheatre and the perception of a town with less to offer.



ROADS AND TRANSPORT

- 1.56 Cirencester sits at the intersection of four A roads. The A419 dual carriageway allows rapid access south to Swindon and the M4. To the north the congested A417 will allow rapid access to the M5 and Gloucester once the ‘missing link’ at Birdlip is completed. East and west the roads are much slower towards Stroud, Malmesbury, Tetbury and Fairford with limited pavements and no dedicated cycling lanes. Road traffic is often heavy around the town at commuter and peak times, leading to congestion and air pollution at various pinch points.
- 1.57 The nearest mainline station is Kemble about 5 miles south, used to London by commuters and some leisure travel. Travel from the town to Kemble Station is overwhelmingly by car. The nearest airports are Bristol (60 miles), and Birmingham (73 miles), the local Cotswold Airport 4 miles outside the town is a private business with no current commercial flights.
- 1.58 Public transport is served by limited bus services from the Forum Car Park and regular National Express coach services to Heathrow and London from the Beeches Car Park. There are private taxi firms although the number has declined and there is no Uber service. Reduced bus services that do not connect with rail links from Kemble or a night-time service to larger towns such as Cheltenham has meant an almost total reliance on the car, migration of non-drivers to towns and cities that have a stronger public transport network and high demand on the car parking in the town.
- 1.59 Today, Cirencester has above average rates of multiple car ownership per household (28.4% vs 26.3%) although it also has almost double the national ‘walk to work’ rate at 14.4%. In July 2022, Cotswold District Council published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Cirencester, which for the first time outlines a programme of walking and cycling infrastructure improvements.
- 1.60 A lack of connected public transport to and from local education facilities means local roads can become congested at peak times.

COMMUNICATION

- 1.61 High speed broadband is available in most of the town with fibre networks expected by 2025, currently being delivered within The Steadings development. Mobile phone coverage remains patchy.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- 1.62 The town has strong education provision at every level. Deer Park School was established in 1966 as a comprehensive, bringing the town’s secondary education together in one place. The growth of the town led to a second comprehensive opening at Kingshill in 1976. In 1991, Cirencester College was established to provide sixth form and adult education. In 2013, the Royal Agricultural College was awarded university status and today the RAU, alongside Deer Park School and Cirencester College, are collectively known as the education quarter. There are five primary schools within the town with another being built within the new strategic housing development of The Steadings. Paternoster School, is a special school for pupils aged 4 to 16 supporting children with severe learning difficulties and mental health learning disabilities. The three former private schools of Oakley Hall, Ingleside and Querns have all closed.
- 1.63 There is considerable movement of pupils in and out of Cirencester at ages 11 and 16 reflecting student and parental choice in the region. In 2022, 2,395 students commuted daily into Cirencester from outside the town (Source: Cirencester College) benefitting from the extensive range of A-Levels, T-Level and Apprenticeship programmes. Alongside this, the RAU is developing specialist provision in agri-tech, rural business and environmental studies and intends to expand its student numbers.
- 1.64 Cirencester College is leading on T Level provision and digital skills; engaging with local employers on the curriculum to support the local job market and meet skills gap needs.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1.65 The town has a minor injuries hospital with day surgery and allied health service provision such as screening and physiotherapy, downgraded from an accident and emergency facility and has four GP surgeries.
- 1.66 Cirencester has ten allotment sites managed and owned by three different owners, most with waiting lists. There is also a community garden at Thistle Park, Chesteron and a Monastic Garden in the Abbey Grounds.
- 1.67 A public library sits behind the Market Place in the Waterloo and there is provision for most faiths with 51% identifying as Christian, as well as various community buildings.
- 1.68 There are several public houses although few outside the town centre.

SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

- 1.69 Sport is well supported within the town with teams representing football, netball, bowls, rugby, cricket, and athletics. Facilities exist at various points in the town, some requiring membership with indoor sport at the Leisure Centre and Cirencester Arena at the Corinium Stadium. Polo is played privately at the Cirencester Park Polo Club.
- 1.70 The town has two theatres, the Barn on Beeches Road, and the Sundial at Cirencester College. The Bingham Hall is used for ad hoc drama and local productions and Corinium Museum showcases the Roman and prehistoric heritage of the town. Occasional live music and comedy is hosted at the Kings Head Hotel.
- 1.71 Whilst the town's only remaining cinema closed in 2003, and plans to replace it have failed to materialise, the Barn, Corinium Museum and other venues do show cinema films. Craft workshops are held at New Brewery Arts on a regular basis where artisans create, display, and sell their work.

COMMUNITY TRADITIONS

- 1.72 Cirencester enjoys several traditions that add to the richness of local living and a sense of community. Within the life of a historic charter market town key events such as Remembrance Sunday and Christmas are supported by summer concerts in the Abbey Grounds, the Cotswold Show at Cirencester Park and the annual Mop Fair in the Market Place. The historic Town Crier and local newspaper represent the value residents place on legacy. In 2018, the town collectively formed a human poppy to commemorate 100 years since the end of World War I, breaking a previous record and so entering the Guinness book of records.
- 1.73 Cirencester's Christmas tree takes pride of place just outside St John Baptist Parish Church in the Market Place, standing at approximately 40 feet. The switching on of the town's Christmas lights is combined with silent fireworks and an Advent Market that weaves through the town centre.
- 1.74 The Mop Fair returns to Cirencester for two consecutive Mondays every October; with three Mop's taking place, if one of those Mondays falls on the 11th. The Fair dates from the time of Edward



III in 1351 in an attempt to regulate the labour market. The same family have brought the fair to the town for the last century, and it is a much-anticipated event popular with families and young people.

- 1.75 Established in 1988, the Cotswold Show held in Cirencester Park is a two-day summer event attracting over 25,000 visitors with a mix of family entertainment, activity arenas, and 200 trade stands and food stalls. Showcasing the best of rural life and the British countryside, the event brings substantial trade and economic benefits to the town.
- 1.76 The Phoenix Festival is a two-day community music and arts event, established in 2013 by a local youth initiative called Ozone as part of a social enterprise to help young people develop self-confidence and business skills. Originally intended as a one-off, today the festival is held annually in the Abbey Grounds over the August Bank Holiday weekend with free entry. It is run by a team of volunteers in partnership with the Cirencester Community Development Trust and Cirencester Town Council and attracts thousands of people.
- 1.77 Historically town criers – or Bellmen as they were sometimes called – were the original newsmen. The Town Crier of Cirencester was a well-known local figure and after a lengthy sabbatical a new appointment was made by the Town Council in 2019.
- 1.78 Established in Malmesbury in 1837, the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard newspaper moved to Cirencester in 1840 with its printing shed on the corner of Lewis Lane and Dyer Street, publishing regional stories of interest with family announcements and local events. The paper merged with its competitor, the Cirencester, and Swindon Gazette, in 1852 and in 1904 moved to purpose-built offices and printing rooms at 74 Dyer Street. Circulation extended to London and over the years was the main method for residents to learn their local news through both wars and into the 21st century. The digital evolution and establishment of an online version meant the offices closed in 2017 and printing is now done outside the town, but for nearly 200 years this local newspaper has been an important aspect of life in the town.

02 THE CIRENCESTER OF TOMORROW

With the scene set, this next section describes the town that the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan hopes to create.

The plan is intended to shape and influence urban planning, architecture and development proposals in ways that will make a better town for all.

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan -
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft



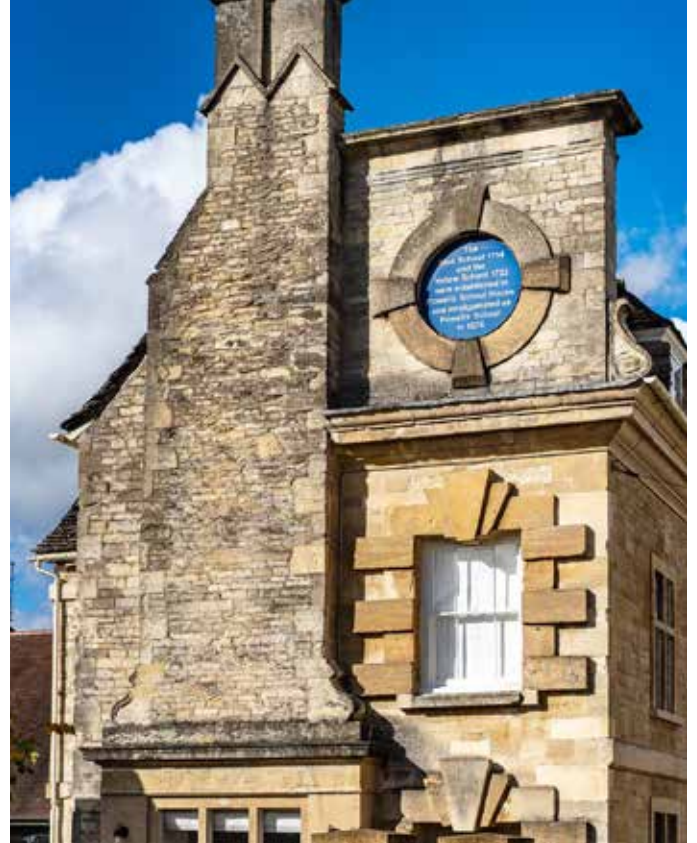
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THE CIRENCESTER OF TOMORROW

- 2.1 The growth and development of Cirencester has occurred in phases: each leaving a distinct pattern of urban form which is expressed in the layout of streets, the scale and architectural style of the buildings and the materials used. The town is currently undergoing another period of growth and to inform how this future growth will develop and capture the opportunities that this brings, the Neighbourhood Plan recognises that while the town must grow, this needs to be accommodated in scale, design and sustainability whilst adapting to emerging trends.
- 2.2 The Covid-19 pandemic caused significant changes to the local economy, businesses, retail, working and shopping patterns and the leisure and tourist industries. The legacy of the pandemic continues to evolve and the extent to which we return to pre-pandemic patterns of life remains to be seen.
- 2.3 During the pandemic, the value of green open spaces close to where we live for improving and maintaining the physical and mental wellbeing of the population was evident. The importance placed on open space for sport and recreation, and the opportunity to walk and cycle locally, in providing the opportunity to live active and healthy lifestyles became even more important and planning has an important role to play in providing, improving, growing and maintaining access to these open spaces and activities into the future; alongside ensuring the economy and business can respond positively, including accommodating changing needs and opportunities.
- 2.4 Growth must also deliver the infrastructure needed for education, health and community facilities whilst retaining the town's distinct and historic character. The Cirencester of the future must capitalise on its heritage, location, and identity to maintain itself as a vibrant market town and a great place to live, work and visit.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOODING

- 2.5 There is overwhelming scientific consensus that the climate is changing and in 2019, Cirencester Town Council declared a climate emergency. The impact of climate change and the associated increase in energy in the atmosphere will be significant, including hotter summers, higher rainfall, and more frequent and extreme weather events. The consequence of this includes increased flooding, more droughts and health risks from higher temperatures. This continues to be evidenced in the most recent reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the UK's Climate



Change Committee (CCC), an independent body formed to advise the UK Government on tackling and preparing for climate change.

- 2.6 The UK's national commitment to mitigate climate change is set through the Climate Change Act 2008 which legislates that the UK achieves net zero carbon by 2050. Cotswold District Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2020 and set out priorities including carbon neutrality, also called net zero, where emissions are significantly reduced with remaining emissions balanced by natural processes which remove carbon from the atmosphere.
- 2.7 It is important that Cirencester adapts to, and mitigates, the impacts of climate change, contributes to the national target of net zero, and recognises the opportunities for the town during the Plan period and beyond.
- 2.8 Parts of Cirencester are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including flooding. The town lies on the River Churn and Daglingworth Stream floodplains, with flood zones covering extensive areas at Stratton Meadow, Kingsmeadow, and alongside the inner ring road, effectively separating the main part of the town from Beeches, Kingshill, Bowling Green and Stratton. Consideration needs to be given to flood mitigation up-river of the town while, at the time this Plan was being prepared, the sewers are inadequate to cope with rainfall especially those serving Chesterton and the Abbey area, alongside issues relating to foul water getting into the River Churn. The problems of rapid run-off and the discharge of foul water into the Churn need to be addressed.

IMPROVING ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

- 2.9 Cirencester suffers from poor public transport provision and over-reliance on cars for transport. In a rural area, cars are important, but their dominance has negative consequences for health, safety, air quality and congestion.
- 2.10 Alternatives to car travel are too limited. There is a good coach service to Heathrow and London but no local links to Oxford

or Bristol. The narrow and congested streets of the town are also unattractive to regional operators because of the delay to services. Only a few buses connect to trains at Kemble while in the local region bus connections are infrequent, slow, and rarely operate in the evening or weekends. There is no central place to transfer from one route to another or from one mode to another such as cycling or taxi to bus. Consequently, buses are underused.

- 2.11 Proposals for a light rail link to Kemble Station and Cirencester College's arrangement with Stagecoach which brings over 22 double-deckers into the town several times a day offer opportunities to develop provision.
- 2.12 The A417 and A429 dual-carriageways allow traffic to travel through the town at the national speed limit of 70mph although they can also be congested and at times gridlocked during peak school-run, commuting times and major events. This creates noise and air pollution in the town but also cuts the town centre off from most residential areas and limits opportunities to walk and cycle.
- 2.13 This 'concrete collar' has the severing effect of cutting off the town centre from the surrounding areas and crossing it is challenging with only limited points of access to do so. This makes walking and cycling into town a dispiriting experience and many people who choose to live close to town will choose to drive instead. This exacerbates the parking and congestion problems experienced in the town centre.
- 2.14 Cirencester lacks safe walking and cycling routes, particularly between residential areas and education provision. Pedestrians and cyclists face crossing busy roads using unpleasant underpasses and narrow pavements. It is a particularly challenging environment for those with mobility issues or young children.
- 2.15 Residents living on the edge of town can feel detached if these barriers are not overcome by ensuring daily needs are met easily and safely on foot or by cycle.
- 2.16 In a rural area and a town not served by a railway, visitors and commuters will, in the main, arrive by car. The challenge is to emulate the new Bathurst Estate car park off the Stroud Road by providing long-stay parking at the periphery.



- 2.17 Although maps show two long-distance Sustrans cycle ways passing through the town, neither provide safe routes to the countryside, Kemble or neighbouring settlements. There are no safe cycling routes into the countryside which remains inaccessible to most cyclists including young people. This has an impact on wellbeing and recreation, long-term health, cycle commuting and long-distance cycle tourism. The route to Kemble Station is particularly problematic where there are no cycling paths along busy highways.
- 2.18 Potential safe routes to the countryside to the west and south (the Water Park) are limited by land-ownership issues while the town's only long-distance footpath (MacMillan) requires walkers to cross one dangerous road and walk along an extremely narrow pavement beside another one.
- 2.19 The National Planning Policy Framework requires consideration of transport at the early stages of proposed development with far greater emphasis to improving health, reducing air pollution and congestion, and promoting sustainable travel. As referenced at 1.59, in July 2022, Cotswold District Council published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Cirencester which for the first time outlines a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment. There is an opportunity to develop other transport options alongside car use and to promote active travel.

ENSURING A THRIVING TOWN CENTRE

- 2.20 While Cirencester has fared better than most, the town has suffered from increasing numbers of vacant shops and the related competition from online stores. To ensure a vibrant and attractive town centre both for residents and visitors opportunities need to be taken to preserve and encourage a diverse range of retail and hospitality outlets including retaining the remaining pubs. Amongst residents there is a desire for a well-managed evening economy including cinema and live music.
- 2.21 It is important that Cirencester's historic character, architecture and charm is sensitively retained whilst the town grows over the Plan period and beyond, and the Neighbourhood Plan will ensure that this is possible whilst adapting Cirencester to meet its future needs.
- 2.22 While tourism contributes to the town, the potential of Cirencester's history and environment is not fully realised. More could be done to promote the town and to make it easier for visitors to reach key features such as the Amphitheatre. There is no obvious place for coaches to drop off and collect visitors or to park coaches outside the centre.
- 2.23 However, if not properly managed, tourism could have an adverse impact on the town'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.

ENSURING SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE HOUSING WITH SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 2.24 Cirencester is currently providing a quarter of the Cotswold District allocation of new homes via The Steadings development. Within the boundaries of the town, most remaining space is either important green infrastructure or flood plain.

- 2.25 The main challenge facing Cirencester 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.
- 2.26 We need to address the shortage of affordable homes to rent or buy, especially for key workers who are vital to the community, and starter homes for local young people. Providing affordable housing will stem the outflow of young people from the town.
- 2.27 The attractiveness of the area has also led to growing numbers of second homes and holiday lets. 1 in 18 of houses in the Cotswold district fall into these categories. We need to ensure that second and holiday-let homes are planned and managed appropriately so as not to leave the local community being 'hollowed out' leaving few facilities and no room for local people.
- 2.28 There is some potential for re-use of pockets of brownfield sites around the town for low-rise housing and for the use of upper floors of retail premises in the town centre as flats. Planners will need to look to the flexible use of redundant commercial buildings particularly as retention of the skilled young is essential for the town's future.
- 2.29 Future development needs to be connected with the town centre and whilst improvements are planned for delivery through The Steadings development, overall, the town lacks 'spokes' of safe walking and cycling routes between residential areas and the centre and public transport within the town is poor. Without change this will lead to residents driving into the town which makes problems of congestion and parking worse.
- 2.30 The growth of the town in recent years has not always been matched by growth in the community infrastructure people need. Of particular concern is primary care provision and ensuring that the public have access to a local GP and doctor, in-line with population growth. There has been no new health provision on any of the new housing developments built since the 1960s. Indoor leisure facilities are also stretched. The town's Leisure Centre is at capacity and there are few publicly accessible indoor sports facilities.
- 2.33 Within the town centre there are concerns about the loss of retail outlets and pubs. A vibrant centre is widely seen as key to the town's future and a strategy is required to strengthen it for the future. There are opportunities for the visitor economy to evolve into an all-year destination and to exploit Cirencester's heritage and links to the Water Park area more fully, but these will require infrastructure improvements.
- 2.34 Despite the roll out of superfast broadband across much of the town, some infrastructure issues remain which limit the growth potential of local businesses. These include local electricity supplies and mobile phone coverage along with public transport links.
- 2.35 Businesses are struggling to recruit staff at all levels, but this is particularly acute in digital, technical, and hospitality roles. The high cost of housing and poor public transport links magnifies the problem, and this is also reflected in key-worker roles in health and education.
- 2.36 There is also the need to ensure local people can access training to acquire the skills needed in the local economy and to attract and retain young talent. The T Level developments and apprenticeship provision at Cirencester College provide an opportunity to improve this but skills development also relies upon employers providing placements or taking on apprentices.

PRESSURES ON NATURAL CAPITAL

- 2.37 The pressure of growth on the natural capital and environment of the town will impact on climate change mitigation, biodiversity decline and habitat fragmentation. It also threatens the green spaces that are valued by the community. Net carbon capture targets require retention and extension of trees and hedgerows combined with an active strategy for a reduction in vehicle emissions.
- 2.38 Biodiversity targets will require strategies that limit the removal of vegetation, meadows, verges, and private gardens, as well as protecting wildlife corridors. Extending the built environment also increases the pressure on land to absorb sudden and heavy rainfall resulting in the raised risk of floods, whilst reducing green buffers and recreational green spaces. Rising summer temperatures raise the need for extending, not decreasing urban shade and landscaping with better river management to maintain the water flow and quality of the River Churn and Daglingworth Stream.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS RETENTION

- 2.31 Cirencester is located on the edge of Gloucestershire and close to the Wiltshire border; with the dominance of Gloucester and Cheltenham this means that it is rarely the focus of county level economics, despite its position in the Cotswold district. Digital, green, and agri-tech sectors have been prioritised for the local area along with encouraging innovation and business start-ups. Financial and business services also expect significant growth. It is important that Cirencester can make a case for its own economic interests to ensure that it secures high-value growth which will improve local tax revenues and provide good jobs for local people.
- 2.32 There is a shortage of industrial space for existing business to grow into with demand likely to increase once the A417 'missing link' is completed. There is some provision for employment land as part of The Steadings development and the proposed Innovation Village at the RAU.





2.39 Proactive targets for carbon, biodiversity, flood mitigation, extending urban shade, river management and the protection of wildlife habitats will require the natural environment of the town to be protected, extended, and maintained despite housing pressures with robust design and landscaping statements. These must prioritise non-sensitive land banks within Cirencester, reducing the spaces given to vehicles for parking and movement over green spaces and greater natural landscape that benefit all that co-exist within the delicate ecosystems of nature. We need to minimise further loss of biodiversity and reverse the fragmentation of wild areas to benefit our natural capital.

PROTECTING THOSE FACTORS THAT AFFECT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

2.40 Health and wellbeing, particularly mental health, was never more challenged than during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the first lockdown residents commented how much they valued the reduction in noise from reduced traffic and the quieter streets, access to nature and green spaces, social cohesion and the sense of community coupled with a growing appreciation of their local environment.

2.41 Growth by default will increase light and noise pollution if uncontrolled, extending the built environment of the town potentially on to green belt and particularly dilute further the night sky. Retaining and extending those factors that contribute to harmony, wellbeing, and a sense of social and collective responsibility for each other will only remain if the pressure to expand the town are countered by policies to protect the qualities of the town the residents value.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

2.42 The creation and maintenance of a healthy public realm for Cirencester, the spaces between and around the buildings, is essential to the achievement of a thriving, vibrant, sustainable, and attractive town that everyone can enjoy and take pride in. As well as being able to move around easily, it is important that people feel the town is a safe and welcoming place. Public spaces and streets need to be versatile and provide for people from different cultural backgrounds, age groups, genders, the disabled and elderly, all of whom will use our town spaces in different ways.

2.43 Cirencester's character is as much defined by these spaces and the considerable heritage and architectural richness as its natural landscape, giving a sense of place and distinctiveness.

2.44 The town has been fortunate in the preservation of the streets which open onto the historic Market Place. Over the last few years a great deal has been achieved to improve the quality of the public realm, most notably the alteration of traffic flow, additional street furniture and greater pedestrianisation which has made possible the growth in the street markets and community events.

2.45 Outside this area, pedestrian experiences are hampered by poor maintenance of the surfaces, narrow historic roads sometimes, as with Park Street, lacking suitable modern pavements, confusing road use such as Cricklade Street and limited street furniture provision. Signage to and from the town centre could be improved, especially for tourists and visitors.

2.46 Connecting the public realm to surrounding open spaces can be achieved through creating and improving green corridors. The Town Council supports a local community group of volunteers, the Phoenix Gardeners, who plant the town's tubs and beds, and this should be extended to include the planting of trees and other greenery.



03 PREPARING THE PLAN

How did we get this far? This section briefly explores the engagement with the public that generated the ideas and suggestions that led to the draft plan that has now been published for consultation and testing.

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan -
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft

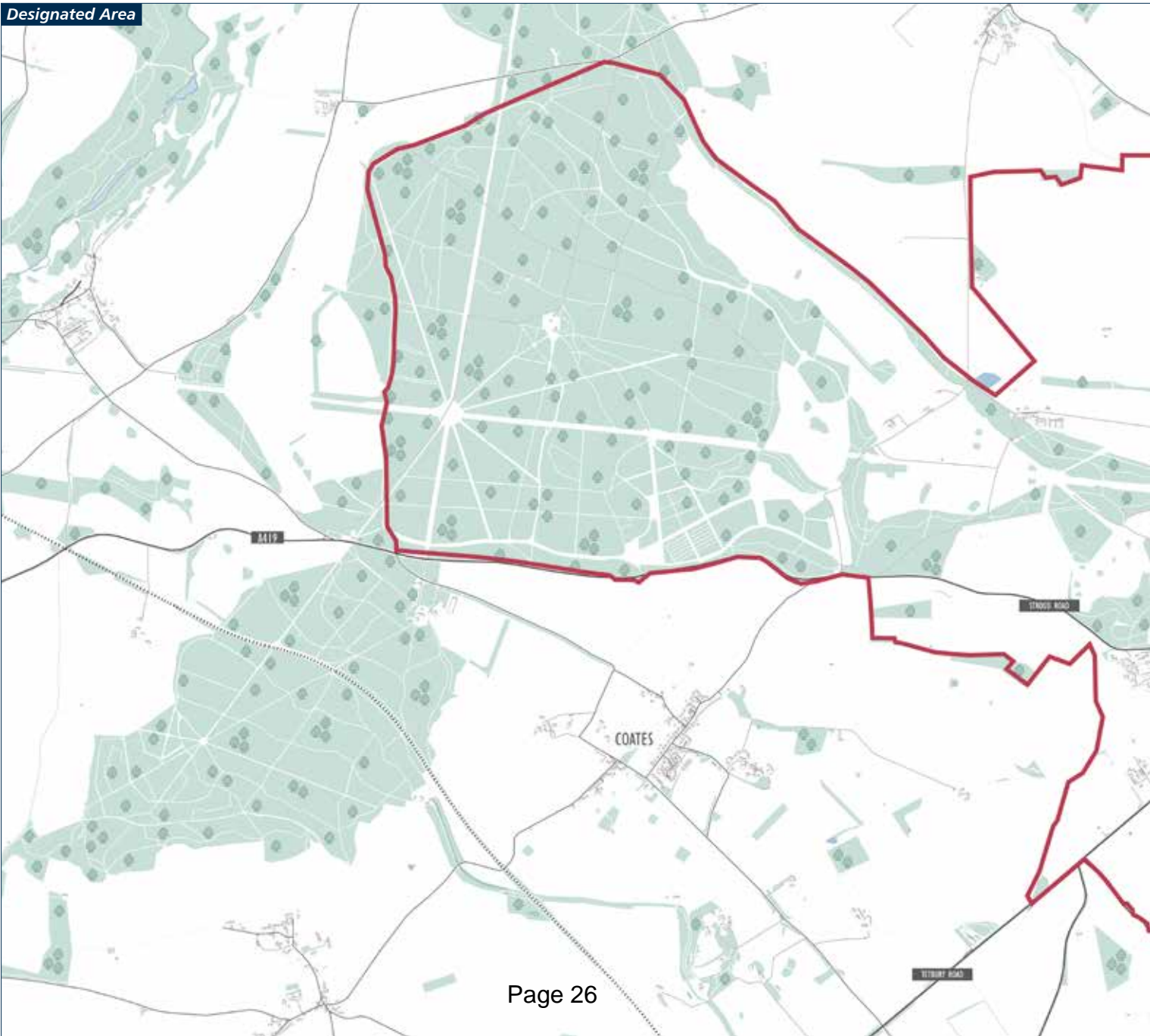
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PREPARING THE PLAN

- 3.1 On Tuesday 11th September 2018, Cirencester Town Council agreed arrangements for proceeding with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan including an application to Cotswold District Council (CDC) to designate the whole of the Cirencester parish as a neighbourhood area.
- 3.2 The purpose of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan was to add detail relevant to Cirencester, to Local Plan policies and propose new planning policy on issues that the Local Plan was silent on.

- 3.3 Cirencester is a relatively large settlement to be a designated neighbourhood area, and with a population of circa 20,000 people, undertaking full engagement with all demographics and organisations presented a significant challenge.
- 3.4 A further requirement is the necessity to maintain the unique quality of the town's heritage and architecture while developing a plan that seeks to mitigate the impact of climate change and improve health and wellbeing.
- 3.5 In the autumn of 2018, the Town Council established a Steering Group consisting of community volunteers, Town Councillors and ex-officio appointments including officers and an elected representative from Cotswold District Council. The complexities outlined above mean, at the time of writing, it has taken four and a half years to prepare the draft Regulation 14 Plan.
- 3.6 After spending time on researching how to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and its necessary contents, developing a strategy for consultation, and creating a database of the contact details of the town's businesses and voluntary organisations, the Steering Group engaged widely with the community, local groups, and businesses in March 2020. These results have been recorded as part of the evidence base. A website was set up along with a social media presence.

Designated Area



3.7 Five thematic groups were established to research issues facing Cirencester, these were:

- Access, Infrastructure and Transport
- Community, Culture and Leisure
- Development, Design and Built Environment
- Economy, Business, and Retail
- Environment and Climate Change

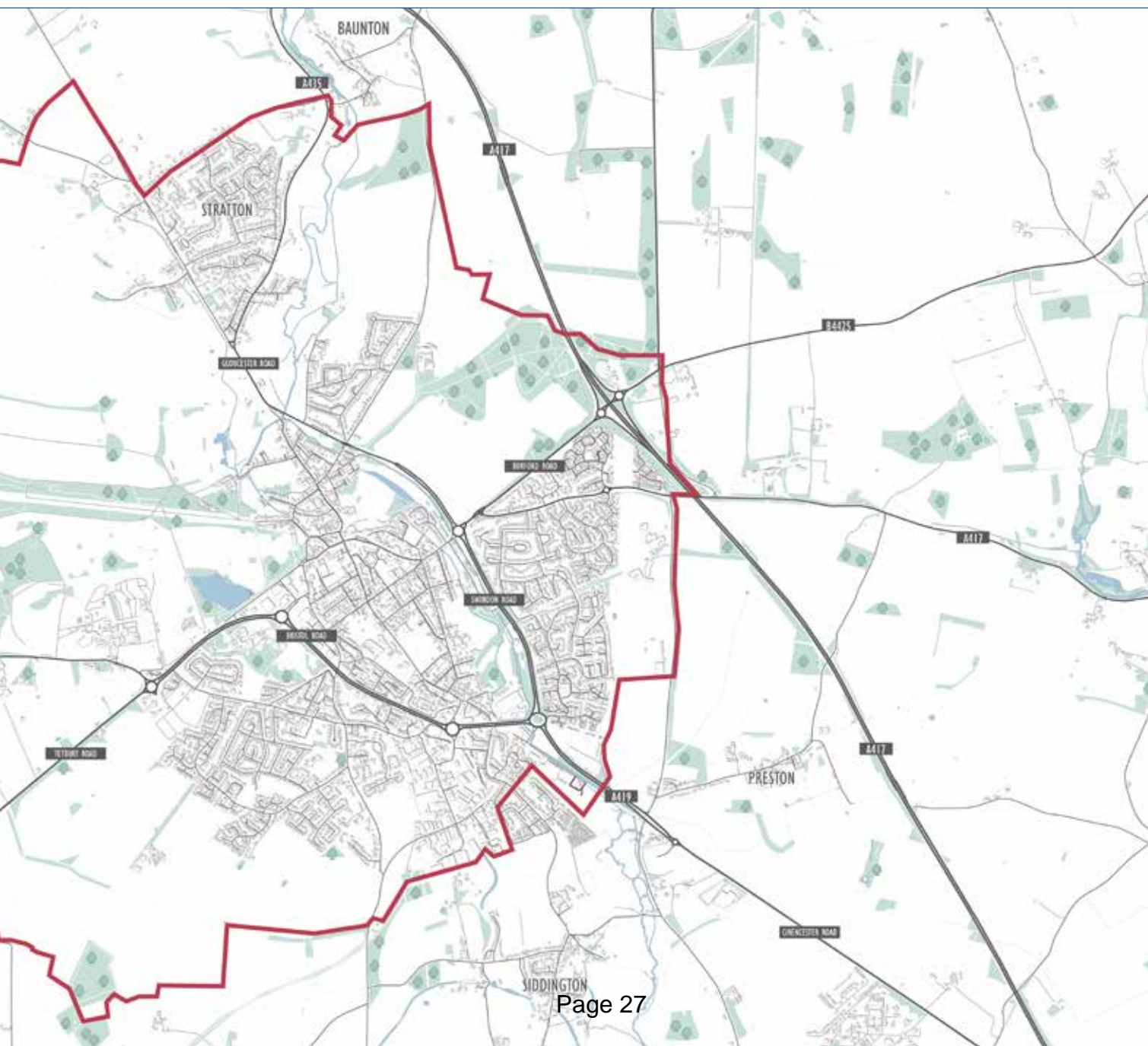
3.8 This research, carried out via Zoom during the first lockdown created an excellent platform for subsequent phases of the project. It also highlighted the need for the appointment of a specialist Planning Consultant to lead and direct the work. In the Spring of 2021, the Steering Group through the Town Council engaged FERIA Urbanism, an urban design and urban planning consultancy based in Bournemouth.

3.9 The Steering Group then consulted again via a series of themed digital workshops run by FERIA Urbanism, who also sought contributions from primary school pupils and held face-to-face workshops with Cirencester College students. These results have also been recorded as part of the evidence base.

3.10 The results of the thematic work, digital workshops and student input were then pulled together in a 12 page, professionally produced, Progress Report that is available on-line and in paper format. Community feedback and comments were collected during August and September 2021 via a series of pop-up stalls in the town centre and an on-line questionnaire.

3.11 In early December 2021, the Steering Group organised, and ran, an exhibition over three days. This comprised a poster display, interactive tasks, and a slideshow presentation. Copies of the posters and a video of the slideshow presentation could be downloaded and the database of interested parties was also invited to share comments and ideas if they were unable to attend the exhibition. The materials for both the Progress Report and the December 2021 exhibition form part of the evidence base for the Plan.

3.12 In parallel with the production of this draft Regulation 14 Plan, the Steering Group established a Town Centre Connection Group which has worked with Cotswold District Council officers and their consultants on the development of the Town Centre Master Plan which is referenced at Section 5 of the Plan.



04 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

What does the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan seek to achieve? This section sets out the outcomes that are expected as a result of the various planning policies coming into effect if the plan becomes the statutory planning document that guides development across the town.

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan -
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft



04

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The Neighbourhood Plan is directed by the following set of aims and objectives:

- 4.1 Ensure that land made available for new development better facilitates and maintains a vibrant, connected, economically active and sustainable town centre without adding to congestion or flood-risk.
- 4.2 Create a convenient, robust, and flexible network of streets and spaces that promote all modes of active travel leading to reduced reliance on private vehicles. To support this, there is a need for enhanced public transport and an integrated mobility hub (IMH).
- 4.3 Improve connections of the outlying suburbs to the historic centre by footpaths, cycleways and public transport which are hindered by highway barriers and gaps in the walking and cycling routes. Overcome the highways barrier created by the A419 and A429 dual carriageways by putting in place direct, street level crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at each roundabout and subway.
- 4.4 Put a '20 Minute Neighbourhood' model in place across the whole of Cirencester through the development of safe, sustainable, liveable, and mixed communities with active transport to jobs and essential services to meet the daily needs of the community.
- 4.5 Facilitate a reduction in carbon emissions and contribute to achieving the national goal of net zero.
- 4.6 Improve the sustainability of both conversion and new build development through use of low carbon materials, construction methods and facilitate low carbon running carbon costs in accordance with the Cotswold Design Code.
- 4.7 Prioritise new residential development towards affordable homes and first-time buyers and avoid age-specific residences.
- 4.8 Minimise future flood risk by protecting and, where possible, extending the functional floodplain; requiring new developments to provide multifunctional mitigation measures, such as sustainable urban drainage systems, to ensure that rainwater is attenuated within the site and supporting solutions to improve the management of the river flow on the upper Churn to reduce flooding and drying up.
- 4.9 Maintain, protect, and enhance the distinctive Cotswold-rich visual character, views and heritage of Cirencester, its immediate historic setting and vistas and its connections to the surrounding areas.
- 4.10 Protect and enhance low carbon economic activity, to encourage the promotion of innovative and high-quality employment space. New employment premises to be part of both existing and new mixed-use neighbourhoods, moving away from employment zoning, subject to respect for the character, scale, and appearance of such areas. The retention of existing skills, and the development of new ones through youth apprenticeships and placement schemes through local business and Cirencester College.
- 4.11 Protect, maintain, and enhance the natural environment, including local green spaces, parks, trees and green buffers, habitats, the River Churn, Gumstool Brook and all wildlife corridors alongside their connection to the wider landscape, promoting biodiversity and planting native species.
- 4.12 Protect existing, and deliver new easily accessible, community infrastructure, including for primary health care, skills development, recreation, sport, leisure, and cultural enrichment, to fill existing gaps and support the future of Cirencester and its population growth.
- 4.13 Facilitate a reduction in noise and light pollution within the town and in new development whilst maintaining and improving air quality through a reduction in emissions.
- 4.14 Protect and improve public safety and the perception of feeling safe through urban design that increases the opportunity for community vigilance and design out crime.



05 CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE

The heart of the neighbourhood plan area is the town centre and draft planning policies have been established to deliver changes to the town centre. This section also includes 25 principles to guide the redevelopment of the town centre, categorised under five themes of townscape and heritage, connections and permeability, contemporary sense of place, “green to the core”, and flexibility and multi-functionality.

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05

CIRENCESTER TOWN CENTRE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

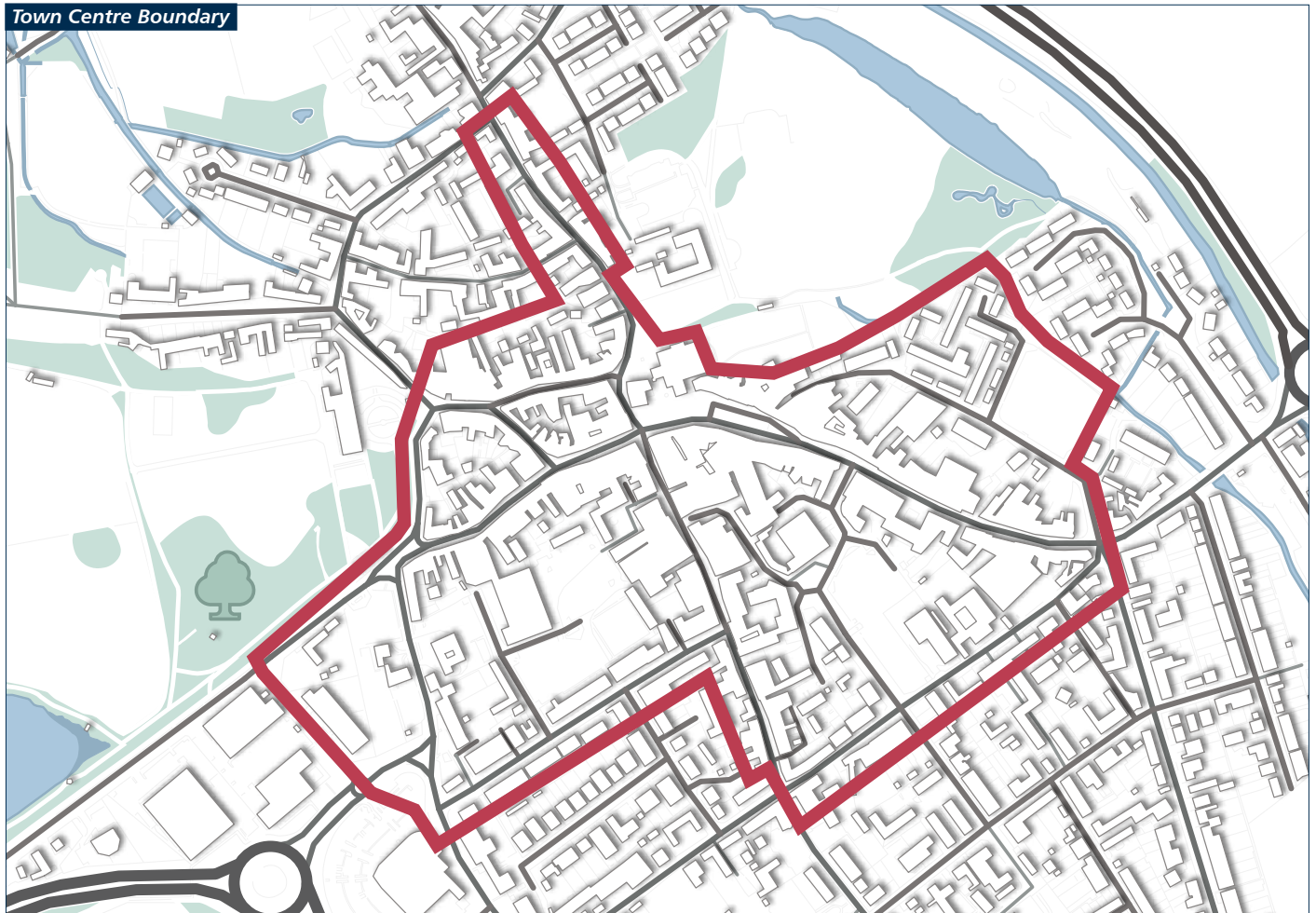
- 5.1 A prosperous market town, Cirencester is the district's main settlement and is celebrated as the 'Capital of the Cotswolds'. The town is the service centre for a wide catchment of Cotswold residents and a significant tourist destination.
- 5.2 The town centre is surrounded by swathes of green space, with the beautiful Abbey Grounds to the east, and Cirencester Park to the west. A route connects these spaces, heading through the town centre, in an area with visual qualities that are highly regarded.
- 5.3 Unlike many town centres across the country, Cirencester has not been badly affected by the effect of online shopping on high street retailing. But in common with other towns, it has experienced a loss of national multiples (including town centre convenience retailing). For example, despite Cricklade Street being highly accessible, it has seen a decline over recent years.

POLICY TC 1 – TOWN CENTRE (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT)

Development proposals within the defined town centre area (Cotswold District Council Local Plan and Town Centre Master Plan refer) that are in accordance with the design and development principles described by the Neighbourhood Plan will be supported.

POLICY TC 2 – TOWN CENTRE (AREAS OF CHANGE)

Development proposals for development within any of the seven defined town centre character areas, that do not compromise, conflict or are in any other way incompatible with general development principles (Policy TC1) will be supported.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.4 Section 7.4 of the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-2031 identifies the key aim for Cirencester town centre to provide an attractive and vibrant place where people can access a good range of local services and facilities, including a diverse retail offer. It sets out how the town centre can evolve and improve to ensure that it continues to compete effectively by continuing to offer a different experience to larger neighbouring centres.
- 5.5 Section 7.4.24 of the Local Plan recognises how, in the longer term, the town centre will deliver significant retail and business opportunities along with new homes. This would be guided by a town centre master plan produced by Cotswold District Council in association with many other stakeholders. The Master Plan will update and review the existing Supplementary Planning Document and build upon the principles that are essentially still valid and supported. It will seek to develop Cirencester town centre in a holistic manner, balancing the need to manage traffic, and improve the appearance of the public realm with other competing, environmental, social, and economic objectives.
- 5.6 The urban spaces comprise various car parks and these provide an opportunity for urban intensification to revitalise the area. The displaced car parking would be accommodated in new decked arrangements on the periphery, to the east and/or west of the town centre.
- 5.7 These new decked car parks would be easily accessible from the strategic travel routes to the west and east of the town. The buildings would be greened, with green walls to provide biodiversity, urban cooling, and aesthetic benefits. Rather than car parking, the rooftops of both buildings could be set aside for outdoor civic spaces (e.g. sculpture park, performance space, viewing platforms etc.) overlooking the town.
- 5.8 As part of the redevelopment of existing car parks, an Integrated Mobility Hub (IMH) can be accommodated. The delivery of an IMH is supported by Policy AM 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The preferred site for the IMH is unknown at this time but criteria to indicate the most viable location is set out in the supporting information to Policy AM 4.
- 5.9 The rationalisation of car parking and delivery of the IMH provide an opportunity to use land in the town centre more productively. Through careful design interventions to spaces, access routes and buildings, a better-defined series of urban blocks can be delivered here. This land will be redefined, seeking to curate a mix of retail, cultural, leisure and entertainment uses to ground floors, as well as increased residential development to enhance footfall in the town centre.
- 5.10 An array of pedestrian routes could enhance the street network and permeability from these sites to the town centre, bringing people in from the east and west. A series of urban pocket parks or themed spaces could be provided to bring greening to this part of the town, giving people a shady spot to escape to and relax in. To the south, provides an opportunity for three new unique gateway spaces to signify an entrance to the new urban space.
- 5.11 This should enhance urban vitality and viability, making Cirencester town centre a more pleasant space to spend time.
- 5.12 To assist with the implementation of Policy TC 2, the town centre has been subdivided into seven areas of distinctive character.
- 5.13 **NORTHERN QUARTER:** The northern half of the town centre, north of Market Place and Castle Street retains a strong medieval character and established streets with positive urban grain and built form. There are minimal opportunities for redevelopment and any proposals coming forward for this area should be sensitive to the character of neighbouring built form and spatial quality and ensuring the enhancement of the predominant land use of the street, whilst maximising the upper level residential or small-scale office opportunities.
- 5.14 **OLD STATION:** This area needs to deliver a positive sense of arrival from both Tetbury Road and Hammond Way alongside highways alterations and public realm improvements to benefit active travel and public transport modes. It should include the positive integration of the listed railway station building as a community asset and careful consideration of the connection to the Sheep Street site. Furthermore, there must be consideration of the provision of a new urban arrival space (or western gateway) into the town from Hammond Way, alongside potential reconfiguration of the Waitrose car park.
- 5.15 **SHEEP STREET:** The Sheep Street area is part of a connected series of places including the Old Station and Brewery. It is therefore an important transition space between them but also forms part of the arrival sequence from the western gateway to the town centre. There must be a connecting street from Sheep Street through to Cripps Road and proposals must also integrate the former air raid shelter into a well-defined spatial strategy, being careful to create frontages to all public streets and spaces.
- 5.16 **THE BREWERY:** The Brewery is a key site in the regeneration of the town centre. It should be designed to connect and integrate with Brewery Court and Bishops Walk to the east, Cripps Road and Sheep Street to the west and accommodate a frontage onto the public route to Ashcroft Gardens to the south. These routes should be designed as streets and public spaces that continue the unique character of the north of the town centre with tight streets, covered gunnels and fronted urban spaces with pedestrian priority but also accommodating a landscape strategy that delivers street trees together with SuDS (sustainable drainage system) to address the urban heat island effect and ecological emergency.
- 5.17 **THE FORUM:** The Forum needs to accommodate several interests, including altered access strategy, improved connectivity to Dyer Street and a clearer and more positive urban grain and spatial arrangement for the area. The Forum is an option for the IMH.
- 5.18 **THE WATERLOO:** The Waterloo accommodates sites from Dyer Street through to the River Churn. Therefore, the key feature is the public cycle connection through from the river to Dyer Street and beyond. Development around the Argos block needs to ensure a fronted lane or street to both sides to ensure overlooking, safety and security of access is achieved. Additionally, the connection to Dyer Street and onwards to The Forum should be carefully considered to include potential future re-modelling into a more appropriate urban space. The Waterloo car park site should deliver a public frontage to the riverside with an urban parkland character and a clear route to the Argos site and beyond also fronting onto The Waterloo.
- 5.19 **PHOENIX WAY:** This area has the potential to deliver the regeneration of the town centre through its strategic location as a car park capturing movements from the A429 and as a connector from the town centre to the Roman Amphitheatre. A key feature is therefore the delivery, alongside public investment, of a pedestrian/cycle ramp from Querns Lane to the Amphitheatre. Consideration must be given to the form of development by accommodating not only a positive space at the Sheep Street and Querns Lane junction but also in a built form, interpretation of the Roman Wall and urban grain. Furthermore, to maximise the value of the gateway at

Hammond Way, there must be engagement with Waitrose to enable a conversation around accommodating its car parking on site.

5.20 There are 25 principles that guide the redevelopment of the town centre, categorised under 5 themes, townscape and heritage, connections and permeability, contemporary sense of place, green to the core, and flexibility and multi-functionality.

TOWNSCAPE & HERITAGE

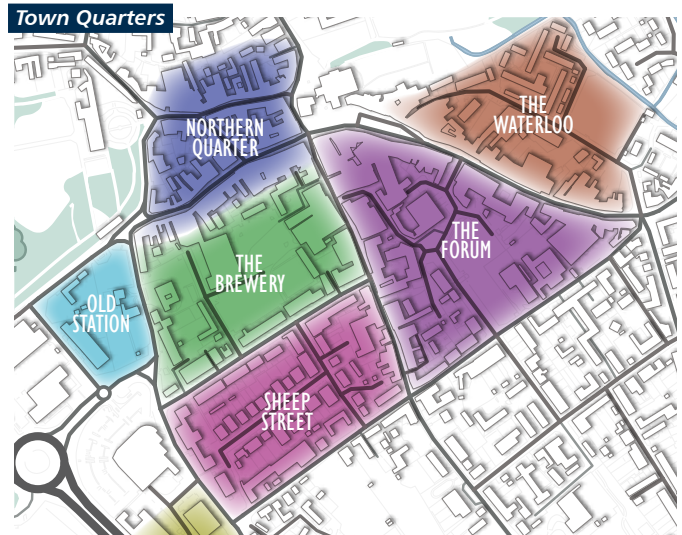
1. New development should support a place that reflects, reveals, and celebrates layers of history.
2. Street sections and block sizes should reflect and reinforce existing medieval hierarchy found elsewhere in the town.
3. Application of these street sections to the opportunity sites will ensure an appropriate response to the Cirencester context.
4. Narrow street sections will provide shade as part of a response to climate change and ensure a resilient town.
5. Proposals should bring out the different characters of the centre, revealing hidden or obscured character areas and enhance views to key buildings and landmarks.

CONNECTIONS & PERMEABILITY

6. Any new network of streets and spaces should be prioritised for pedestrians and be connected, comfortable, convenient, convivial, and conspicuous.
7. Streets should be places to explore which are delightful, playful, shaded, beautiful and social.
8. New development should enhance permeability and connectivity within the centre and to the wider town including the Amphitheatre.
9. New development should connect seamlessly with existing and neighbouring buildings, streets, and spaces to enhance character of the place.
10. Off-street public vehicle parking at edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations should be provided.
11. New or enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes to and through the town centre, activated through a series of new spaces to form a new animated route, encouraging active travel should be provided.
12. The arrival experience, building upon and enhancing the town's historic arrival points should be provided.

CONTEMPORARY SENSE OF PLACE

13. Layout and design should be of an exceptional quality and embody the highest standards in building and landscape architecture.
14. Proposals should show a deep understanding of the defining characteristics of Cirencester and demonstrate how these qualities are expressed within the new urban form.



15. New development should respect the historic environment while purposely raising its profile and presence as an important aspect of the town centre's identity.
16. New development should be a contemporary interpretation of Cirencester's character, materiality and built form rather than pastiche representation.
17. New development should enable modal shift in transport and movement around the centre, and to the rest of the town including provision of an IMH, discouraging dominance of motor vehicles.

GREEN TO THE CORE

18. Development should enable greater access to green and blue infrastructure.
19. Existing quality trees should be retained with an expansion of green infrastructure around trees to create intimate spaces which align with the preferred scale of streets.
20. Proposals should aspire to net zero carbon, to use renewable energy, and deliver biodiversity net gain.
21. Proposals should embed sustainable construction principles and encourage modern methods of construction.
22. New development should use materials, land, energy, and water efficiently and be designed for longevity, minimising pollution.

FLEXIBILITY & MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY

23. Building blocks should be flexible and allow a mix of uses (e.g. shape, depth, height, and general arrangement) to allow the appropriate increase in commercial, retail, education, leisure, housing, transport, and parking assets in response to changing economic models.
24. The flexible design of buildings should enable changes of use and retrofitting without substantial alteration.
25. A retrofit, first approach, should be taken with existing buildings.



06 ACCESS & MOVEMENT

How people move around and across the town has a big impact on the quality of the town centre experience. The policies in this section aim to improve movement connections and overcome barriers in and around Cirencester making it safer, healthier, more sustainable, supporting the economic viability and vibrancy of the historic centre, and meeting the needs of all in a growing town.

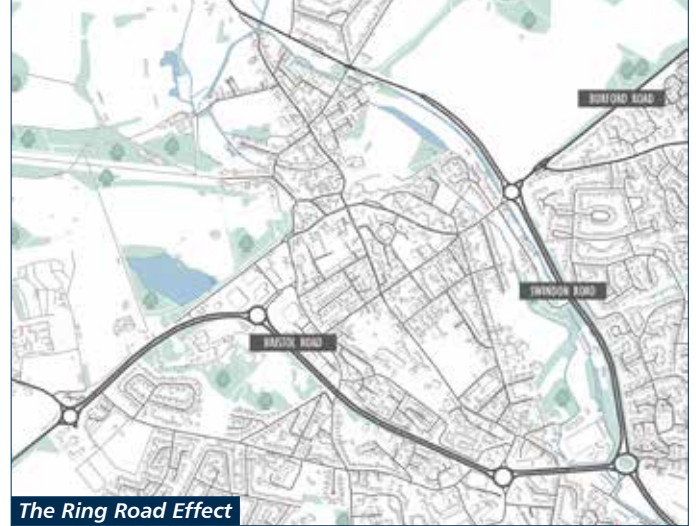
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06

ACCESS & MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 6.1 These policies aim to improve movement connections and overcome barriers in and around Cirencester making it safer, healthier, more sustainable, supporting the economic viability and vibrancy of the historic centre, and meeting the needs of all in a growing town. While improving transport connections and options outside of the town are beyond the remit of this document, the Neighbourhood Plan supports such issues being addressed and resolved on behalf of Cirencester with transport operators, at a County Council, regional, and national level.
- 6.2 Both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Cotswold Local Plan require consideration of transport at the early stages of proposed development with far greater emphasis to improving health, reducing air pollution and congestion, and promoting sustainable travel. Priority should be given (paragraphs 112 NPPF 11.2.6 CLP refer) to provision for walking and cycling and for high quality public transport.
- 6.3 As referenced within the Neighbourhood Plan, in July 2022, Cotswold District Council published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Cirencester which for the first time outlined a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment. This Neighbourhood Plan supports the proposed 33 cycling routes and 23 walking routes as identified in the LCWIP.
- 6.4 An attractive built environment has been shown to encourage walking, cycling and other healthy behaviours. A high-quality public realm and a sense of place can incentivise active travel and create a sense of community cohesion by reducing social isolation and the fear of crime. Suitable access allows everyone to participate equally and improves overall health and wellbeing.
- 6.5 It is important that the needs of Cirencester are given greater attention in Gloucestershire County Council's transport strategies, with the purpose of improving connectivity of walking and cycling routes, increasing options for moving around the town, overcoming barriers, and improving public transport.
- 6.6 There is also a need for greater engagement with transport and local bus operators, as well as Cirencester College and the Cotswold Lakes Trust to obtain the right level of investment in transport links with Cirencester and address transport issues identified in this Plan.
- 6.7 Paragraph 112 of Cotswold District Council's Local Plan requires the facilitation of "access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use". To attract more fee-paying customers onto buses and coaches they need to provide rapid point to point transport which means avoiding delays in the town centre. Increasing numbers is essential to persuading operators to add routes in the evenings, weekends, and to other locations such as Bristol, Oxford, or the Midlands.



- 6.8 Changes which are required include:

- 6.8.1 rebalancing travel within the town and connecting schools and residential areas to the centre and to each other. Measures are required to support safe and active travel by walking and cycling. This includes implementing the LCWIP and the additional 'spoke and wheel' projects identified. Policies AM 1 and AM 2 are specifically drafted to assist in the implementation of the Cirencester LCWIP;
- 6.8.2 making appropriate connections to existing footpaths, cycleways, rights of way and bridleways to provide safe walking and cycling routes to the countryside and neighbouring settlements;
- 6.8.3 promoting and extending public transport use; the town needs a movement hub and a strategy to increase services within the town and to other destinations.
- 6.8.4 removal of unnecessary vehicular traffic from the town centre, reducing congestion and improving air quality, improving access for pedestrians and cyclists, and protecting the built heritage of the town.

POLICY AM 1 – THE CIRENCESTER SPOKE & WHEEL CYCLE NETWORK

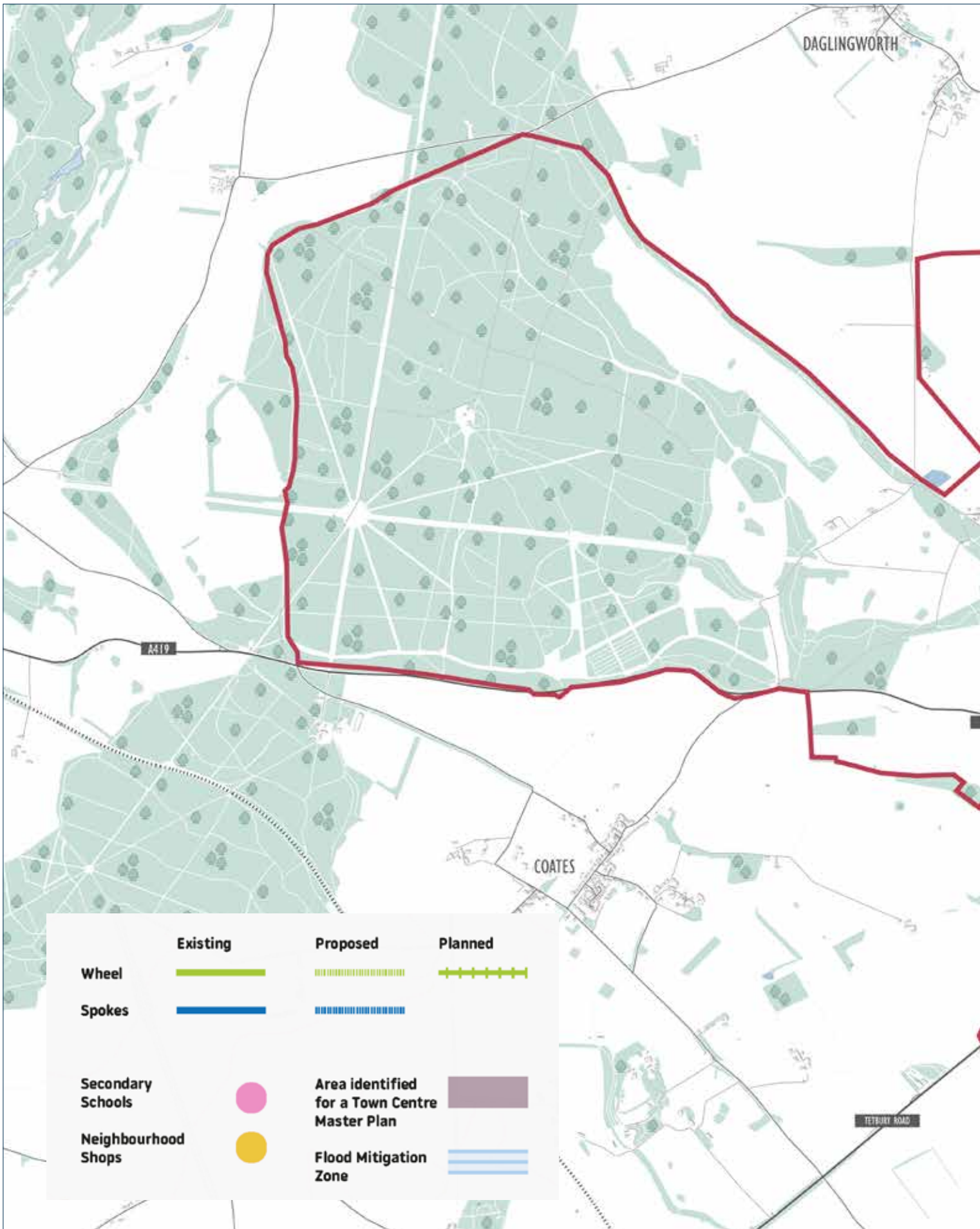
Support will be given for the creation of a cycle and footpath network radiating from the town centre to the neighbourhoods (the spokes) and connecting neighbourhoods to each other (the wheel).

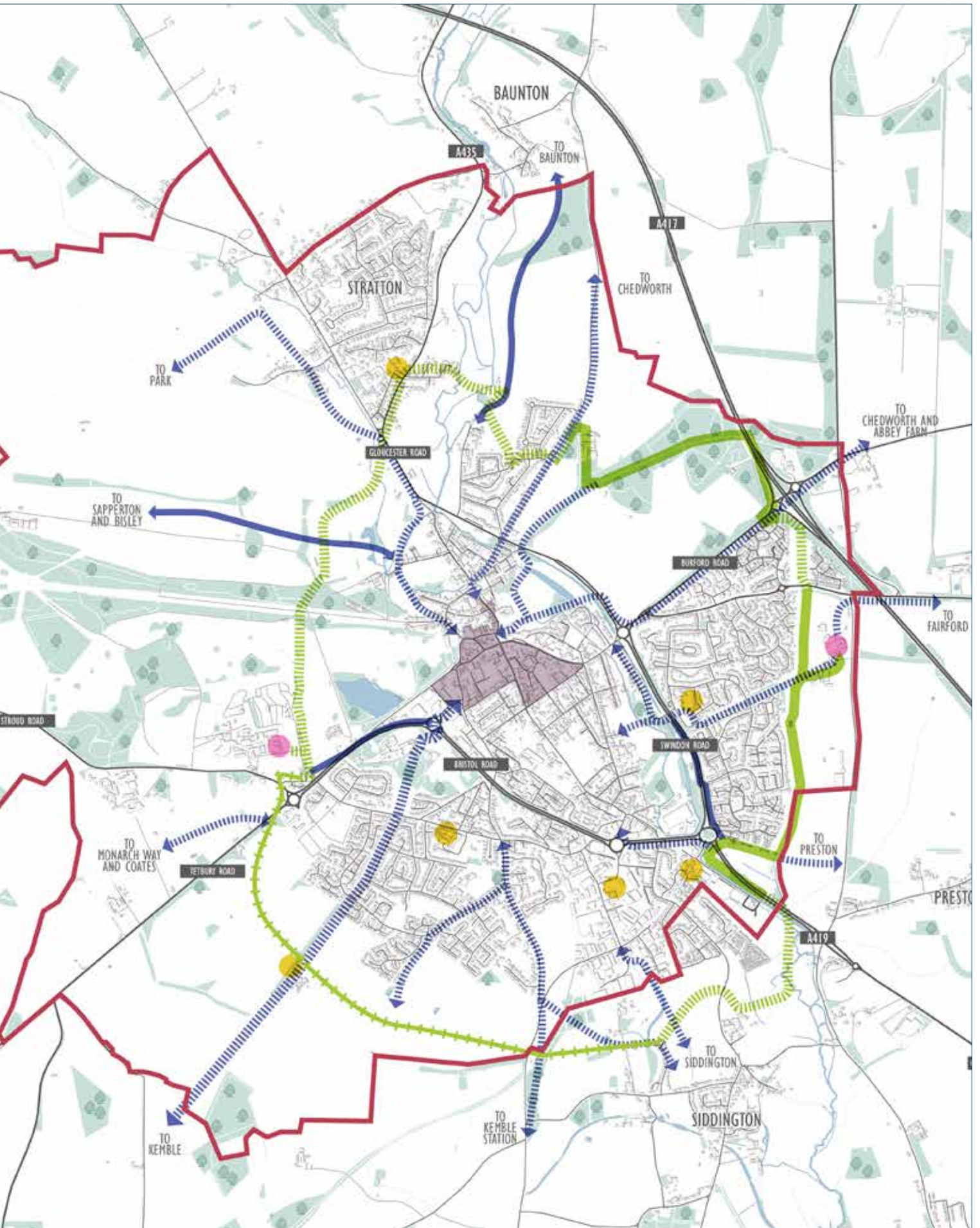
Components of the system will include the 33 cycling routes and 23 walking routes proposed by the LCWIP within the town boundary, together with the following additional measures:

a) Creation of a new walking and cycling link from rear of Tesco to The Steadings roundabout on Spratsgate Lane, via Siddington Church and Orchard Fields. This route will then connect into the new cycling and walking infrastructure within The Steadings neighbourhood and on to the RAU.

b) Upgrade of the existing footpath between Harebushes and Bowling Green Lane to accommodate cycling journeys.

c) Upgrade of the existing footpath between Bowling Green Lane and Whiteway View to accommodate cycling journeys.





POLICY AM 2 – TOWN & COUNTRY CONNECTIONS

a) *The building of walking and cycling routes and other measures, that connect Cirencester with outlying areas, as proposed by the LCWIP, will be supported.*

b) *The delivery of the walking and cycling routes listed in Table 1 will be supported.*

Table 1 – Proposed Connections between Town & Countryside

Connection	Description
<p>Connectivity to Kemble Station</p>	<p>The route investigated and identified by the Cirencester Community Railway Project included cycling and walking options alongside a Very Light Rail line as an alternative route to that identified by Sustrans and the LCWIP.</p> <p>Furthermore, good, safe, at-grade connections to Kemble, its rail station and connection to the national rail network are strategically important for Cirencester to maintain and improve its national visibility and accessibility.</p> <p>Today, this station is not fully utilised because of a poor bus service connection and no safe at-grade cycle routes.</p> <p>Improved connections need to be established through the week including early morning and late evening and weekends.</p>
<p>Cotswold Water Park & South Cerney</p>	<p>Sustrans Route 45 towards South Cerney and the Cotswold Water Park is difficult to access because of the ring road and Love Lane Industrial Estate. Creating safe cycling and walking links between the Water Park and Cirencester is important for local recreation and tourism between the two locations. It would also link the two major industrial areas at Love Lane and Broadway Lane. This project is also a priority for the Cotswold Water Park. There are opportunities to re-use industrial heritage such as the remains of the Cirencester branch of the Thames Severn Canal or old railway lines. A path from Tesco to Siddington Church possibly via the field behind the petrol garage which has been offered by the owner for flood alleviation. This would link to the ‘wheel’ in AM1.</p>
<p>North up the Churn</p>	<p>The route northwards alongside the Churn is currently blocked by landowners north of North Cerney. The old railway line to Chedworth is currently inaccessible. Additional riverine footpaths along the Churn to be opened up to join existing rights of way into a long-distance footpath.</p>
<p>West via the Old Bisley Road</p>	<p>Cycle and footpath west of Cirencester along the Old Bisley Road towards the Frome Valley and Stroud. This route includes restricted pathways through the Bathurst Estate. The ancient right of way along the Old Bisley Road was closed by the landowner in the 19th century.</p>
<p>East to Fairford and the Eastern Cotswold Water Park</p>	<p>There is no long-distance footpath to the east beyond Preston which is a barrier to recreational cycling and tourism between Cirencester and the eastern part of the Cotswold Water Park.</p>
<p>Monarch’s Way</p>	<p>Access to the Monarch’s Way long-distance footpath is via the RAU land but there is no safe crossing of the A419 Stroud Road and the narrow, poorly maintained footpath alongside the Tetbury Road is particularly dangerous. The proposed development of the Innovation Village at the RAU intends to improve access and amend the route so it goes through the development.</p> <p>North to Chedworth via Old Railway Line</p> <p>The railway line exists for most of the way but is now privately owned. It is possible to reach Chedworth by road, but roads are not safe for cycling, especially for young or inexperienced riders.</p>

POLICY AM 3 – THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Support will be given to a range of coordinated measures designed to enhance the pedestrian experience across the Plan area, as follows:

- a) *Decluttering streets and removing obstacles.*
- b) *Widening footways and improving surfaces.*
- c) *Enhanced street design including high quality surfaces, street furniture, tree planting and other greening initiatives.*
- d) *Town centre management, including curation of events and festivals.*
- e) *New signage and a wayfinding strategy.*
- f) *Rationalising and management of vehicle parking.*
- g) *Creating ‘bumping spaces’ for people to stop and meet.*
- h) *Moving most parking to the periphery rather than the centre of the town.*
- i) *Implement changes to operation of street network to remove unnecessary through traffic from the town centre.*

POLICY AM 4 – INTEGRATED MOBILITY HUB (IMH)

a) *Support will be given for the development of an integrated mobility hub (IMB) that includes the following elements:*

- 1) *Long distance coaches to London, London airports, and the Midlands.*
 - 2) *Regional buses to Bristol, Oxford, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bath, and Swindon.*
 - 3) *Local buses.*
 - 4) *Kemble railway shuttle or very light rail.*
 - 5) *Taxis.*
 - 6) *Car Hire & Car Club.*
 - 7) *Cycle shelters.*
 - 8) *Bike and e-bike hire.*
 - 9) *Car passenger drop-off and pick-up.*
- b) *The preferred location for the IMH will be determined by the selection criteria set out in this Plan.*

POLICY AM 5 – STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS & TRANSPORT LINKS

Effective connections through public transport links with towns which are economically important to Cirencester will be supported. These include:

- a) *Level 1 Kemble – Strong public transport services and safe at grade cycle routes are strategically important to Cirencester.*
- b) *Level 2 Swindon, Gloucester, Cheltenham – Strong public transport services and connections to the national rail system through Kemble rail station.*
- c) *Level 3 – Oxford and Stroud – Strong public transport services and connections are important.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 6.9 The Neighbourhood Plan supports Cirencester Town Council, Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council in actively seeking funding for the routes listed in Table 1 from, among other things, contributions from new development, requiring developers to make provision for these routes in their proposal, and regional and national funds available for increased active travel.
- 6.10 At present, Cirencester has no single hub for public transport services. The majority of bus services use the bus stop opposite the Forum Car Park, with a limited number of services using the stop across the road, further south from the town centre.
- 6.11 As well as causing difficulties for cars accessing the Forum Car Park when multiple buses arrive at the same time, these stops are not intuitively located for newcomers to the town looking to find their way to the heart of Cirencester.
- 6.12 Other important services do not serve the Forum bus stops, including the National Express coach service between London, Gloucester and Cheltenham which uses the bus stop near the Beeches Car Park and the busiest bus route serving the town, Route 51, uses the stop outside Bingham House in Dyer Street.
- 6.13 Limited bus stop infrastructure and supporting information is provided at any of the existing town centre bus stops other than a real-time information departure board at the stop opposite the Forum Car Park.
- 6.14 There is no drop-off facility for tourist coaches that visit Cirencester, resulting in a number of informal locations across the town centre being used, varying in appropriateness and safety. Community transport (dial-a-ride style) services also drop off at various informal points without dedicated infrastructure around the town.
- 6.15 The one-way system through the town centre, combined with various narrow streets and sharp turns, restricts access for bus journeys. This can result in circuitous journeys, or in the case of several services to and from Cirencester College, the town centre not being served at all by buses.



6.16 An IMH, integrated mobility hub, for Cirencester would provide a single focal point for access to the town. This would increase the appeal of using bus services as well as allowing key facilities such as tourist information to be consolidated in a single focal point. To be effective any site will need to be in close proximity to the heart of the town and easily accessible.

6.17 The hub would provide a gateway to the town for unfamiliar visitors and provide new users with a single point of access to travel and bus information, in turn providing greater confidence to use public transport for journeys to and from town. An integrated hub could also provide a single location for coach drop-off and pick-up.

6.18 The hub could be a simple yet eye-catching structure to provide shelter and transport information whilst not detracting from the urban realm and historic quality of the town.

6.19 The following criteria should be used to identify an appropriate location for the IMH:

- **TOWN CENTRE INTEGRATION:** At the heart of the town centre, the Market Place is in the immediate vicinity of key shops and facilities and provides easy visual aids for navigating to most key locations in town. As such the transport hub should be easily accessible from here.

This includes ease of access in terms of wide and safe walking space as well as easy wayfinding, ideally through natural means such as clear sightlines of landmarks, but also supported through signage and pavement design.

- **EASE OF ACCESS BY BUS SERVICES:** Bus services accessing the hub should not have to take convoluted routes around the one-way system to get there. This will add to journey times, deter customers, and increase operating costs. A location that minimises the need for buses to cover additional distance to access it, will maximise the location's appeal to customers and bus operators.

- **EASE OF ACCESS BY COACH SERVICES:** National Express (and operators for services through Cirencester) have expressed a strong desire to minimise the distance coaches have to travel away from the A417 dual carriageway, as this adds to journey times. It is for this reason their service between Stroud and London travels along Cirencester's ring road but does not make a stop at Cirencester. For an integrated hub to be viable, it is essential that coach services can access any location with as little journey time from the A417 as possible.

- **ABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE BUSES, COACHES, AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT VEHICLES:** The site should be large enough to provide a minimum of six bays for buses and coaches to use at the same time, including drop-off and pick-up points for community transport vehicles, ranging from cars to mini-buses equipped with specialist accessibility features.

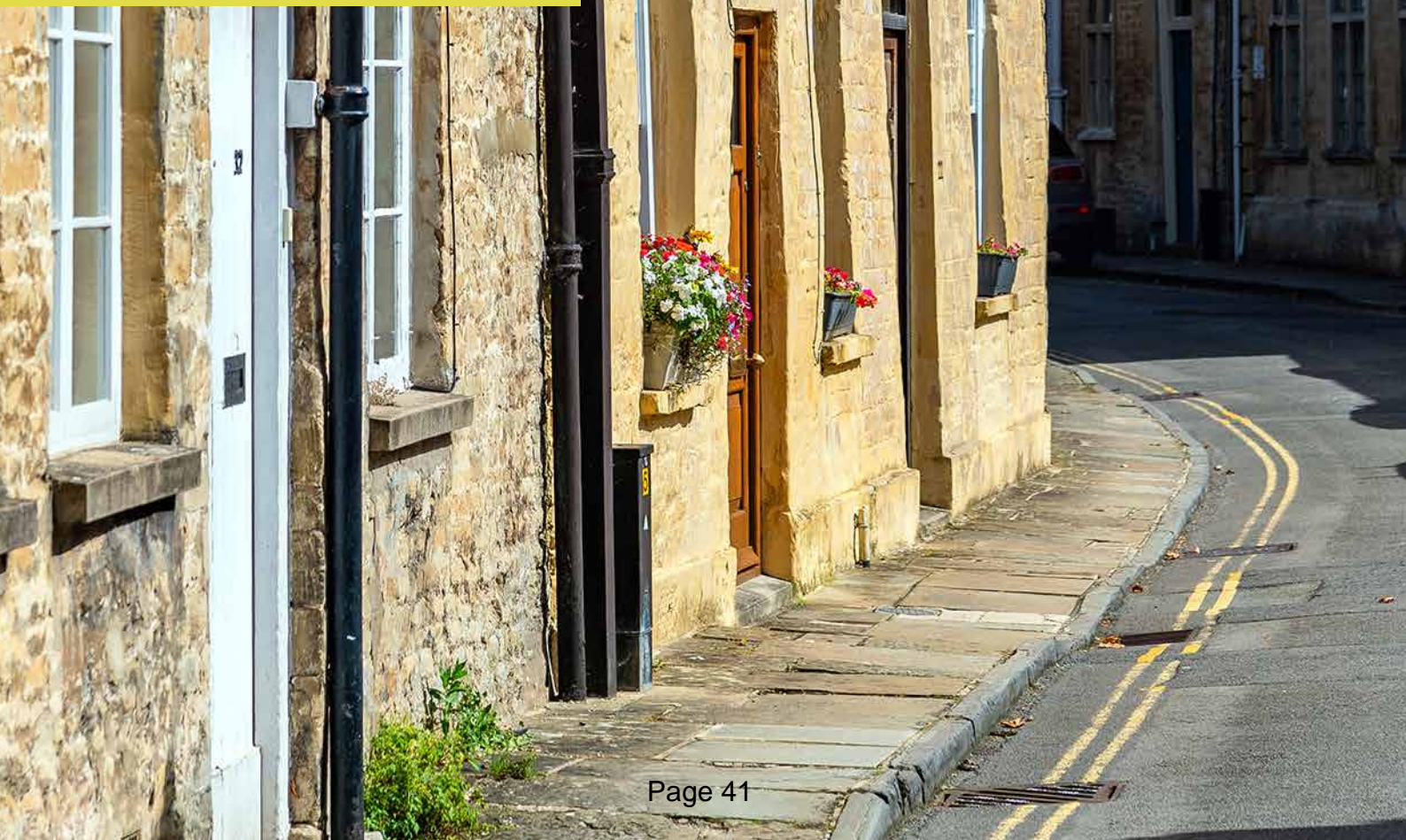
- **CUSTOMER FACILITIES:** The hub should provide the space and facilities for customers to wait in safety, protected from the elements and with access to good quality facilities including real-time information and, if appropriate, commercial facilities such as a shop or café. Such facilities could provide an income source for the hub operator.

- **DRIVER FACILITIES:** Bus drivers play a crucial role in providing mobility to all of society, yet often struggle to have access to the most basic of welfare facilities. By providing driver toilets and a rest area (including space for drivers to prepare their own food and drink) the hub can accommodate breaks in duty. This not only provides much needed facilities but will also encourage bus operators to treat the site as an operational hub, making it easier to add more services to and from Cirencester.

07 DESIGN & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Distinctive local design and architecture going back many years is one of the main reasons Cirencester's built environment has a unique character. This section includes planning policies to encourage high quality design and a design checklist. The checklist has been prepared to support developers, landowners, their designers, and architects when preparing planning applications.

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07

DESIGN & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW



7.1 Distinctive local design and architecture going back many years is one of the main reasons Cirencester's built environment has a unique character. New developments should respond in a positive and appropriate manner to this legacy.

7.2 The Neighbourhood Plan anticipates future phases of development that are led by a more flexible use for residential/independent retail/co-worker office space, and which is generally less orientated around private car ownership.

7.3 The response to the global challenges of reducing carbon usage will help drive the shape and appearance of future development. However, this need not necessarily conflict with the character of the town which is, as described below, composed of adjacent, differing urban forms from different historical periods.

7.4 Cirencester has experienced successive and distinct periods of growth, both commercially and in size, these include:

7.4.1 the Roman settlement, when Corinium (Cirencester) was second only to London in terms of area and economic importance. The legacy of this period includes the alignment of some roads, earthworks, and the Amphitheatre;

7.4.2 the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary. The vast land holding controlled by the Abbey shaped green spaces and watercourses existing today;

7.4.3 the high value of the medieval Cotswold wool trade brought considerable wealth to the town and helped to fund the large parish church and many large town houses;

7.4.4 the connection to the canal and subsequently to the rail network. These allowed new industrial areas to develop to the east of the town and brought cheaper brick building materials for terrace housing to be built;

7.4.5 development of the post-war motorway network. Cirencester lies at a mid-point on the A417/A419 connecting the M4 and M5. This necessitated the ring road and led to the town becoming more of a commuter town with greater emphasis on residential development and car-based retail infrastructure.

7.5 The above phases of growth are clearly legible within the town, expressed in the alignment and width of the roads and pavements, the building materials of walls and roofs, the variations in fenestration and the changing fashions of house frontages. Notwithstanding this, there are several factors that are common to all areas of the town. These include pedestrian routes through passageways and alleys, courtyards and, with the welcome

exception of the tower of the parish church and the spire of Watermoor Parish Church, a general conformity of building and roof ridge heights.

7.6 In line with the principal historical phases of development, the layout and alignment of streets play a prominent role in creating each area's distinctive character. From the organic, and curvilinear shapes of medieval Coxwell Street and Gosditch Street to the straight roads of the 19th Century (Victoria Road) and the 20th Century (South Way).

7.7 The key positive qualities of the town today have been used to directly inform the design checklist that follows at the end of Chapter 7 of this Plan.

7.8 The principal urban space in the town is the Market Place. In broad terms, this is dominated by the medieval parish church and south porch, by Georgian facades on the north side and Victorian on the south side. These buildings form the boundaries to the Market Place which itself curves and diminishes in width from west to east.

7.9 Cirencester has an attractive compact historic core, with a complex evolution and character of Roman and medieval street patterns. It is characterised by many protected, historic, tightly packed buildings, built up from the back edge of the pavement. They form curvilinear medieval, intimate, and enclosed street patterns.

7.10 The critically important views of the St John Baptist church tower are categorised into three types – glimpsed, framed, and panoramic. Streets such as Dollar Street, Black Jack Street, and The Waterloo all benefit from glimpses of the tower rising above the contextual rooflines whereas South Way, Tower Street and the Broad Ride within Cirencester Park are consciously aligned axially to the tower. The prominence of the tower stands as a landmark from the approaches to the town, from Gloucester, Cricklade and the Whiteway.

7.11 Pedestrian passageways through and between buildings make an important contribution to free movement within and access to the public realm, for example from the Market Place to The Waterloo, to the Abbey Grounds via the closed church yard and to Swan Yard. Other roofscapes of note are the Brewery buildings in Cricklade Street (now residential) and the Waitrose building in Hammonds Way.

7.12 The architecture of the buildings responds to their position within the street, especially on corners, where, for example the former HSBC bank on Cricklade Street, Lloyds Bank on Castle Street and the Corinium Museum on Park Street and Silver Street all display a higher order of architectural style from turrets to Palladian facades.

- 7.13 Where given the space to develop and properly mature, trees make an important contribution to the public realm, creating screening, providing shade and biodiversity habitats. Successful examples of this are the Lebanese cedar and False Acacia in West Market Place, the Hornbeams and Planes in Brewery Court and the Beech trees in The Waterloo.
- 7.14 Street furniture, which includes benches, bollards, cycle stands, litter bins, signage, lighting, and advertising are generally designed to be seen and therefore play a prominent role in defining the character of the street. Cirencester displays a range of styles from traditional metal (Victorian) in West Way and Gloucester Road, to contemporary stone and timber in the Market Place and Brewery Court.
- 7.15 As is the case with most historic towns, Cirencester is a palimpsest of urban development. This has evolved over many centuries and as a result, within the public streetscapes, it now expresses a wide range of built forms that have been shaped in large part by commercial need and architectural fashion. In marked contrast to these picturesque and protected facades, the rear elevations of the properties have developed in a more ad-hoc and utilitarian manner.
- 7.16 This contrast in quality applies particularly to the rear elevations that form the visual boundaries to the Brewery and Forum car parks. This visual enclosure creates the opportunity for a more contemporary architectural style and to help it adopt a form of building design whose shaping and appearance incorporates the requirements to achieve a low carbon building at the construction stage, during its maintenance lifetime, and at its demolition and recycling.
- 7.17 For these measures to be integrated into the design of the building fabric this will affect various building elements e.g., the size and appearance of the fenestration, the incorporation of photovoltaic panels and the orientation and pitch of the roofs.
- 7.18 Whilst these aims may result in a different architectural character, they do not exclude the adoption of important elements of the historic urban centre, that is the inclusion of features such as arches and passageways through and between buildings to maximise permeability and the use of materials sympathetic to the colour and texture of the local limestone.
- 7.19 New development that is situated beyond the historic streetscapes i.e. within the Brewery, Forum and Waterloo car parks and Phoenix Way, may make use of modern design and materials that contrast with, yet complement local character. The obligation to develop low carbon buildings with an inherently low carbon construction and maintenance cost will drive a different aesthetic from the traditional Cotswold vernacular, i.e. in terms of their size and framing as well as roofscape design that allows the more effective performance of PV panels.

POLICY DBE 1 – DESIGN QUALITY

The design of new buildings and their settings should be of an exceptional quality and embody the highest standards in building and landscape architecture. This creation of successful public realm spaces begins at the principal layout stage where the integration of open courtyards and their connection to pedestrian access routes, create animated, social spaces with a legible and appealing sense of place. Proposals will need to show both a deep understanding of the defining characteristics of Cirencester and demonstrate how these qualities are expressed within the new urban form. They should use materials, land, energy, and water efficiently and be designed for longevity and minimise pollution.

New developments should enhance the local character, although this does not imply simply duplicating existing developments which, in themselves, may not be of good quality.

a) All new development proposals should have regard for the Design Checklist outlined in the Plan which has been produced specifically for the Cirencester context.

b) Where a development is proposed in, or on the edge of an existing settlement, all new routes will respect their place in the hierarchy within the overall network.

c) The design of new development should take into account, the need to define and integrate the transition between areas of different character.

d) Where the corners of new buildings lie on the sight lines and axial views, consideration should be given to the inclusion of architectural features that form focal points, e.g. turrets, oriel windows and projected gables.

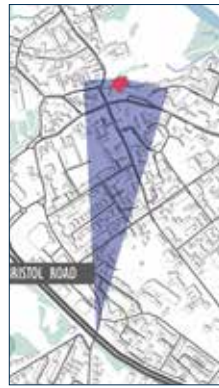
e) Buildings should incorporate publicly accessible pedestrian routes in order to maximise permeability through the town. This applies particularly where existing routes can be linked.

f) New developments should not be disproportionate in scale to adjoining buildings in the locality, unless warranted by its proposed use and position on the street.

g) Innovation in building design and materials in a way that supports local distinctiveness and the other objectives for good design and sustainable development will be supported.

h) Buildings should not be more than 12 metres in height i.e. from ground level to the ridge, three storeys in height, (with use of the roof space with dormer windows as a useable fourth storey habitable living space being accepted) i.e. ridge heights to not exceed those of neighbouring buildings which set the appropriate height for a new or extended building and that the proposed design causes no impairment of light or visual impact.

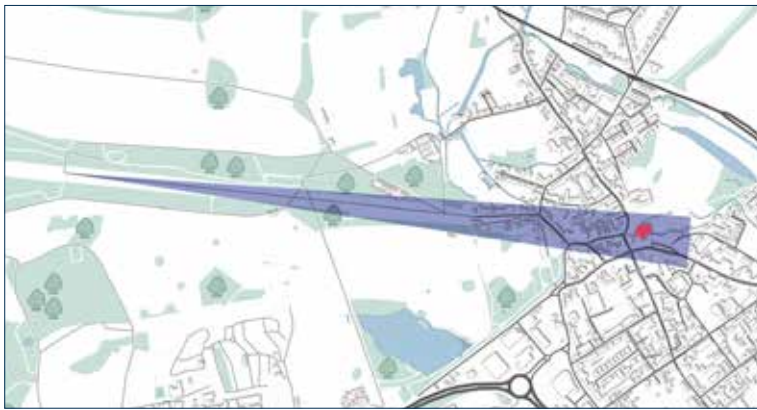
These diagrams show a series of seven indicative 'view cones' for the panoramic views of the St John Baptist church tower. These seven views referenced as glimpsed, framed and panoramic, when considered collectively, indicate that all development proposals within the town centre have potential to disrupt the important townscape setting of Cirencester.



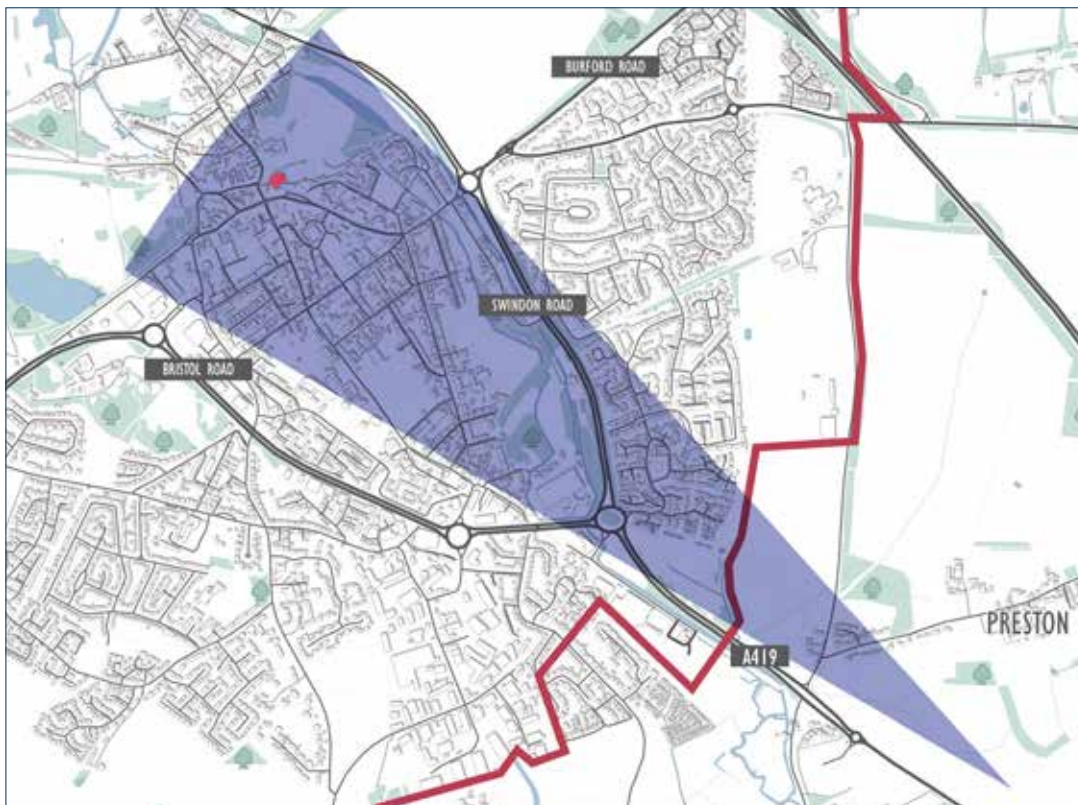
Somerford Road



Gloucester Road



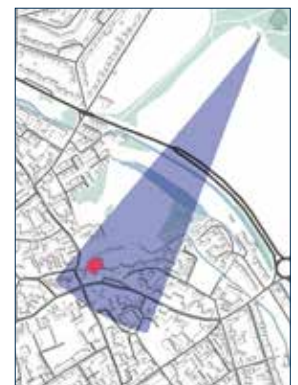
Cirencester Park



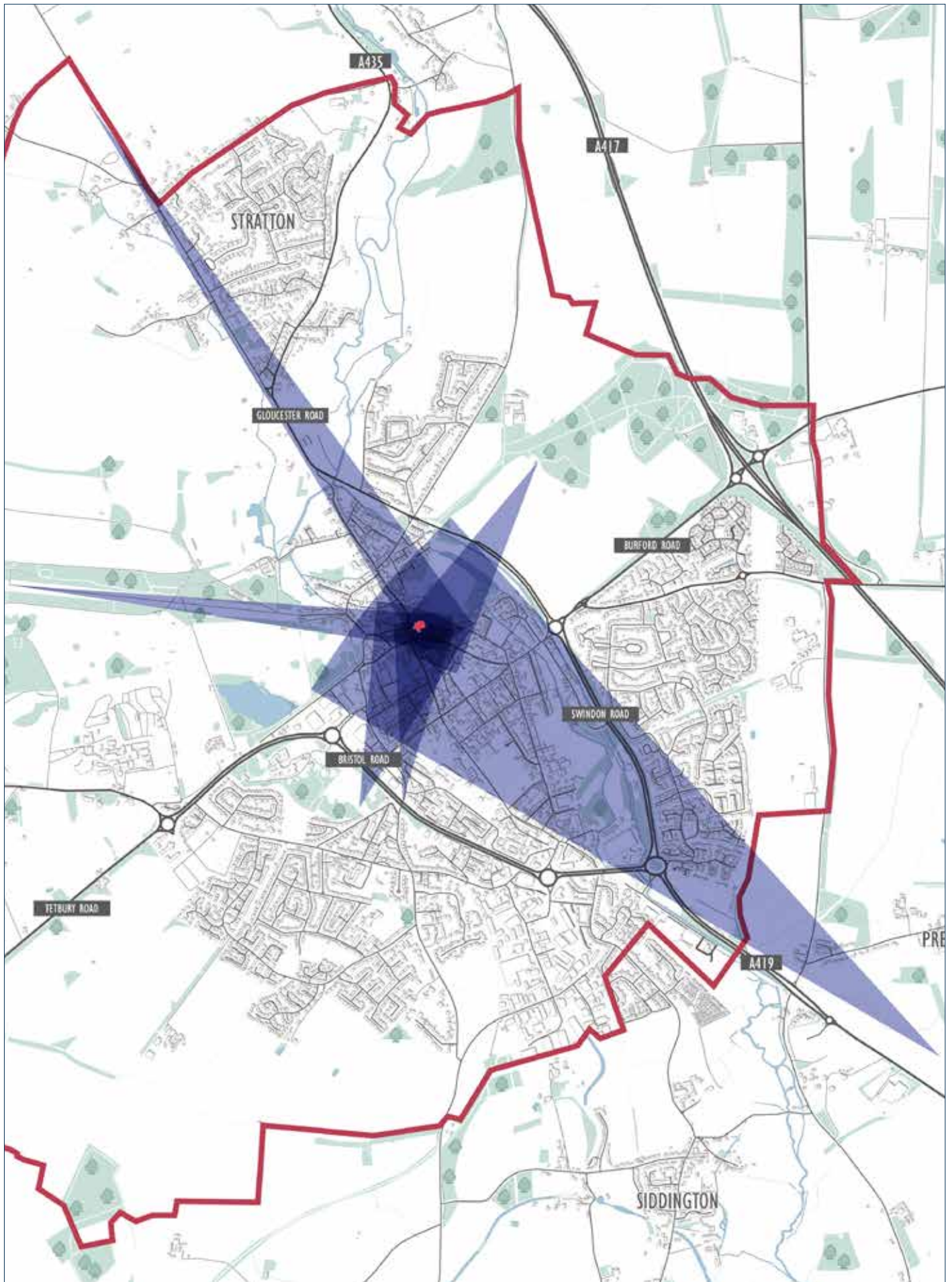
Preston



Amphitheatre



Tar Bushes



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

7.20 New development should respect and respond positively to the character of the Cotswold vernacular and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the town and providing value to the public realm. Good, contemporary design that is complimentary to the historic environment will be acceptable and preferable to pastiche.

7.21 The need for high quality design is a core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It emphasises that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”. It goes on to say that “Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development”. Cirencester has grown over time, with the historic medieval core responding to its location and cultural heritage, the surrounding landscape and built form, and with the use of traditional materials that reflected the geology of the wider area. These elements help shape the character of the built form.

f) Riverside Walk: Much valued Riverside Walk with open fields towards Stratton which enhance the area and its emphasis on wildlife. Probably prone to flooding and therefore unlikely to be built on but still noted.

g) Powell’s School Playing Fields from the Barton Allotments: Open aspect from extensive school playing fields which can ‘sometimes’ offer potential to reduce in size and zone for development.

h) Approaching town from Gloucester Road: Could be compromised with any development of the commercial garage site on the left, or petrol station on the right of the distant eyeline.

POLICY DBE 2 – PROTECTION OF LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE VIEWS

Development proposals should demonstrate through a Design and Access Statement or Visual Impact Statement how they will protect and enhance the following views, identified as important to the landscape and townscape of Cirencester:

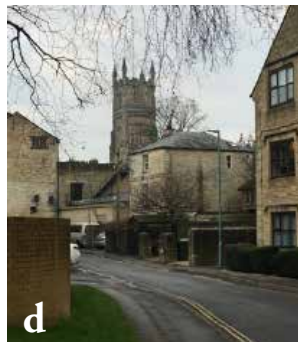
a) Rear of the former Watermoor Primary School: The school is currently empty and vulnerable to development. The ‘glimpse’ of the church spire is enjoyed as you approach from higher ground behind the premises. Roof line or development on the playing field could and would affect this.

b) Churn Meadow Stratton: Towards the town, enjoyed by dog walkers and accessible for all, it is also a valued green space.

c) Tower Street towards the St John Baptist Parish Church: A particularly significant central view, any development or change to the Police Station building could affect this approach with the Forum Car Park on the right.

d) The rear of the former House of Fraser building: The back of the former House of Fraser building in the Market Place, which could be described as a mismatch of previous development, still presents an aspect of the St John Baptist Parish Church that invites anticipation of what is to come and could be affected by changes to the rear of the building.

e) Somerford Road walking towards Sheep Street: Commercial buildings are probably unlikely to change but behind this aspect is Querns Lane with an empty large shop which currently has the potential to be developed into residential town houses or flats.





SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 7.22 Cirencester is a growing town with an historic core within the town centre which should be protected to retain the special historic character.
- 7.23 The siting and design of new buildings plays an important role in how a place functions and contributes to reinforcing local character and a sense of place. Buildings should generally be sited and designed (in terms of scale, mass, width, size, architectural quality, and material used) to enclose streets and spaces and contribute to legibility and wayfinding, to reinforce the existing historic medieval urban grain and quality, making it easier for people to find their way around. Well designed, beautiful buildings with high quality materials can bring variety and vibrancy to an area and contribute to the local distinctiveness of a place.
- 7.24 The Cotswold District Local Plan preserves key views in D66 of the Cotswold Design Code with no greater definition or audit of what these are. The Conservation Area views are essentially protected but areas of the town such as Watermoor with approaching glimpses of the town or approaches from outlying highways such as that from the A417 have less protection.
- 7.25 The Neighbourhood Plan, rooted in community appraisal of what is felt important to protect, provided an opportunity to highlight and document those valued by residents to ensure higher protection, assisted by the Civic Society members. These views are subsequently supported by the Cirencester Conservation Appraisal draft map.
- 7.26 Many views are iconic and have a degree of protection by being surrounded by or within Conservation Areas, each view known for its distinctiveness, visual impact, visibility, and sense of place. Others are glimpses of the wider landscape such as the Amphitheatre or landmarks such as the former malthouse on Cricklade Street.
- 7.27 Vulnerable views have been identified as having some potential to be negatively impacted by development, especially where buildings may change, be demolished, and replaced with taller buildings. The eight views identified within Policy DBE2 have the potential to be particularly compromised by development and are considered to fit this description.

POLICY DBE 3 – CONVERSION OF EXISTING PROPERTIES

a) Due to the negative impact on the appearance and character of the town centre and where planning permission is required, proposals for the merging of multiple units within Cirencester Town Centre will need to show:

- 1) how it will minimise any detrimental impact on the Conservation Area*
- 2) that the tenant or occupier will be providing much needed services*

b) Redevelopment proposals will be supported where, through the design of the ground floor retail units, small, local, and/or independent traders are encouraged to locate in the town centre.

c) The conversion to residential of under-utilised commercial upper floors across the town centre will be supported to create a more vibrant and vital town centre, as appropriate to the nature of the development concerned. Support will be given if proposals are to a high design standard, respect the scale of neighbouring buildings and the ground floor continues to provide an active and animated frontage onto the street.

d) The sub-division of houses over 200m² gross internal floor area to create a studio, one, or two bedroomed self-contained apartments will be supported, subject to design quality.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 7.28 Changing patterns of economic activity across the town centre, including the decline in retail activity, has left many units empty. Even those that are occupied at ground floor level often have unused upper floors above shops and commercial premises. Bringing these upper floors back into use as residential accommodation would meet housing needs and increase town centre footfall leading to a more vibrant local economy. Meanwhile, sub-division of large houses can make more efficient use of the existing historic built form, to satisfy a housing need for smaller sized accommodation and increase the vibrancy of the neighbourhood and the housing mix and density.
- 7.29 Furthermore, this would increase housing in a sustainable location, which would encourage less car reliance and help reduce carbon footprints. It would also increase night-time surveillance of the public realm, making it safer.
- 7.30 Redundant commercial buildings and large residential houses should be the focus of Policy DBE 3, to encourage the efficient reuse of existing embodied energy within structures. This also helps to provide much needed homes for the smallest household size, as starter homes for first-time buyers, key workers and for more elderly households. Town centre living, with its proximity of services, and the reduced need for larger dwellings, appeals to all these cohorts.
- 7.31 Smaller retail floor plates (< 300 sqm) can often be more attractive to small, local, and/or independent retailers than large format units and therefore redevelopment proposals should include a significant proportion of retail units of 300m² or less.

POLICY DBE 4 – PROTECTION OF NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

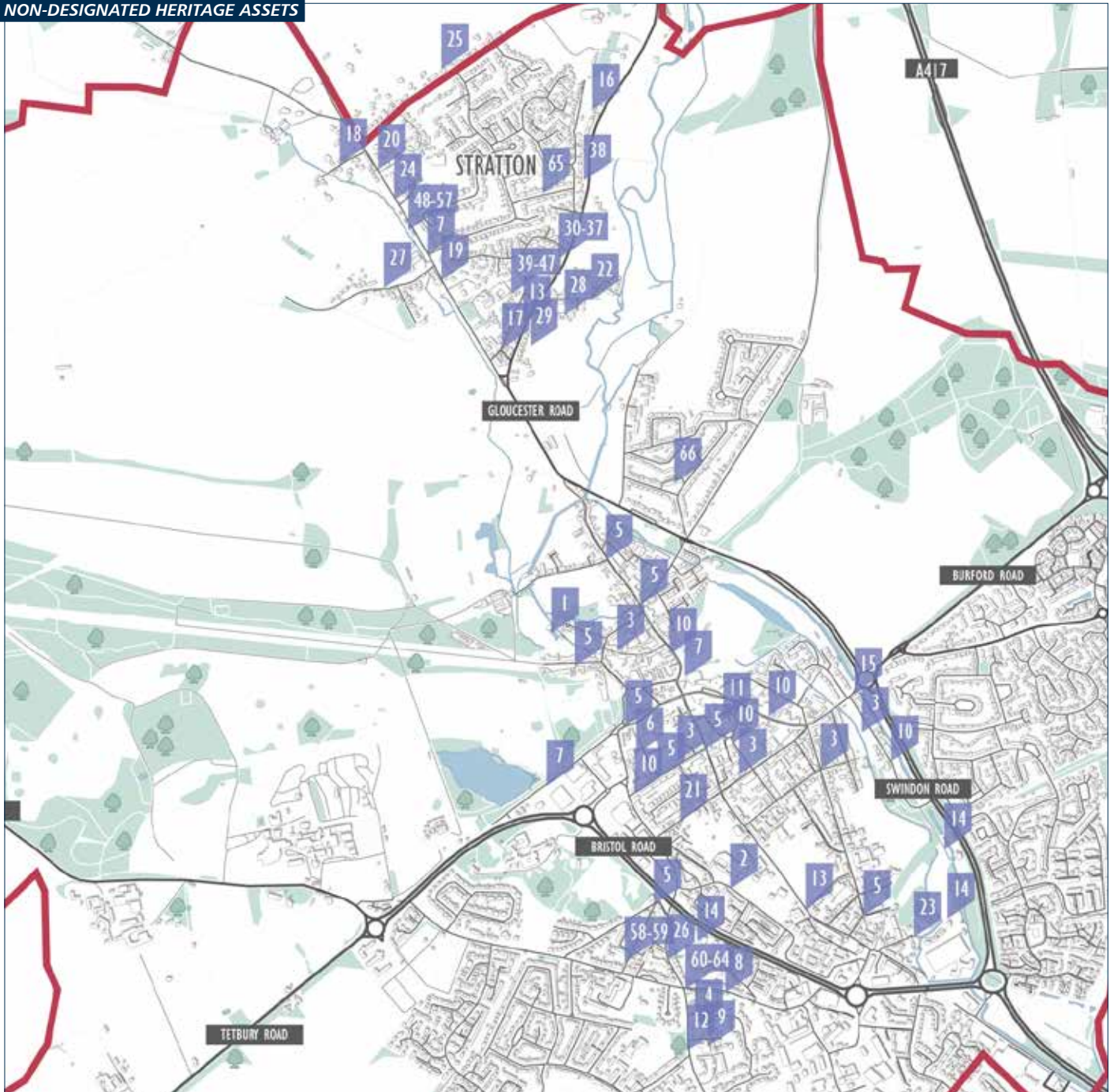
a) The identified Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) shown on the Map and listed at Appendix 5 make a positive contribution to the townscape and will be protected from inappropriate demolition or alteration.

b) Any new development or alteration to an existing structure will be required in its design, scale, and materials to preserve or enhance the setting of heritage assets, whether designated or undesignated, and the historic character of the town, and to have regard to the guidance in the Cirencester Streetscape Strategy.

c) Any application for new development or alteration to an existing structure should include an appraisal of the site and its surroundings, with drawings showing its relationship to heritage assets, whether designated or undesignated, including roofscapes and views.

d) The application should clearly explain how the development proposals have taken account of the findings of such an appraisal.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS



For more details please see Appendix 5



a local publication, Cirencester Scene, which is distributed free to each household and business in the town.

7.40 A list of approximately 80 submissions was assessed for appropriateness for designation, assisted by advice from the Heritage Officer and using the Historic England criteria outlined below:

- ARCHITECTURAL: the age and locally distinct in material retaining significant structure;
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL: supported by clear evidence;
- GROUP VALUE: having association through use or design;
- RARITY: as judged against other features;
- LANDMARK: is it striking and with strong association with location, event, or community;
- DESIGNED LANDSCAPE: such as a garden setting, structured landscapes, and parks;
- EVIDENTIAL: is there documentation of past historical use or history;
- COMPLETENESS: is there enough fabric and features to be understood;
- SOCIAL HISTORY: features that are illustrative of historic local life;
- ECONOMIC HISTORY: illustrative of historic commercial activity;
- COMMUNAL VALUE: connected with collective local memories.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 7.32 All heritage assets have significance, either with designated status or as a non - designated heritage asset. The contribution made by their setting to the significance, also varies. Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all have the same capacity to accommodate change without harming the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it. Within and beyond the Conservation Areas of Cirencester there are many unlisted features, buildings and structures that contribute to the visual, architectural, and social history of the town which, in the absence of a local list, are currently unprotected as historic assets.
- 7.33 Representative of architecture styles, commercial life, or industrial activity, non-designated heritage assets are distinctive, contributing to evidence of local life. These types of assets can be removed or altered. This policy aims to retain and enhance high quality, locally important, buildings and structures over the town and in the Conservation Areas, and to avoid the danger of heritage assets being allowed to be neglected leading to demolition or removal. This includes unprotected high quality heritage buildings and unique reminders of Cirencester's past.
- 7.34 The Somerford Road area and industrial heritage in Watermoor, includes architectural features such as industrial signage, older street name plaques, rare post boxes, and commemorative street benches which are unlisted.
- 7.35 Several are representations of the evolution of the town, architecturally and socially, particularly over the last century during industrialisation and merit consideration in planning decisions which should exercise a balanced judgement on their contribution to the setting, history, and character of the town.
- 7.36 The industrial legacy of the town is particularly shown by commercial signage and parts of the redundant railway network with the social history of commemorative benches, street signs and post boxes.
- 7.37 The current position regarding any Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) in Cirencester is reflected in the adopted Cotswold District Local Plan suggesting development affecting a NDHA will be 'permitted' where it is sympathetic and enhances the character or will be 'resisted', but with no current local list the assets this protection extends to is missing.
- 7.38 The Neighbourhood Plan has the authority to tighten the wording associated with a planning application that may affect a heritage asset by identifying NDHAs to form a local list, providing the decisions to identify them are based on sound evidence.
- 7.39 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group formed a sub-group supported by a Heritage Officer from Cotswold District Council and requested nominations from stakeholders such as the Civic Society. An advert asking the public for suggestions, was placed in

7.41 Further NDHAs may be identified in the future that meet the criteria outlined at 7.40, provided evidence for the justification is included.

7.42 The benefit will be the further and greater protection of the less observed and previously noted heritage of the town including its social, commercial, and industrial evolution.

DESIGN AND ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 7.43 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to drive net-zero carbon development within Cirencester through sustainable design, build, and operation of new development and development with outline permission. The policies in the Plan aim to adapt Cirencester's building stock to mitigate the effects of climate change, contributing to the national target of net-zero carbon.
- 7.44 There is a climate emergency (Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Reports, Climate Change Committee Reports and pathways, Cotswold District Council declaration, and

Cirencester Town Council declaration). The UK has legislated for net-zero by 2050 (The Climate Change Act 2008, as amended). The Committee on Climate Change (CoCC) pathway to net-zero includes ultra-efficient new buildings, low carbon heat and ambitious retrofit to existing buildings.

- 7.45 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires a positive strategy to deliver renewable and low carbon energy and heat and makes clear that the planning system should help shape places to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The UK Government considers local authorities are best placed to drive local progress towards national climate change commitments. The updated Cotswold District Local Plan aims to be green to its core to support the aim of achieving net-zero (Source: CDC priorities, April 2020 and partial update to the Local Plan).
- 7.46 Engagement with the public as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan identified heritage, better town integration and climate change as the top three most important aims indicating broad agreement for measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Wider consultation supports a vision which places climate change mitigation on the same level as both heritage and better town integration.
- 7.47 For Cirencester to respond to the Town Council's 2019 Climate Emergency declaration and contribute to national targets, each type of building will require a different approach. The design, development and operation of new development should be net-zero, also known as carbon neutral.
- 7.48 Cirencester's need for new housing and its contribution to the district's housing need to 2033, already has a grant of outline permission. The design, construction and operation of this housing should also be net-zero.
- 7.49 This will not be possible, or certainly very difficult, for existing building stock to achieve and a different approach will be needed such as an ambitious approach to existing and heritage building stock which improves performance equivalent to an energy performance certificate of at least EPC C or similar.
- 7.50 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that design and build to Building Regulations, Part L and Future Homes 2025 will not achieve carbon neutrality and sets reasonable targets that exceeds these regulations.
- 7.51 The UK Green Building Council defines a net-zero carbon operational building as: "the amount of carbon emissions associated with the building's operational energy on an annual basis is zero or negative. A net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and powered from on-site and/or off-site renewable energy sources, with any remaining carbon balance offset."
- 7.52 The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan set clear and measurable outcomes through specifying energy targets which are supported by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the UK Green Building Council (GBC), and the Climate Change Committee (CCC), a statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 7.53 Furthermore, the policies in this Plan, recognise the construction industry, and its clients are increasingly active in achieving net-zero buildings with available and affordable skills, techniques, and technologies. Occupants and owners are also seeking energy efficient buildings, partly to meet their green agenda and partly to reduce through-life cost of space heating.

POLICY DBE 5 – NET-ZERO & ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES IN THE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

- a) Proposals should demonstrate that solutions to minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions have been adopted and included at each stage of the design and construction process.*
- b) Proposals should demonstrate how greenhouse gas emissions are minimised and reduced as part of the site identification and selection process, site layout and orientation, construction methodology, thermal properties of materials, choice of glazing, choice of construction materials, avoidance of materials harmful to the environment, use of local materials and people, incorporation of sustainable modes of transport, integration with existing or planned sustainable travel networks, recharging points for electric vehicles, flexible and adaptable space, water efficiency, incorporation of systems to collect rain and grey water, use of permeable surface and sub-base materials.*
- c) Proposals should follow an energy hierarchy as outlined in the supporting text.*
- d) Non-residential development, design and construction should comply with the BREEAM standard and achieve an 'excellent' accreditation or an alternative standard which achieves the same or better outcome.*
- e) Carbon off-setting will not be permitted.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 7.54 This policy aims to establish a process during the development, design, build and operation to minimise energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and set out adaptations to mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 7.55 The energy hierarchy takes a fabric first approach to maximise the energy and thermal performance of the fabric of the building, minimising energy use, before considering other items in the list. LETI (London Energy Transformative Initiative) has modelled energy performance which shows that a fabric first approach increases capital costs by 4.8% compared to Building Regulations, Part L. The running cost is reduced by 25% to 50% compared to Part L and Future Homes.
- 7.56 This approach means buildings will be warm and comfortable with minimum energy usage and, in the short and long term, significantly reduce the energy cost of keeping the building warm.
- 7.57 The following energy hierarchy places the most favourable option at the top, and least favourable at the bottom. The first option is to be fully utilised before moving to the next option.

7.58 The energy hierarchy is:

- 7.58.1 fabric-first to minimise overall and space heating demand before considering other options;
- 7.58.2 maximise energy efficiency within the building;
- 7.58.3 incorporate renewable energy;
- 7.58.4 use low carbon energy; and as the last option,
- 7.58.5 use other sources of energy.

7.59 The CCC states that retrofitting measures to mitigate climate change including improvement to the thermal performance of the building fabric are five times more expensive than if the same measures were installed at build. It is better to include measures to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change at the design and build stages.

7.60 The DBE 5 Policy reference to carbon off-setting not being permitted, acknowledges the CCC recommendation that net-zero cannot be achieved with extensive use of off-setting.

POLICY DBE 6 – ENERGY USE IN NEW BUILDINGS

a) New residential developments should not use fossil fuels on-site for space heating or hot water provision.

b) New residential developments should achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) (or metered energy use) of no more than 35 kWh/m²/year for regulated and unregulated demand assessed using energy modelling such as a Passivhaus Planning Package or similar. This is based on the total amount of energy needed within a residential building per year.

c) New residential developments should achieve a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m²/year assessed using energy modelling such as Passivhaus Planning Package or similar. This is based on the level of heat energy needed within a residential building per year to maintain a regular temperature.

d) Non-residential developments should achieve an energy utilisation intensity or metered input of 55 to 65 kWh/m²/year (subject to building use) and a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m²/year assessed using energy modelling such as Passivhaus Planning Package or similar.

e) On-site renewable energy should meet all the energy consumption needs of new residential buildings.

f) The strategy for metering, monitoring, reporting, energy calculations, and predicted energy use should be confirmed as part of the planning submissions for outline and detailed grant of permission and reconfirmed before the commencement of construction.

g) Variations on the requirements of this policy will be allowed only under exceptional circumstances where in complying with the above the development causing harm, or harm to the character of the wider area, or extraordinary reasons, clearly demonstrated where the standards above cannot be achieved.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

7.61 The reference to new buildings means all buildings completed during or after 2025.

7.62 The energy utilisation and space heating demands set out in the policy are recommended by LETI in its Climate Emergency Design Guide and supported by RIBA, UKGBC and the CCC as targets necessary to achieve carbon neutrality. LETI provides a common set of metrics and targets which allow new buildings to achieve net-zero or carbon neutrality by 2030.

7.63 These targets are being implemented by several planning authorities both in emerging and made local plans. The partial update to the Cotswold District Local Plan refers to the LETI design code. The clear targets in Policy DBE 6 can be monitored and measured through utility meters installed in each building.

7.64 Design, development, and construction should comply with the BREEAM standard and achieve an 'excellent' accreditation or an alternative standard which achieves the same or better outcome.

DBE 7 – HOMES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

Proposals for the development of new Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) will be supported where the development:

a) Does not harm the residential amenity or character of the locality as a result of excessive noise.

b) Does not increase levels of on-street parking, that cannot reasonably be regulated through parking control measures.

c) Does not lead to inadequate off-street storage of refuse and bicycles.

d) Is on a site in an electoral ward where under 10% of homes are currently HMOs.

e) Has no existing HMO within 5 dwellings on either side of the property or on the opposite side of the street, within 10 dwellings.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

7.65 Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) form an important part of the town's private rented accommodation, providing homes and contributing to housing choice. HMOs are generally more affordable and flexible and can be suitable for younger people and other households not living as families. Increasing numbers of individuals are unable to afford to buy a home or rent a flat in the town due to increases in costs and so access to HMOs is important for these individuals. Sharing homes can also help younger people, especially newly arrived in the town, to form new networks and relationships. It is also important to support further education establishments, like the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), to provide suitable student accommodation.

7.66 While the town's stock of HMOs is contributing to meeting housing needs, creating a greater mix of residents, and a more balanced community, they can also create harmful impacts, which affect community's health and wellbeing, for example through noise and disturbance, poor waste management, increased pressure for on-street parking and a more transient community lacking cohesion.

7.67 It is a higher concentration of HMOs in specific neighbourhood areas that is having the most negative impact on local communities.

7.68 The largest proportion of demand for HMOs in the town is from the student community attending the Royal Agricultural University (RAU). The Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment (ORS 2020, LHNA) notes that the RAU has 1,200 students and aims to increase this to 1,500. There are 870 living off campus mainly in the town's privately rented sector.

7.69 This could therefore increase by 300 to 1,170 students if no new purpose-built student accommodation is provided. Assuming 3.6 students per dwelling, an extra 83 student HMOs could be needed, leaving aside those who are forced to live in neighbouring villages or towns due to the lack of availability.

7.70 The 2011 census suggests there are around 315 homes within Cirencester with 'no usual' residents, being around 3.6% of the total housing stock (8,717) which is low compared to the rest of the Cotswold district. Cotswold District Council's public protection team have a record of 42 licenced HMOs, being over five residents per dwelling, with over half in the electoral ward of Chesterton. There is a need for more local housing data on existing HMOs from Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

7.71 But even with limited data, there appears to be a need to avoid concentrations of HMOs by spreading them more evenly across the town, despite the student's natural desire to live closer to the University.

7.72 Small HMOs occupied by between 3 to 5 individuals and who share basic amenities such as a kitchen, bathroom, or toilet, are not covered by this policy as they have permitted development rights. Only large HMOs, of more than 5 individuals, are covered by this policy, as these require planning consent.

7.73 The purpose of Policy DBE 7 is to prevent harm to the character, appearance of the property, adjoining properties, or their local context. Furthermore, to prevent an unacceptable impact on the amenities of adjoining neighbours, including the need for sufficient amenity space, refuse storage, and car and cycle storage to a suitable standard. The aim of the policy being to avoid an over concentration of HMOs in any one electoral ward.

7.74 Policy DBE 7 is needed to help deliver the increased student accommodation needs resulting from growth of the RAU, and of other young single residents, finding it difficult to find affordable accommodation, in a sustainable way. Reducing the potential harmful impacts on communities that could occur from high concentrations of HMOs, it will also ensure that HMOs can continue to form part of the town's housing stock, particularly close to local amenities, and provide an affordable form of accommodation for those that need it.



CIRENCESTER DESIGN CHECK LIST FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

The design checklist has been prepared to support developers, landowners, their designers, and architects when preparing planning applications.

While there is a vast range of qualities that contribute to the overall sense of place, the primary components are the **built form** – the layout & arrangement, scale, massing, and details of the building that enclose the streets and spaces – and the **public realm** – the streets and spaces, as formed by the enclosure of the adjacent buildings.

The checklist is set out with the following categories:

- Layout & Arrangement
- Height & Scale
- Materials & Details
- Resource Efficiency
- Streets & Spaces



CHECKLIST - LAYOUT & ARRANGEMENT

- The scale of new development should be in keeping with the historic urban grain, to help to create a sense of enclosure to streets and spaces, but also reflect the great variety of building scales within the historic core.

- The contribution made by the historic urban grain, and the style and materials of its buildings, should be reflected within all town centre redevelopment proposals.

- The density of development should encourage the efficient use of land which can bring the benefits of social vibrancy and interaction, as well as security of streets by passive surveillance, while ensuring privacy. It should reflect the hierarchy of urban density, highest within the historic town centre and neighbourhood centres, and reduce towards the peri urban areas, with increased green spaces.

- Increasing the density of existing low density suburban areas by high quality roof and rear extensions will be supported, whether they are traditional or contemporary in design. This increase in population will

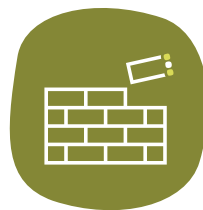
help to support local facilities and reduces the pressure to develop green field sites.

- Where new plots are being formed, these should reflect the existing grain and pattern of development where these form a significant characteristic in the street scene, unless this would conflict with other policies.
- New development within the town centre and Conservation Areas, should develop a sense of place that reflects, reveals, celebrates, and contributes to the layers of history.
- Street sections and block sizes should reflect and reinforce the existing medieval hierarchy found elsewhere in the town. Application of these street sections to the opportunity sites will ensure an appropriate response to the Cirencester context. Narrow street sections will also provide shade as part of a response to climate change and ensuring a resilient town.
- Increase the mixed use of buildings by, for instance, converting commercial upper floors to residential and incorporating shops and offices within residential buildings.



CHECKLIST – HEIGHT & SCALE

- The local character of Cirencester is defined by a great diversity of urban forms and scales which have evolved over time and with important public and religious buildings breaking through to create a dramatic skyline (St John Baptist Parish Church in the Market Place and the Watermoor Parish Church). Buildings within the historic core should be no more than three storey plus an extra attic within the roof space, to a maximum height of 12m above ground level.
- The creation of a hierarchy of buildings that differ in scale and order when located on prominent corners or where they form the focal point, for example as a result of a bend in the road which places a building at the end of a sight line, will be supported.
- All proposed roof heights for new development must not damage the setting of the town's significant listed buildings. Also views of these buildings from within the town and from the outlying countryside should be retained. So, within these cones of view, overall building heights of development will be limited.
- The Cotswold style roof pitches and Arts & Crafts local tradition tend to be over 45 degrees, while the Georgian design uses parapet walls and low-pitched roof. These storey heights are important in creating the established urban form of the town and fourth storey rooms in the roof will be encouraged. Roofline silhouettes which assimilate well with adjoining properties and skyline will be encouraged.
- To make best use of space, roofs that can provide complementary amenity uses will be considered. On a wide span building, this might include a bowling green or for a raised deck car park a treed-roof garden.



CHECKLIST – MATERIALS & DETAILS

- Buildings should be designed with construction details and materials which ensure both a long life and minimal maintenance. Poorly specified materials and details can cause a rapid deterioration in the building's appearance and that of its setting. The need for building maintenance should be designed-out to avoid this danger as well as reducing its lifelong maintenance carbon footprint.
- All new developments should be designed and built to achieve the highest standards of urban appearance over its life-time.
- Concrete materials, like reconstituted stone and reconstituted stone tiles, which have very high embodied energy, will be resisted.
- Respect for the appearance of adjoining properties and the local neighbourhood, by the use of high-quality design and natural local materials, will be supported. The appearance of natural materials, with low embodied energy, if well detailed, can bring variety, local distinctiveness and vibrancy and will improve in appearance as materials weather.
- New development within the traditional, historic streetscapes should respond positively to the Cotswold vernacular and to the distinctive Cirencester context. Proposals for new development (both residential and commercial) in the Plan area should demonstrate architectural design standards of the highest quality and maintain and enhance local character.
- New development should reflect the local building forms and traditions, material and architectural detailing that are significant in the local area, and maintain or, where appropriate, enhance local character.
- The use of imaginative, innovative, and contemporary designs and materials which enable buildings to achieve net zero construction performance and promote sustainability, without harming the character of the Conservation Areas, will be supported.
- The size, proportion, materials and detailing of replacement windows should reflect the original within Conservation Areas and those listed as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.
- The removal of historic architectural details including chimneys, which could detract from the appearance of the original structure will be resisted within Conservation Areas and Non-Designated Heritage Assets.
- Shop fascias and hanging signs, including illumination and size, within Conservation Areas and Non-Designated Heritage Assets, should be of a design in keeping with the character of the area.
- Windows and doors should be setback behind the wall face to create a 100mm reveal, and stone cills with a 50mm overhang. This creates a shadow to the reveal and creates a sense of solidity.



CHECKLIST – RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

- All new developments should be built to net-zero construction and energy efficient building methods.
- The design of a new development should minimise its embodied energy used within the provision of its materials and construction. The sourcing of local materials, and the reuse and recycling of existing materials will be encouraged.
- Existing buildings should be retained and upgraded to the same high energy efficient standard as new build, only where there is a saving in the use of embodied energy.
- All development should increase the potential for ecological biodiversity, not only through the design of the buildings but also through its external materials, organic plant selection and varied landscaping.
- On-site generation, such as solar PV (photovoltaics) and heat pumps, should be considered from the outset of the design process.
- Measures to conserve and recycle water should be demonstrated by all new developments. Sustainable urban drainage design should be included within all development to ensure that the project does not increase the risk of flooding adjoining properties.

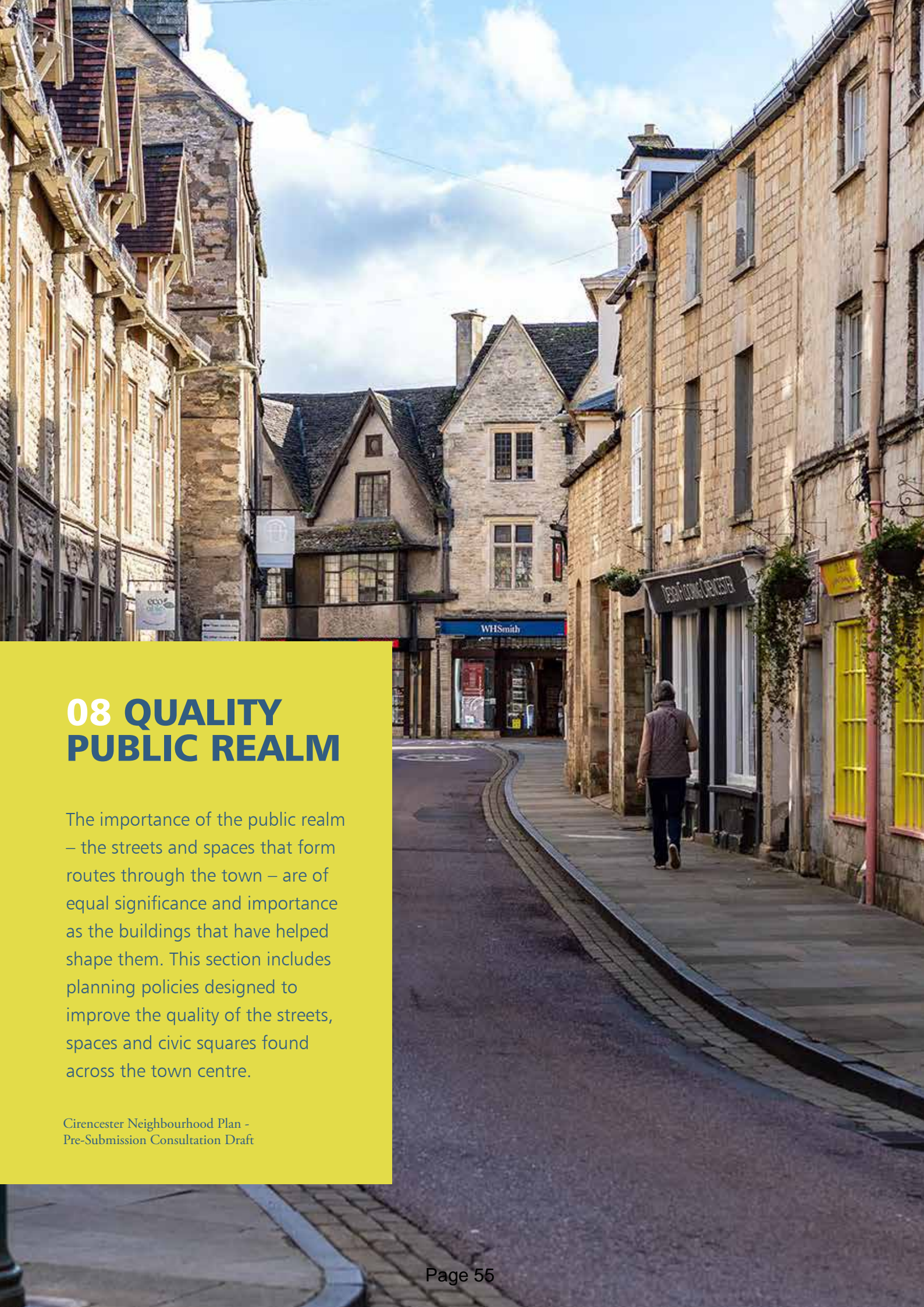


CHECKLIST – STREETS & SPACES

- Development proposals should create layouts and alignment of streets which both curve and vary in width, to form a staggered building line and protected areas at street level.
- The layout of streets, courtyards and building footprints should allow glimpsed views of the St John Baptist Parish Church tower, or where appropriate, incorporate open vistas to the tower.
- Provide sufficient space for trees to develop and properly mature. Select species for approval by the Cotswold District Council Tree Officer and include root barriers, permeable tree guards, irrigation pipes and a commitment to on-going maintenance.
- The streets are to be designed to allow the free movement of pedestrians prioritised over cyclists who in turn are prioritised over vehicles. In addition, there should be segregated (or areas delineated by bollards) that exclude vehicles altogether to allow the temporary and informal use of space for seating, vendors, and performance.

- Designated cycle routes will be incorporated into developments to contribute to the linking of established Sustrans cycle routes with the town. The width of allocated land for these routes should be sufficient to allow native hedgerows and trees to establish and thus provide the additional benefit of a wildlife corridor to connect pockets of biodiversity.
- The spatial arrangement of differing but complementary surface materials, channels and edgings will be arranged to form a shared space, that is to delineate the traditional carriageway pattern in order to discourage any sense of vehicle 'ownership' and therefore any assumption of priority. Where car access and parking is required, vehicle speeds will be restricted. On-street parking within the public realm will be time limited with private parking within communal courtyards located to the north of the built development.
- Buildings will incorporate publicly accessible passageways leading to footpaths, the location of which will be led by the natural desire lines between destinations.
- Public art, typically interpreted as sculptural, has the potential to express and communicate important cultural and social concepts. The form that it takes, be it literal and figurative or more abstract can be divisive. It differs from the design language of other street furniture in that contemporary pieces are often seen successfully within more historic settings. The inclusion of public art should be considered from the outset of the design process.
- Incorporate designated locations for future public art commissions including raised empty plinths.
- External public street lighting should ensure the safety and security of pedestrians and cyclists. It should be as unobtrusive as possible and integrated into the landscape. Doors and windows facing the street, when lit at night, can reduce the need for external lighting and ensure that people feel safe.
- Pedestrian routes should be prioritised with open spaces, and wild areas should be left unlit to avoid pollution, light spillage, and harm to wildlife.
- Street furniture, benches, bollards, cycle stands, bins, signage, and lighting should be sympathetic to the contextual architecture and any existing retained furniture and respond to the needs of those who have a visual impairment or are less mobile.





08 QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

The importance of the public realm – the streets and spaces that form routes through the town – are of equal significance and importance as the buildings that have helped shape them. This section includes planning policies designed to improve the quality of the streets, spaces and civic squares found across the town centre.

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08

QUALITY PUBLIC REALM

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

8.1 The importance of the public realm, the streets and spaces that form routes through the town, are of equal significance and importance as the buildings that have helped shape them. Their value transcends the mere functional aspect of creating links between destinations. They provide the principal infrastructure for social engagement within the town, from large formal gatherings such as the Remembrance Day Parade and Mop Fair to the Charter Markets and chance meetings that occur between friends and acquaintances.

8.2 The current arrangement of streets and open spaces belong to three distinct phases of development: the Medieval, the Victorian & Edwardian and the Modern 20th Century streets (Source: Cirencester Town Centre Public Realm Design Code – a Cirencester Town Council commissioned document through Portus and Whitton):

8.2.1 **MEDIEVAL STREETS:** these form the town historic core and the streets to the north. They are typically narrow winding streets, with Cotswold stone buildings. There are, nevertheless, a number of notable Georgian buildings within this medieval core.

8.2.2 **VICTORIAN & EDWARDIAN STREETS:** many of these developed following the arrival of the railways. As a consequence, the materials are more varied with the widespread use of red brick evident in some streets. They are mostly located to the south of the town centre, closer to the railway sidings and wharfs. These streets typically adopt a rectilinear street pattern and are wider sometimes including formal street tree planting.

8.2.3 **20TH CENTURY STREETS:** these have been developed during the interwar and post Second World War periods. This includes peripheral areas of redevelopment around the edges of the town centre as well as larger swathes of development that took place following the closure of the railways in the 1960s.

8.3 All three streetscapes referenced at 8.2, were established before the meteoric rise in private car ownership post 1945. The prevailing sentiment within highway departments was to re-engineer town centres and maximise capacity for vehicle movements.

8.4 In Cirencester, this resulted in four lanes of traffic within the Market Place including areas of deterrent paving to dissuade pedestrians from crossing the road. Continuing growth in car ownership resulted in the creation of the ring road. The legacy of this within the town centre was a predominance of tarmac surfacing, concrete kerbs and narrow pavements which are unattractive to look at, less accommodating for public events, particularly problematic for buggies, mobility scooters and wheelchairs and unworthy of the many listed buildings.



8.5 To remedy this, two main phases of works in the town centre have taken place, the re-surfacing works to Park Street and Silver Street and the regeneration of the Market Place as a pedestrian priority space, whilst providing less dominant vehicular access to local amenities.

8.6 With changes to the one-way system, the latter reduced the volume of regional cars within the town, created significant areas of pedestrian space using high quality street furniture and surface materials and was detailed in a way to respond to and enhance the setting of the buildings. Since its completion in 2017, awareness of the impact of car exhausts and particulates has increased, strengthening the case for the reduction in vehicles in town centres.

8.7 The success of the schemes referenced at 8.5, set the template for further enhancements within the wider town centre. The aims of which are set out in the Access and Movement section of the Plan under Policy AM 3, which relates to the dynamics of pedestrian movement, in contrast to the experience as outlined in this section of the Plan.

8.8 In referring to these aims, the principal objectives are to:

8.8.1 reduce further the volume of regional traffic that uses the town centre as a short cut;

8.8.2 widen pavements and thereby reduce carriage way widths to favour pedestrian space and inhibit traffic speeds;

8.8.3 implement a programme of resurfacing which creates a pedestrian priority environment;

8.8.4 remove unnecessary street clutter and introduce additional tree planting and seating within these areas that follows an agreed design language appropriate to its context.

8.9 The selection of street furniture in style, colour and material can complement, strengthen, and enhance the contextual architectural character. This applies to features such as seating, litter bins, cycle racks and bollards. Where wider uniformity is helpful, i.e. to signage and heritage trails, a more neutral functional appearance will be supported. This applies to the font, the base colour, and absence of period embellishment.

- 8.10 Cirencester's gateways, the 'points of arrival', are described as the location where, on approaching the town centre, the viewer becomes aware of crossing the threshold into the historic core. This awareness is often heralded by the view of the St John Baptist Parish Church tower, situated in the Market Place. The gateways into the town strengthen the sense of place and where they coincide with a 20mph zone, they act as a signal to car drivers that they are entering an area where pedestrians and cyclists are more likely to be crossing or sharing the road space.
- 8.11 Public art can be sculptural, figurative, literal, or abstract, floor, mounted or set on a plinth. It can be built in stone or wrought from metal, engraved statements in paving or pictorial as a mural. Each medium has the potential to express and communicate important cultural and social concepts. It differs from the design language of other street furniture in that contemporary pieces are often seen successfully within more historic settings.
- 8.12 The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments. They provide habitats and biodiversity particularly in built up areas with increased recognition of benefits that the visual presence provides to mental wellbeing. Urban landscapes that incorporate trees have been shown to encourage walking whilst enhancing social cohesion and connectivity. Trees also soften the lines of buildings and are increasingly being recognised as an important tool in the challenge of climate change.
- 8.13 A tree strategy is particularly required in new developments where trees are not only seen as having a role in landscaping design, helping new buildings blend into existing areas, but absorbing water and reducing flood risk, filtering air pollution and mitigating climate change, as they play an important part in atmospheric carbon capture. Suitably positioned they can also help keep buildings sheltered and cool so reducing energy costs. The Woodland Trust recommends 30% of the site of a new development is given to trees.
- 8.14 In addition to the important role that trees play in terms of biodiversity net gain and carbon sequestration, they also make a vital contribution in terms of health and wellbeing. For trees to fulfil this potential and generate meaningful, healthy growth, the following criteria are important and need to be approved prior to installation:
- 8.14.1 the frequency in rows, avenues, and blocks;
 - 8.14.2 their proximity to buildings, kerbs, and driveways;
 - 8.14.3 the size at which it is planted;
 - 8.14.4 the size and depth of the tree pit and the root barrier protection to avoid conflicts with existing services;
 - 8.14.5 the quality of backfill material and the inclusion of ameliorants and permeable irrigation pipework;
 - 8.14.6 the permeability of adjacent surfacing;
 - 8.14.7 the robustness and style of the ground level grid and tree guard;
 - 8.14.8 the initial maintenance regarding irrigation and feeding to achieve establishment and the longer-term maintenance to ensure growth is balanced and free from disease and dieback.
- 8.15 An inherent part of Cirencester's character is the use of indigenous limestone for buildings. This is the predominant material used throughout the town centre and its mellow appearance greatly enhances the public realm. Intrinsic to these qualities and to help facilitate the free movement of pedestrians, is the removal and avoidance of unnecessary street clutter. This applies particularly to the use of free-standing structures with illuminated advertisements which are designed to maximise their visual impact and therefore both distract from and commercialise the immediate environ. This is contrary to the policies enshrined within existing legislation the purpose of which is to protect the special character and appearance of buildings within Conservation Areas or the setting of Listed Buildings.



POLICY QPR1 – ILLUMINATED SIGNAGE

Unless it can be demonstrated that the introduction of free standing and wall mounted structures with illuminated advertisements have no detrimental visual or acoustic impact on the town centre Conservation Areas i.e. that they are contained discretely within the fabric of buildings, proposals to introduce these or similar structures will not be supported.

POLICY QPR2 – QUALITY STREETS & SPACES

a) The network of historic streets, parks, gardens, and spaces across the town will be protected and enhanced. Development proposals that would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the existing historic network will not be supported.

b) Development proposals will be supported which use the palette of heritage materials outlined in the Cirencester Town Centre Public Realm Design Code.

c) Where appropriate, new developments across the Plan area should contribute to the delivery of projects that help implement this policy.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 8.16 Cirencester has a wide range of different outdoor activities and events happening at any one time. It is therefore important to maintain and enhance this vitality through the protection of the public realm. Pedestrian routes and crossings need to be improved in accessibility, safety, and drainage. Any new development should encourage this and make footpaths wide enough for people to pass each other safely, where feasible. Introducing more seating throughout the town and achieving the correct balance between historic street surfaces and accessibility will help residents and visitors to discover and enjoy the heritage of Cirencester. Installation and maintenance of street trees and street furniture will be supported.
- 8.17 Specific areas that include proposals for improvements will be supported, for example in Cricklade Street, where its pedestrianisation will be supported, and the Dyer Street area around Catalpa Square. Whilst the alleyway between Dyer Street and The Waterloo [between Argos and The Salvation Army] has recently been enhanced it feels unsafe and is in poor repair compared to the Woolmarket. Improvements to Brewery Court will also be supported, including the courtyard with the mosaic which in the past has been neglected. There are also poor urban townscapes adjacent to car parks including the Forum and Sheep Street.

POLICY QPR 3 – SOCIAL & CIVIC SPACES

Where appropriate, new developments will be supported where they provide a clear network of well-designed social and civic spaces that can help support the cultural, social, and economic life of the town.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 8.19 Cirencester has a good network of social and civic spaces. New development should help enhance and expand this network. This policy will apply to large residential and commercial proposals such as town centre redevelopment (see Policy TC2) which will be developed over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Such proposals will present appropriate opportunities to incorporate social and civic spaces within their layouts.
- 8.20 Known colloquially in Cirencester as ‘bumping spaces’, urban spaces that encourage spontaneous or unexpected positive social interactions, the urban street pattern of the town is generally connected, permeable and attractive. Castle Street, Black Jack Street and Coxwell Street are some of the best examples. This policy aims to maintain and enhance these qualities across the town and ensure that new developments take on the same positive attributes.
- 8.21 The areas of green space on the edge of the town centre are used for sport and recreation and should not be lost. Equally, the green spaces that are enclosed in the centre of Cirencester are vital ‘breathing spaces’ for the town and unique to the local character. These spaces have been designated as Local Green Spaces to ensure their long-term protection.



POLICY QPR 4 – HERITAGE TRAILS & WAYFINDING SYSTEMS

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for heritage trails, wayfinding systems and the improved signposting of existing pedestrian and cycle routes within the town will be supported. Proposals that would facilitate better connections between the town centre, the surrounding areas and the wider countryside will be particularly encouraged.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 8.22 Cirencester has an important tourism economy but has no standardised town-wide welcome or signage strategy nor sufficient high-quality signage to the key heritage sites. Therefore, an improved and consistent signage strategy, including maps with directions to the cultural and heritage sites of Cirencester, is encouraged.
- 8.23 The term ‘wayfinding’ describes the processes people go through to find their way round an environment. The wayfinding process is fundamentally problem-solving and is affected by many factors such as people’s perception of the environment, the information available, their ability to orientate themselves spatially and the cognitive and decision-making processes they go through. A system of signs, information boards, ground surface marking, and other interventions in the urban environment can greatly assist with the understanding of the town and the ability to navigate from place to place.



09 THE 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The 20 Minute Neighbourhood model of urban planning is about creating attractive, interesting, safe, walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively for short distances from home to the destinations that they visit and the services they need to use day to day such as shopping, school, community and healthcare facilities, places of work, green spaces, and more. This section explores how this concept could be applied to Cirencester.

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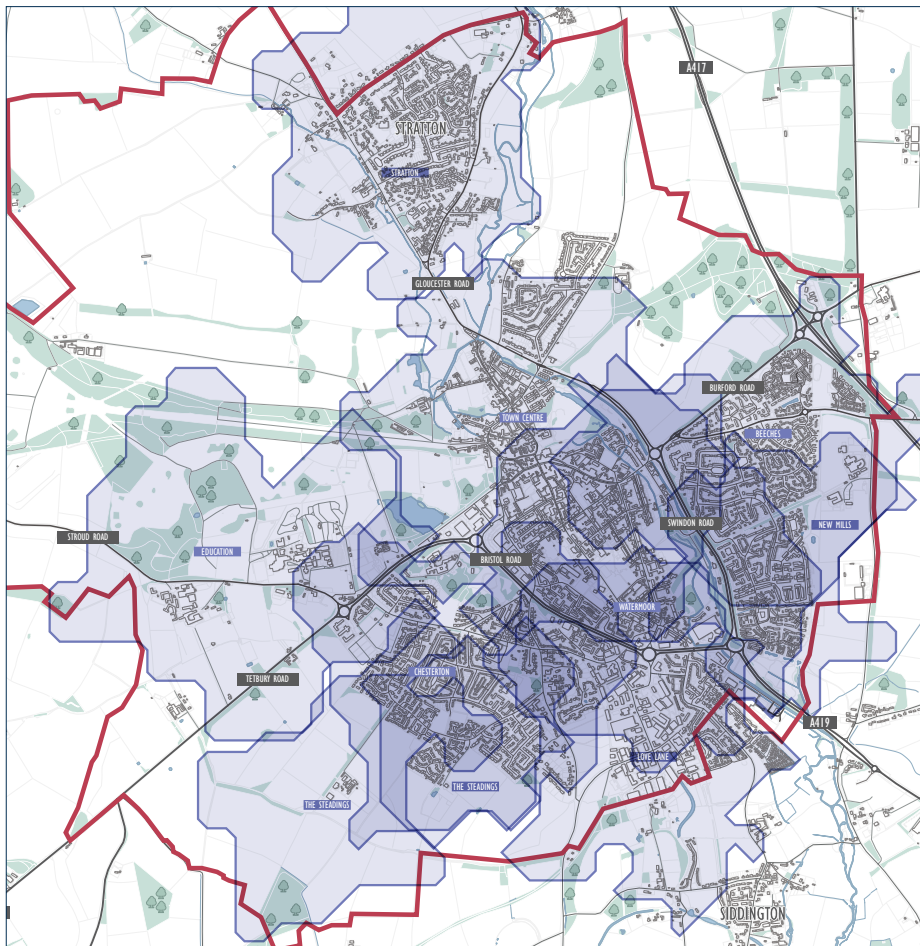
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THE 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

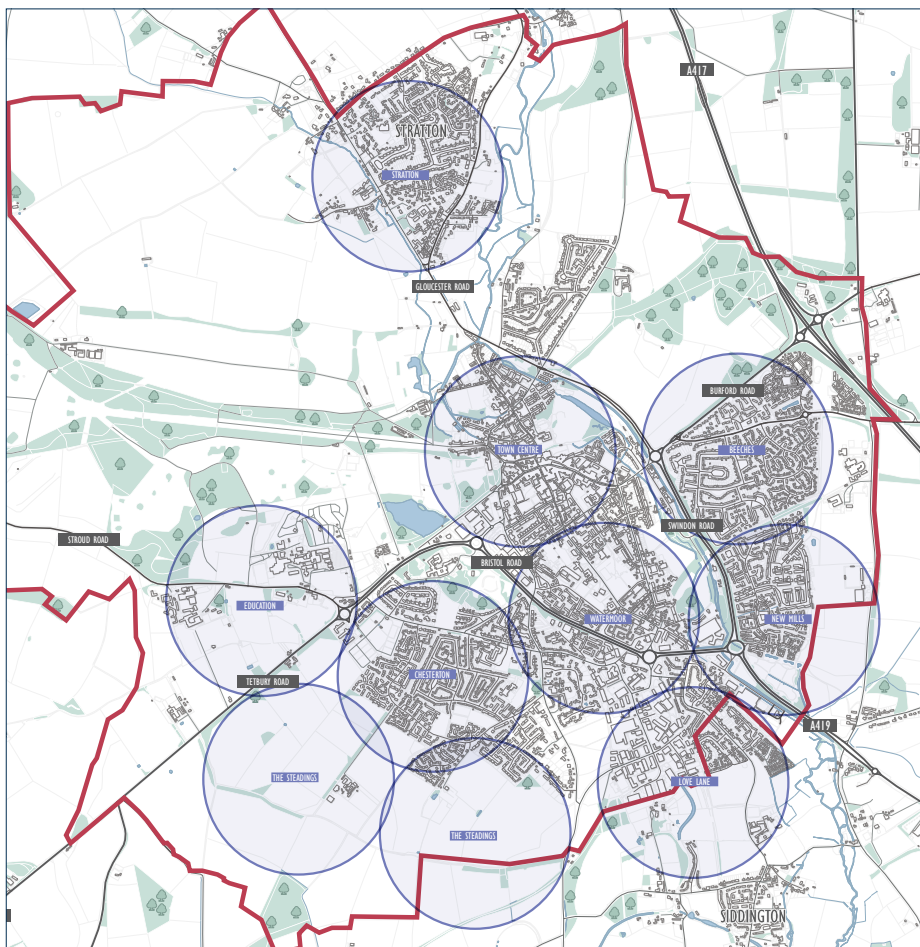
- 9.1 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) says a 20 Minute Neighbourhood is about creating attractive, interesting, safe, walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively for short distances from home to the destinations that they visit and the services they need to use day to day such as shopping, school, community and healthcare facilities, places of work, green spaces, and more.
- 9.2 These places need to be easily accessible on foot, by cycle or public transport and accessible to everyone, whatever their budget or physical ability, without having to use a car.
- 9.3 The TCPA goes on to say that the 20 Minute Neighbourhood idea is also about strengthening local economies by keeping jobs and money local and facilitating local food production to create jobs and supply affordable healthy food for all, empowering communities to have a direct say in how their neighbourhoods change, and about doing all this in ways that create places that meet the needs of the least healthy and least well-off.
- 9.4 Interest in the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model to shape towns and cities is growing. The model has been adopted by cities and towns around the world. In Melbourne, Australia, it is a 'twenty-minute city', a 20-minute return walk being the time a Melburnian is prepared to walk from home to their destination. For Parisians, it is 15 minutes one way, that is an ambition to move to a model where residents are within a 15-minute walk of services. Closer to home, some London boroughs have adopted a 20-minute return walk.
- 9.5 Other towns such as Kendal focus more on a complete, compact, and connected place. Winchester has adopted 15-minutes one way from home to destination, that is a 30-minute town. The centre of Cirencester developed as, and largely remains, a 20-minute neighbourhood with what it offers within a short walk or cycle ride.
- 9.6 This Neighbourhood Plan aims to promote and put in place the features of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model, and the benefits it brings, across the whole of Cirencester. This will include overcoming the barriers created by the A419 and A429 with at grade crossings, improving connectivity by putting the recommendations of the LCWIP in place, and ensuring the services residents use each day are within a short walk or cycle ride. All new development should also be in accordance with the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model.
- 9.7 The benefits of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model are, for example safe, sustainable, livable communities with good access to jobs and essential services and effective integration of the outlying residential areas, were strongly supported during consultation.
- 9.8 The Neighbourhood Plan does not aim to restrict how residents and visitors travel around, into and out of Cirencester. Everyone will continue to be able to travel as they do now if they choose to do so.
- 9.9 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages Cirencester Town Council to work with Cotswold District Council, and Gloucestershire Highways to put the features of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood in place at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.10 The TCPA, which has arranged seminars and produced reports on this subject, suggests a well-designed 20 Minute Neighbourhood features the following:
- 9.10.1 diverse and affordable homes;
 - 9.10.2 well-connected paths, streets, and spaces;
 - 9.10.3 schools at the heart of communities;
 - 9.10.4 good green spaces in the right places;
 - 9.10.5 local food production;
 - 9.10.6 keeping jobs and money local;
 - 9.10.7 community health and wellbeing facilities;
 - 9.10.8 places for all ages.
- 9.11 While the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model is a straightforward concept, putting it into practice in an existing city or town is more complex and takes time. Plans for a 20 Minute Neighbourhood model should be based on what the community needs and not simply follow a generic model.
- 9.12 Through the provisions of this Neighbourhood Plan, new developments would be expected to contribute, in proportion to the size of the development, to support and strengthen the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model, in particular improved connectivity. Other funding to support and strengthen the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model should also be actively sought and/or allocated by Cirencester Town Council and Cotswold District Council.





When the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model is applied to the geography of Cirencester, this is a possible outcome. The circles represent theoretical neighbourhood units, and each unit should contain the appropriate mix of shopping, school, community and healthcare facilities, places of work, and green spaces. This will help minimise the need to travel in and out of the town centre.

Using an online software tool, this diagram shows the complexity of the realities of the 20 Min Neighbourhood model – street patterns, the direction of different links and topography, such as how hilly an area is – will all influence exactly how long it takes to move across an area. This diagram shows that the application of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood is not a precise science and is more about an attitude and approach to urban planning, about placing daily and weekly needs within reach of people without them having to travel very far.



- 9.13 There are two geographical areas of application for the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model. The first, is identified by considering the town centre to be at the heart of a single, 20 Minute Neighbourhood area.
- 9.14 The theory behind the model, recognises that town centres play host to a range of significant services that are not used on a daily basis, but more infrequently, such as on a monthly or annual basis. These include features such as hospitals, universities, and cultural venues. It is unreasonable to expect such destinations that play a regional or sub-regional role to appear in a typical 20 Minute Neighbourhood.
- 9.15 That said, Cirencester town centre can more effectively rediscover its historic role as the focus of commercial, community and cultural life in future by adopting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model as a basis for its future development.
- 9.16 The centre of Cirencester, developed as a walking neighbourhood already exhibits many of the recognised characteristics of a 20 Minute Neighbourhood. The challenge today is to overcome the barrier effect of local highway infrastructure through the provision of direct, safe, street level walking and cycling routes, so the town centre area becomes reconnected to its surroundings to deliver the full benefits of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model.
- 9.17 The second geographic area is the outlying suburbs, and these would be covered by a series of multiple 20-minute neighbourhood areas. Within these areas, residents would be within a ten-minute walk of daily needs including a primary school, grocery shopping and meeting place, such as a pub or café.
- 9.18 The aim is for existing development within these areas to be supported and strengthened through the provision of cost-effective services.
- 9.19 In both geographical situations, the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model would seek to integrate the following land use features:
- 9.19.1 diverse and affordable homes;
- 9.19.2 well-connected paths, streets, and spaces with safe, direct, street level (at grade) cycle ways and footpaths;
- 9.19.3 primary schools at the heart of communities;
- 9.19.4 good green spaces in the appropriate places providing spaces to meet, children's playgrounds, amenity spaces, and allotments;
- 9.19.5 community meeting places such as pubs, cafes, and cultural venues, pop-up coffee vans and outdoor seating that people can turn up and use to meet;
- 9.19.6 grocery and retail shopping;
- 9.19.7 sports, wellbeing, and community health facilities.
- 9.20 The 20 Minute Neighbourhood can only be considered complete when it includes the full range of supporting uses and facilities, including, for example, grocery shops, pubs, primary schools, healthcare, and green spaces, including parks and play spaces. Therefore, proposals to provide 'missing' neighbourhood facilities will be supported.
- 9.21 Provision of such uses is important for quality of life, in helping to create a sense of community and belonging. A neighbourhood



lacking such facilities can have long-term financial and social costs as well as forcing residents to be dependent on their car. Providing them in a timely manner, and where they are well integrated with development, is important to good planning.

- 9.22 Policies in this Plan include a requirement for new development to provide such uses where they are missing in the most convenient location. Local shops and pubs are being lost to the community at a very high rate. Designations of Assets of Community Value can give time for the local community to either save the facility, to adapt them to provide a missing need or provide an alternative location.
- 9.23 As part of the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan, an identification of 'missing' community facilities has been undertaken. The neighbourhoods of the town without a pub/café or community halls are: The Beeches, Chesterton, the northern end of Bowling Green, and the north end of Siddington, (which is outside the town boundary).
- 9.24 The neighbourhoods without access to a grocery shop are west Beeches, northwest Chesterton, north Bowling Green, and north Stratton.
- 9.25 Good connectivity across the town allowing the population to walk and cycle to their destination is a key component of putting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model into place across Cirencester.
- 9.26 The LCWIP identifies 33 primary and secondary cycling routes and 23 walking routes. Cirencester Town Council will work actively with the Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire Highways to strengthen, upgrade, and create these routes within the town boundary.

POLICY TMN 1 – 20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS

a) Development proposals which contribute to the 20-minute neighbourhood model, will be supported. The contribution made should be in proportion to the scale of the associated development.

b) Proposals that remove barriers to cycling and walking across the Plan area will be supported.

c) Measures designed to help overcome the barriers created by the A419 and A429 dual carriageways including the provision of safe, direct, street level (at-grade) crossings will be supported.

d) New developments should offer a genuine choice of sustainable and active travel in accordance with the agreed travel hierarchy, both within the new development and beyond the boundaries as it connects with the surroundings.

e) Incorporate or contribute in proportion to the scale of the development to the walking and cycle routes within the town boundary and identified in the Cirencester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

f) Street designs which provide direct, good connections to the existing or future neighbourhoods bordering the development will be a requirement of all development proposals.

g) New residential areas will be designed in a way that keeps traffic speed at and below 20mph.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

9.27 The dual carriageway highway infrastructure which runs around the centre of the town creates significant barriers to walking and cycling, across, into and out of the town centre.

9.28 Overcoming the barriers created by the A429 and A419 dual carriageway highway infrastructure by putting at-grade cycle and pedestrian crossings in place will be a key mechanism through which the ambitions of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood Model will be delivered.

9.29 The introduction of 30mph speed limits on the A429 and A419 in the approaches to the at-grade cycle and pedestrian crossings, and between the hospital and Cirencester College roundabout, will make the introduction of at-grade crossing more likely, in turn supporting the walking and cycling ambitions of this Neighbourhood Plan.

9.30 With regard to a series of specific interventions, the following changes are supported:

9.30.1 A429 Tetbury Road at The Steadings. Main site access roundabout with a minimum 3.0m wide shared footways and cycleways on all approaches (except for the western side) and a toucan signal-controlled crossing for pedestrians and cyclists across the northern A429 Tetbury Road approach with dropped kerbs and tactile paving on all other approaches to the junction.

9.30.2 A429 Tetbury Road at The Steadings. Secondary site access with a minimum 3.0m shared footway cycleway on the eastern side and northern side of the site access, connecting to the facilities and the main site access. Footway and cycleway connections are also provided to the existing facilities on the other approaches to the junction with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

9.30.3 The A419 – A429 Tetbury Road junction including Chesterton Lane junction on the ring road and the Cirencester College, Deer Park School and Stroud Road junction including a toucan crossing on the A429 Tetbury Road to the south of the

junction. A minimum 3.0m footway cycleway on the east and west of the roundabout, and on the cut through to the subway.

9.30.4 A toucan crossing on A419 Stroud Road towards the access to Cirencester College and Deer Park School.

9.30.5 At the junction of Chesterton Lane, toucan crossings across Chesterton Lane and the A429. The existing subway will be retained at this location and incorporated into the junction improvement proposals.

9.30.6 At the A419 – A429 ring road, Hammond Way and Hospital Junction including the Waitrose Hammond Way a toucan crossing on the A429 approach with a minimum 3.0m shared footway cycleway to the north and south of the A429. The junction will also incorporate infrastructure to facilitate a toucan crossing to the Amphitheatre to allow future aspirations of Cirencester Town Council to provide better connectivity between the Amphitheatre and town centre.

9.30.7 At the Waitrose access, a pedestrian crossing facility on all approaches except Hammond Way north.

9.30.8 A the A419 – A429 ring road, Midland Road, Watermoor Way and Fire Station roundabout including Midland Road, a pedestrian crossing across the Bristol Road west and a toucan crossing across Bristol Road East. The pedestrian subway will be closed because subways are no longer seen as desirable and current best practice is to avoid providing them as there are personal safety issues, difficulties for disabled users and they increase the distance pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users need to travel to get to their destination.

9.30.9 At the mini-roundabout junction of Midland Road and Love Lane a range of pedestrian enhancements are proposed at the junction and at the Midland Road and Bridge Road mini roundabout junction.

9.31 Cirencester Town Council will work actively with Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire Highways to deliver the essential highway interventions which support the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model.

9.32 The travel hierarchy referred to in the policy places sustainable and active travel modes is:

9.32.1 walking including for the passage of pushchairs, prams, and wheelchairs;

9.32.2 cycling;

9.32.3 battery powered cycles and mobility scooters and wheelchairs used by those with disabilities and reduced mobility;

9.32.4 public transport, including tourist buses, and a plan for access to public transport;

9.32.5 specialist service vehicles, for example emergency vehicles, refuse and recycling collection;

9.32.6 car clubs;

9.32.7 electric and hydrogen propelled vehicles;

9.32.8 private fossil-fuel powered vehicles.



10 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Conservation of our natural environment has never been more important. The delicate balance of land, air, and water to provide the ecosystems that facilitate food production, carbon capture and wildlife habitats provide the natural capital that supports social, environmental, and economic benefits to humans.

Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan -
Pre-Submission Consultation Draft

10

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 10.1 Conservation of our natural environment has never been more important. The delicate balance of land, air, and water to provide the ecosystems that facilitate food production, carbon capture and wildlife habitats provide the natural capital that supports social, environmental, and economic benefits to humans.
- 10.2 Cirencester is a town sitting on the fringes of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a Special Landscape Area (SLA) particularly rich in areas of natural habitat, alongside formal and informal recreational green spaces. Development over time has evolved around the vast private parkland of the Bathurst estate, the historic Abbey Grounds, and paths along the green and blue corridors, as they meander through and beyond the town.
- 10.3 Green gaps or buffers between Cirencester and nearby settlements have preserved the character and identity of the town. The woods of Querns and Harebush shelter small fragments of concentrated tree habitats whilst allotments and community gardens provide a place for residents' leisure. All of this contributes to the town's natural environment and beauty.
- 10.4 Growth requires the development of land but without strong planning policies can invade and compromise existing habitats and biodiversity, reduce carbon capture and potentially increase the impact of flood events.
- 10.5 Recognising the contribution this natural capital makes to wellbeing, sustainability and resources featured highly in the Neighbourhood Plan community engagement with 65% of respondents in the 2020 online survey stating protection of the Natural Environment was important.
- 10.6 Residents appreciate and want to protect the recreational spaces and green infrastructure but also value the informal nature of City Bank, the extension of habitats through re-wilding on the edges of Four Acre Field and the wildlife observed when walking along the River Churn, all of which add to the town's character and natural beauty.
- 10.7 There is also recognition that increasing summer temperatures will need better urban shade, and through the pandemic lockdown, a realization of how much value to mental health there is in spending time in these spaces.
- 10.8 The 2021 flooding events in the town heightened the need for stronger water management strategies to deal with not only sudden heavy rainfall but rising ground water. Flood plains must be protected, river management maintained and improved with policies that resist, reduce, or limit the water capacity of the land or run off.



- 10.9 The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to, and enhance, the natural environment.
- 10.10 The environmental planning policies EN1 through EN9 within the adopted CDC Local Plan support this statement but the Neighbourhood Plan has an opportunity to strengthen and better protect within planning policies, areas identified by stakeholders and the community.
- 10.11 Cotswold District Council declared an Ecological Emergency in 2020, putting ecology at the heart of climate emergency action. The Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey of 2019 and public engagement of 2021 both confirmed respondents highly valued the biodiversity value of areas of the town, whether within the parks and designated green spaces or informally as seen with recent re-wilding schemes. The Neighbourhood Plan can work alongside emerging policy and planting schemes to support recovery and extend this work.

POLICY NE 1 – BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Development will be expected to demonstrate, in accordance with the Environment Act of 2021, a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain on site or replace as near to the development as possible.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 10.12 The Government's 25-year Environment Plan defines biodiversity as the variety of ecosystems or habitats that can and do exist and the genetic diversity they contain. Apart from the support of lifecycles, such ecosystems also provide carbon capture that contribute to mitigating climate change, optimizing natural pest management, protecting threatened species such as bees and replenishing the land with nutrients.
- 10.13 The introduction of the 2021 Environment Act will now require all qualifying developments to deliver a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10% which should then be shown to be maintained for a

period of at least 30 years. The use of the DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) biometric to assess the baseline and improvement recognises the potential negative impacts on habitats arising from developments and calculates how much new or restored habitat, and of what types is required to deliver sufficient net gain.

- 10.14 The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) has shown a 41% decline in bird species populations during the last fifty years particularly the house sparrow, starlings, and skylarks with one of the most significant drivers being urbanisation and the decline in the habitats that support their lifecycles. Other wildlife in decline includes a 95% reduction in hedgehogs and 68% loss of the common toad since the 1950s.
- 10.15 There is a critical need to maintain and enhance these delicate balances long term and stop further decline with the threats from pollution, development, and invasive species. Research has indicated a target of 90% biodiversity within a land mass is needed to avoid wildlife extinction and the sustainability of food production, the UK currently has 50% remaining, the lowest of any G7 nation.
- 10.16 Alongside this, areas of wildlife habitat are known to contribute to wellbeing and health, especially during times such as the recent pandemic when lockdown reportedly escalated the benefit of the natural environment. A Natural England survey of 2020 stated many adults felt happier in nature and they were worried about its loss.
- 10.17 At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 109-119 currently state planning should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising the impact on biodiversity including establishing coherent ecological networks that are resistant to current and future pressures.

POLICY NE 2 – REWILDING SCHEMES

Support will be given for the extension of wilding areas of the town, particularly on the periphery of green spaces, verges and edges of footpaths combined with the retention of hedgerows.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 10.18 Cirencester has a rich natural landscape of biodiversity supported by the urban street trees and vegetation of the river corridor which supports insects and amphibians. In recent years there has been re-wilding of the boundaries of open areas such as Cirencester College, the wildlife meadows of Victoria Road and along the paths and margins of Four Acre Field.
- 10.19 Existing biodiversity must be protected, maintained, and extended where possible and could be replicated in development in place of plain grassed areas or with wilding along the edges of play spaces.
- 10.20 This habitat-based approach supports foraging and life cycles and as such excludes items such as bird and bat boxes. Natural England considers this the most important strategy for determining current ecological value versus net gain. Ecological reports would then need to be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity code of practice for planning and development.

- 10.21 Local Nature recovery strategy can identify areas within the town where biodiversity improvement could occur to supplement or replace lost biodiversity in development. When loss is proved unavoidable, developers will be required to work with Cotswold District Council to use the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan's recommended off site opportunities, to be identified using local ecology evidence, the value placed by residents, their potential for improvement and their importance to the biodiversity map of the town.
- 10.22 The inclusion of biodiversity policies within the Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to further strengthen in development a requirement to protect and extend biodiversity, supporting the new net gain requirement and reflects the importance placed on biodiversity as a feature of the local environment by residents.
- 10.23 The key biodiversity requirements in development will include:
 - 10.23.1 the greater use of natural features such as trees and hedgerows with potential extensions such as green roofs and water bodies such as ponds in new development;
 - 10.23.2 planting schemes should be native and diverse, sympathetic to the site and using naturalised pollinator friendly species;
 - 10.23.3 consultations with local wildlife experts should take place to ensure best practice in landscaping;
 - 10.23.4 habitats and biodiversity planting should be linked and not fragmented by development;
 - 10.23.5 developer contributions should be used to invest in areas outside the site and within the town, especially re-wilding of green spaces currently predominately grass;
 - 10.23.6 identification and implementation of further re-wilding sites and opportunities within the town;
 - 10.23.7 consultation with Gloucestershire Highways to establish best practice for the maintenance of verges and hedgerows.
- 10.24 The benefit will be the protection and extension of the current biodiversity within the town combined with a requirement development achieves the 10% net gain, avoid fragmentation, and only use native planting.

POLICY NE 3 – WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

- a) *Development proposals should maintain the integrity of existing wildlife corridors whilst creating new opportunities to connect areas of habitat through planting and links.*
- b) *Existing wildlife corridors within the town should not be separated or fragmented by changes to green infrastructure and habitats without justification and compensation with new connections.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 10.25 A wildlife corridor links the habitats and spaces that facilitate the maintenance of ecological processes that include movement, feeding, and breeding.

- 10.26 While encouraging and enhancing biodiversity within the town is desirable, isolated wildlife habitats and ecosystems are stressed and less robust with reduced chance of survival. Links between habitats that allow wildlife to move freely are essential, for example, gaps in boundary walls to allow hedgehogs to move between gardens to shelter or dark corridors for bats to forage.
- 10.27 In the education quarter, for example, the Wild Campus Cirencester Project has created and extended wildlife corridors to provide safer passage for endangered species between Cirencester Park and the farmland towards Coates. Active management and enhancement of these habitat connections are essential.
- 10.28 The NPPF states development should seek to identify and map habitat networks particularly if proposals could fragment or interrupt a landscape corridor and isolate species while the Environment Act of 2021 requires the need to protect these nature recovery networks.
- 10.29 Cirencester has many areas that currently link together to essentially form wildlife corridors, all of which mingle and merge to support the extensive local network of species and wildlife activity. These are important landscape features and amenity spaces, to be maintained and enhanced through linkage and extension.
- 10.30 Wildlife corridors provide recreational and relaxation spaces important for mental and physical wellbeing, contributing to the character of the town and educating on the delicate interaction between humans and the natural world, whilst providing routes for wildlife to migrate.
- 10.31 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to maximise all green and blue wildlife corridors by strengthening and supporting the adopted Local Plan Policy EN8 that proposals affecting significant habitat fragmentation should not be permitted while using developer contributions for the reversal of any existing fragmentation.
- 10.32 Development should maintain the nocturnal integrity of all corridors through the avoidance of new and extended light pollution where darkness is an existing characteristic.
- 10.33 The planting of additional native species trees and new hedgerows will be encouraged and supported in development which connect to existing wildlife corridors. New footpaths and access points into developments must have native and appropriate linked boundary planting.
- 10.34 The benefit of this approach will be the protection and extension of wildlife corridors in development or within the town, correcting existing and avoiding new fragmentation whilst using only native planting.
- 10.35 The key objectives within the town are:
- 10.35.1 to protect the important natural corridors for people and wildlife to move easily between open spaces or along water courses within the town and beyond without breaks;
 - 10.35.2 to identify and support opportunities for enhancements and connection of missing or fragmented areas to the existing network through features such as bridges, raised fences or natural boundaries, particularly on the side of footpaths and open spaces;
 - 10.35.3 to maintain the visual integrity and amenity value of all wildlife corridors.

POLICY NE 4 – GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT

a) Development proposals should protect the existing green and blue infrastructure of Cirencester alongside creating new opportunities, connections, and extensions.

b) Green and blue infrastructure opportunities and requirements should be considered at the earliest stages of all new development planning proposals, as an integral part of the town's provision, taking into account the most suitable locations and types.

c) The removal of existing green and blue infrastructure within the town will be resisted and should be justified and compensated for, with appropriate replacement if permitted.

d) Developers will be required to justify the removal of any area of highway verge to create or extend vehicle access to property and land.

e) Private households will be encouraged to avoid replacing lawns with hard landscaping.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

10.36 Green and blue infrastructure includes all the spaces and assets that provide environmental and leisure benefits within an area such as parks and playing fields, woodlands, allotments, gardens, and water courses. Alongside these are incidental natural areas and features such as meadows, hedgerows, and verges and all these individual spaces create a green infrastructure network with benefits for all. It is this natural capital identified by the NPPF 2021 as capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities.

10.37 For towns such as Cirencester these include:

10.37.1 wellbeing through access to outdoor recreational spaces for social interaction and sport, urban ambience, and tranquillity;

10.37.2 enhanced and better ecological resilience;

10.37.3 wildlife habitat connectivity;

10.37.4 food production in allotments and community gardens;

10.37.5 urban cooling;

10.37.6 management of flood risk and water absorption;

10.37.7 reduction in climate impact through carbon storage;

10.37.8 filtering pollutants;

10.37.9 attractive roads and paths;

10.37.10 town character and quality of the public realm urban greenery;

10.37.11 verges that soften highways.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

10.38 The UK Government 25-year Environment Plan focuses on enhancing the natural capital of the country, and the town's urban green infrastructure underpins this vision. The pandemic heightened appreciation and awareness of the 'natural' over the 'built' environment of the town, allowing social connections at a time of lockdown and stress, and raising in engagement the desire to protect for future generations.

10.39 The green and blue infrastructure of Cirencester contributes to the quality and distinctiveness of the town, fortunate to have the private Bathurst estate open to residents for recreational use and public parks such as St Michael's and the Abbey Grounds with its lake and much appreciated bevy of swans, the historic Amphitheatre and Querns Wood, City Bank Nature Reserve alongside the many formal and informal recreational fields and parks. Aside from recreation, green infrastructure contributes to local food production, active travel connections, fitness, and education.

10.40 Verges also act as a visual buffer between roads, paths, and buildings and within Cirencester can be the remnants of old meadows bounded by species-rich hedgerows with refuges for wildlife whilst acting as corridors connecting species and habitats across the town. They are particularly important during the spring and summer when a huge range of wildflowers and grasses provide a rich habitat for wildlife including insects, spiders, snails, small mammals, and birds.

10.41 While management of verges within the public highway is the responsibility of Gloucestershire Highways, who have adopted a mid-summer cutting strategy to facilitate biodiversity gain, their removal or encroachment by households or commercial premises extending car access to the road should be avoided without strong justification.

10.42 Cotswold District Council's draft Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies key themes and aims for development, but the Neighbourhood Plan takes this further. The benefit will be the protection, maintenance, and extension of the current and potential green infrastructure within Cirencester, its contribution to wildlife, wellbeing, and landscape.

10.43 The key requirements will include:

10.43.1 development proposals must contain within the planning application material proposals for new sustainable long term green infrastructure such as green open spaces, its management and maintenance;

10.43.2 avoid any removal of green infrastructure within the town without justification or replacement;

10.43.3 urban ambience and tranquillity to be better recognised as a benefit of retaining and enhancing green infrastructure and support will be given for an 'urban tranquility strategy' for Cirencester.

10.44 Cirencester has become more vulnerable to flooding in recent years. The valley location and high groundwater levels have always been factors but significantly increased run-off, declining river management, old sewers with inadequate capacity and more extreme weather have made things worse. With increased development and climate change, the risks will grow. The town should develop a water management strategy that addresses all the contributory factors of flood events including river management, sewer capacity and the use of flood wardens.

10.45 The local river system drains the Cotswold Hills north of the town and flows south to the Thames. At Barton Mill part of the River Churn is joined by the Dunt or Duntisborne Stream and feeds the Gumstool Brook which returns via culverts to the part of the Churn which feeds the lake in the Abbey Grounds. Other culverts, some Roman in origin, also carry water under the town. The main Churn course runs east of the Abbey Grounds and is re-joined by the rest beyond Watermoor.

10.46 The river used to be actively managed by the ancient water meadows upriver towards Baunton and Stratton and the mills around Cirencester, but this no longer happens. To the south, meadows at Watermoor and Kingsmeadow have been built on, creating areas of flood vulnerability.

10.47 A complex range of factors are responsible and differ in their impact in each locality. For example, the Churn being overwhelmed by highway runoff above Spitalgate while in Chesterton lack of capacity in foul water sewers is key.

10.48 Problems are associated with high volumes of water coming down river after prolonged heavy rain. Changes in agricultural practice in the catchment area make this more likely and the situation is worsened by rapid run off in the town due to increased hard surface area and the inability of storm drains and sewers to cope.

10.49 Another risk factor is the lake in Cirencester Park which last overflowed following storms in 2007. Climate change models suggest future increases of between 15% and 30% in rainfall intensity which will magnify risk in urban areas. The sewer system is already beyond its intended capacity and any additional hard surfaces will increase the pressure.

10.50 A range of measures are already being taken to alleviate flooding and increase resilience including sewer replacement and an overflow area at Barton Mills, but others will require funding. These could potentially involve work to use the water meadows as a flood reservoir and work in the upper reaches of the Churn to reduce the speed of run off by creating wetlands, planting hedges and deep-rooted plants and building wooden dams. River restoration projects have been shown to reduce flooding including restoration of banks and meanders.

10.51 The inadequacy of the current sewer system means that during storms raw sewage is pumped into the river to continue to provide waste-water services to homes.

10.52 Even in good weather, the town is at capacity with water treatment, Shorncliffe sewage works already serves a population of 34,000.

10.53 New developments should provide additional sewer capacity their building will require, including increasing treatment capacity and incorporate design features to reduce storm run-off. These might include blue roofs, SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System), ponds,

POLICY NE 5 – FLOOD MITIGATION

Development proposals should demonstrate how they will mitigate flood risk through design and landscape measures, as combined with other appropriate strategies such as permeable paving and sustainable drainage systems.

and ditches. Where possible, hard external surfaces should be permeable, including new driveways.

- 10.54 However, for much of Cirencester, ground water levels are too high for soak-aways to be effective and other measures should be used. Additionally, development should not take place on flood meadows and should leave an 8m buffer strip to allow for additional capacity.
- 10.55 Aside from sewage and other pollution, Cirencester's waterways also suffer from drying up during the summer months. As a result, the diversity of wildlife has declined.
- 10.56 During the last decade the Gumstool Brook has lost its population of water voles while numbers of fish have declined. Some of this is due to abstraction by Thames Water but leakage and rapid run off also contribute. Many of the natural measures to reduce flooding will also keep our waterways running all year and bring back wildlife.
- 10.57 The Neighbourhood Plan looks to strengthen water management in development with the key requirements to:
- 10.57.1 incorporate into new developments water mitigation strategies such as run offs and SuDS;
- 10.57.2 consultation on improvements to river management of the Churn and support for a town flood strategy and better river management with the restoration of banks;
- 10.57.3 households to be encouraged to avoid further hard landscaping of front gardens to retain water run-off and be encouraged to use permeable paving where appropriate.
- 10.58 The benefit of these measures will be to strengthen the towns resilience to heavy rainfall, its consequence, damage, and cost with the requirement that new residential developments must integrate features to accommodate future events.

POLICY NE 6 – LOCAL GREEN SPACE DESIGNATIONS

- a) Local Green Spaces in Cirencester identified on the Local Green Spaces Map, scheduled in Table 2 and detailed in Appendix 4 will be protected from built development except in very special circumstances.*
- b) Community green or open spaces that contain a building which needs improving or removing will be allowed to be developed if the proposed work is for the benefit of the community and will preserve the local significance of the space for which it was designated.*

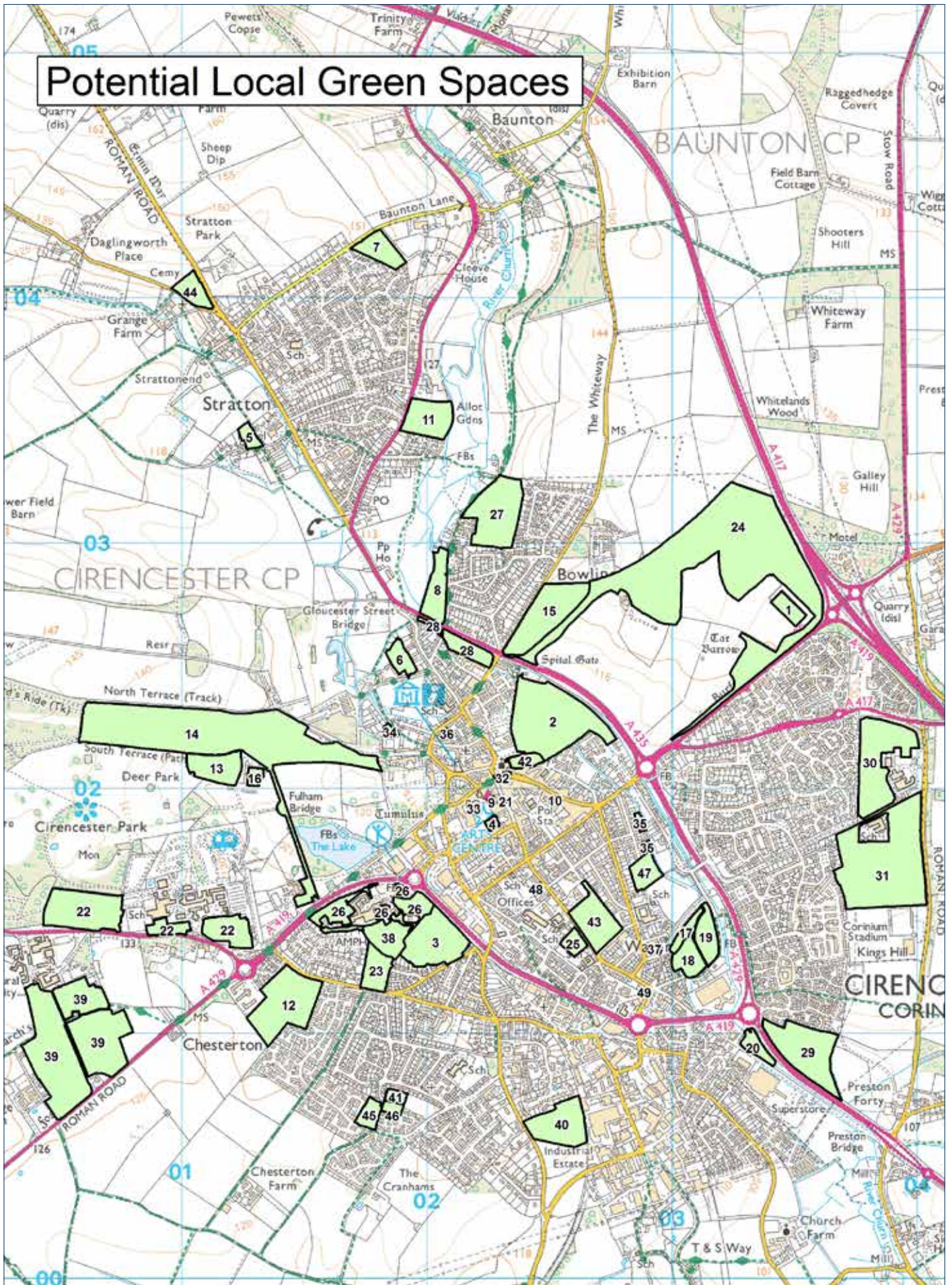
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 10.59 Cirencester has a network of green and open spaces that the community use for recreation, social interaction, and rest. They also create physical breaks within the built environment, urban structures, roads, and walkways. Some already benefit from protective policies and others are informal open areas or part of the urban environment.
- 10.60 The private Bathurst Estate parkland dominates the town with its richness of recreational green space, and whilst it has restricted

public access is included for the extensive relationship between its use and town life with extensive pathways and connections to the town through and within. Access and enjoyment of Cirencester Park is much valued and enjoyed by residents and visitors to the town.

- 10.61 Alongside this sits other areas such as the protected historic Abbey Grounds, St Michael's Park with its tennis courts and play areas with smaller pockets of open space such as the Four Acres field in Chesterton.
- 10.62 Smaller green spaces such as those within housing estates can also be just as valued by the community who live within the immediate vicinity, and as such are equally recognised.
- 10.63 Open spaces that may be predominately hard landscaped with small areas of urban greenery include recent seating at the end of Watermoor Road, developed by the local community with informal planting.
- 10.64 These spaces are unique and contribute to the local character of the town and are places of wellbeing, socialising, and recreation. Less obviously, these spaces include cemeteries, often maintained by volunteers which offer places for reflection, such as the quiet garden at the Quaker Meeting House.
- 10.65 Local green spaces will be protected from development except where there is an existing building/structure within the space and the works are needed to maintain its viability/use into the future (e.g. a sports pavilion); or where the proposed development will be for the benefit of the community and will preserve the particular local significance of the space for which it was designated.
- 10.66 Essential small scale utility infrastructure will be supported where the existing use and community value of the space is not detrimentally affected. Proposals for the development of new green infrastructure to assist with flood protection and/or to contribute towards public enjoyment and health, and/or to create corridors for wildlife will be supported.
- 10.67 The National Planning Policy Framework introduced Local Green Space designation to provide special protection against development for green areas of importance to communities and to ensure their permanence and quality.
- 10.68 The designation can be used where:
- 10.68.1 the green space is in reasonable proximity to the community it serves;
- 10.68.2 the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
- 10.68.3 the green area is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 10.69 Designated local green spaces do not have to be publicly accessible, and do not need to be in public ownership. The Cirencester NDP Steering Group, acting on behalf of Cirencester Town Council, has identified a range of sites that it believes are worthy of designation as Local Green Spaces and these are included in this draft plan for consultation with both the public and the statutory consultees.

Potential Local Green Spaces



LGS Site	Number
Abbey Farm Allotments Harebush	1
Abbey Grounds	2
Amphitheatre	3
Ashcroft Road Bowls Club	4
Barn Way Allotments	5
Barton Lane Allotments	6
Baunton Lane Playing Field	7
Bromford Allotments Bowling Green Lane	8
Brewery Court	9
Catalpa Square	10
Cheltenham Road Allotments	11
Chesterton Cemetery	12
Cirencester Cricket Club	13
Cirencester Park and Old Kennels	14
Cirencester Rugby Club	15
Cirencester Tennis Club	16
City Bank Allotments	17
City Bank Nature Reserve	18
City Bank Recreational Ground	19
Cricklade Road Picnic Area	20
Cricklade Street/West Way Seating	21
Deer Park Secondary School & Cirencester College Playing Fields	22
Four Acre Field	23
Harebush Woods	24
Holy Trinity Churchyard Garden of Remembrance	25

LGS Site	Number
Hospital Grounds	26
Humpty Dumps	27
Jack Gardner Memorial Garden	28
Kingshill Country Park	29
Kingshill School Playing Fields	30
Kingshill Playing Field (Also known as Kingshill Sports Development)	31
Market Place	32
Old Tesco Supermarket Seating Area	33
Open Air Swimming Pool	34
Purley Road Allotments	35
Quaker Meeting House Quiet Garden	36
Queen Street Allotment Gardens	37
Querns Wood	38
Royal Agricultural University Playing Fields	39
Somerford Road Allotments	40
Springfield Road Allotments	41
St John's Churchyard	42
St Michael's Park	43
Stratton Cemetery	44
Thistle Park Chesterton Community Garden	45
Two Acres	46
Victoria Road Meadow	47
Watermoor Road Cemetery	48
Watermoor Road/Way Corner Seating	49

Table 2 – Local Green Spaces & Community Spaces

Site Name & Reference Number	NPPF Criteria					Local Community Space
	Beauty	History	Tranquillity	Wildlife	Recreation	
1 Abbey Farm Allotments Harebushes				✓	✓	✓
2 Abbey Grounds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 Amphitheatre		✓	✓	✓	✓	
4 Ashcroft Road Bowls Club		✓	✓		✓	✓
5 Barn Way Allotments				✓	✓	✓
6 Barton Lane Allotments				✓	✓	✓
7 Baunton Lane Playing Field				✓	✓	
8 Bromford Allotments Bowling Green Lane				✓	✓	✓
9 Brewery Court						✓
10 Catalpa Square						✓
11 Cheltenham Road Allotments				✓	✓	✓
12 Chesterton Cemetery		✓	✓			
13 Cirencester Cricket Club					✓	✓
14 Cirencester Park and Old Kennels	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15 Cirencester Rugby Club					✓	✓
16 Cirencester Tennis Club					✓	✓

Table 2 – Local Green Spaces & Community Spaces

Site Name & Reference Number	NPPF Criteria					Local Community Space
	Beauty	History	Tranquillity	Wildlife	Recreation	
17 City Bank Allotments				✓	✓	✓
18 City Bank Nature Reserve			✓	✓	✓	✓
19 City Bank Recreational Ground		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20 Cricklade Road Picnic Area				✓	✓	✓
21 Cricklade Street/West Way Seating						✓
22 Deer Park Secondary School & Cirencester College Playing Fields					✓	✓
23 Four Acre Field			✓	✓	✓	✓
24 Harebushes Woods	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
25 Holy Trinity Churchyard Garden of Remembrance		✓				
26 Hospital Grounds						✓
27 Humpty Dumps			✓	✓	✓	✓
28 Jack Gardner Memorial Garden						✓
29 Kingshill Country Park			✓	✓	✓	✓
30 Kingshill Park					✓	✓
31 Kingshill Playing Field (Also known as Kingshill Sports Development)				✓	✓	✓
32 Market Place						✓

Table 2 – Local Green Spaces & Community Spaces

Site Name & Reference Number	NPPF Criteria					Local Community Space
	Beauty	History	Tranquillity	Wildlife	Recreation	
33 Old Tesco Supermarket Seating Area						✓
34 Open Air Swimming Pool		✓			✓	✓
35 Purley Road Allotments				✓	✓	✓
36 Quaker Meeting House Quiet Garden		✓	✓			✓
37 Queen Street Allotment Gardens				✓	✓	✓
38 Querns Wood	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
39 Royal Agricultural University Playing Fields					✓	
40 Somerford Road Allotments				✓	✓	✓
42 St John's Churchyard		✓				
43 St Michael's Park		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
44 Stratton Cemetery		✓	✓			
45 Thistle Park Chesterton Community Garden				✓	✓	✓
46 Two Acres			✓		✓	✓
47 Victoria Road Meadow				✓		
48 Watermoor Road Cemetery		✓	✓			
49 Watermoor Road/Way Corner Seating						✓

POLICY NE 7 – GREEN GAPS

Development proposals should maintain a green gap between Cirencester and adjacent settlements.

Proposals that result in the loss of peripheral boundaries and buffers of undeveloped land between Cirencester and its adjacent settlements should compensate for this loss through appropriate replacement landscaped areas.

10.70 Cirencester is growing significantly and the green gaps that define its boundaries and prevent coalescence with its nearby settlements are increasingly under threat. Even small peripheral developments can lead to urban sprawl and diluted distinction of communities.

10.71 The town's relationship with its surrounding landscape was a key feature of community engagement in 2021, a reason many like living in the town.

10.72 As Cirencester expands, encroachment compromises the distinct nature of the town and should be supported by a strategy to avoid diluting the landscape character and identity. It also preserves the distinct identities of the nearby communities of Siddington and particularly Preston, where the green buffer is small.

10.73 Therefore, developers must show through appropriate landscape visual impact assessment that any planning proposals would not diminish the visual distinction between the town and nearby settlements, nor compromise approaching gateways into the town.

10.74 The benefit will be the retention of the distinct settlement character of Cirencester from its neighbours, avoiding urban sprawl and prioritising less sensitive development land.



11 THE LOCAL ECONOMY

This chapter contains policies that: are designed to protect and enhance economic activity; will encourage the development of innovative work spaces for new and small businesses; and will develop skills and training.

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THE LOCAL ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 11.1 Cirencester residents want a vibrant town centre and are concerned about the loss of shops and pubs. There is also a desire for a larger evening-economy including a cinema.
- 11.2 Hospitality and tourism are important to Cirencester. There is potential for growth and to be more of a year-round destination linked to heritage and proximity to the Water Parks but also a desire for tourism to be manageable and sustainable, which requires the preparation of a sustainable tourism strategy.
- 11.3 In respect of recruitment and employment, surveys (e.g. GFirst LEP and Business West) show that local employers struggle to recruit staff at all levels. Meeting these needs goes beyond the scope of this Plan although transport and affordable housing have crucial roles to play including retaining more of our young people. Census data shows lower than average proportions of 21 to 30 year olds, living in Cirencester. Improving skills for young people but also those changing careers or re-entering the labour market is important.
- 11.4 Attracting more high skill companies, particularly in digital, green technology, and agri-tech is key to Gloucestershire's strategy to be a magnet county that keeps and attracts young people. Maintaining a strong local tradition of innovation and start-ups is also part of this and together, will ensure a strong tax-base and growth in local spend.
- 11.5 Successful delivery of this strategy means ensuring we have the right kind of communication infrastructure and employment space available whether that is co-working hubs, small retail start-up units or more flexible space on industrial estates.
- 11.6 Employment land is designated within The Steadings development and proposed Innovation Village on University land as well as pockets in the town centre. If local people are to benefit from future industries, it means we need to have the right kind of skills training provided locally, for example, through the Digital Skills Centre and new T Level building at Cirencester College.
- 11.7 Innovative use of new employment space within the town centre is required, including redevelopment, to attract high-value business and enable new start-ups; ensuring that infrastructure is in place to support them.
- 11.8 Cirencester does not have a high profile in economic plans at County and District level, so it's important that local authorities responsible for the town ensure its interests are promoted effectively. This includes early engagement with organisations providing capital funding for infrastructure and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for skills development.
- 11.9 Key assets identified by GFirst LEP including Farm491, the Growth Hub and Gloucestershire Digital Skills Centre should be supported. The public transport infrastructure priorities identified in the Access and Movement section will also be important to our local economy.
- 11.10 Skills development initiatives are required, especially for young people. They should be supported, with employers encouraged to take on apprentices and provide the T Level placements that students need to acquire and develop workplace skills alongside gaining vocational qualifications.
- 11.11 Developing an economic voice for Cirencester will be vital. This voice will promote the historic centre but also enhance local economic links, ensure a thriving town centre, and secure enabling infrastructure investment.
- 11.12 The key tasks of this voice will include:
- 11.12.1 developing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy which exploits the town's historic and archaeological assets and provides increased access to and information about sites such as the Amphitheatre, to enhance the visitor economy and the town's 'brand';
 - 11.12.2 actively seeking to attract businesses which provide career opportunities for local people with priority given to high value, digital, STEAM (i.e. science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics), agri-tech and finance businesses;
 - 11.12.3 actively lobbying for infrastructure investment to underpin the future economy of the town;
 - 11.12.4 articulating and developing links between the town, Water Park and AONB to enhance Cirencester as an all-weather, all-year destination;
 - 11.12.5 to encourage an enhanced, but managed and sensitively located, evening and night-time economy;
 - 11.12.6 creating a Town Centre Business Development Manager post to coordinate and seek funding for measures to sustain and enhance the vitality of the economy.
- 11.13 Plans and policies are needed to ensure the vitality of the town centre with proactive measures being required to support business, retail and hospitality which are needed by residents.



POLICY LE1 – PROTECT & ENHANCE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

a) Existing economic activity (including employment, tourism, and retail uses) and premises across the town centre will be protected and enhanced.

b) Existing economic activity in the neighbourhoods, particularly key local facilities identified as community assets within Appendix 3 and associated information, will be protected, and enhanced.

c) Any loss of employment uses, or premises, will not be supported unless it is accompanied by clear evidence demonstrating that the site or premises is not currently viable and that an appropriate alternative site or premises can be identified within the Plan area. The evidence required will be determined by the existing use and its site.

d) Flexible growth and adaptation of existing employment areas (e.g. Love Lane) across the Plan area through the sensitive introduction of new low carbon economic uses and activities, will be encouraged.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 11.13 Proposals that increase economic activity across the town centre will be supported. This includes proposals that introduce active street level uses, such as retail employment, leisure, food/drink, commercial use, social spaces, and entrepreneurial activity.
- 11.14 Town centres are at the heart of communities, providing accessible shops and services, employment, and leisure facilities. Vital and viable centres not only provide economic and social benefits but also help to foster civic pride, promote local identity, and contribute towards the aims of sustainable development. The dispersal of commercial activities to out of town locations will be resisted to protect the vitality of the town centre.
- 11.15 Recent years have seen economic decline in town centres across the country, with decreasing footfall, high street retailers going out of business and increases in long-term vacant premises. This situation was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic which has enhanced growth in internet sales and caused a significant reduction in footfall due to home-working and social-distancing.
- 11.16 The Love Lane and Wilkinson Road industrial areas have without regard to planning a positive built environment. There are many HGV movements, and these areas can become congested. Access roads and network requires an upgrade. The areas also need to be better connected to residential areas and the town centre by footpaths and cycleways.

POLICY LE2 – PROVISION FOR INNOVATIVE WORK SPACES, NEW & SMALL BUSINESSES

a) Development proposals that provide innovative hybrid and/or mixed-use working spaces which encourage creative small businesses or community uses will be supported.

b) Support will be given for developments on sites that provide for:

- 1) start-up businesses by enabling low cost facilities in cooperative clusters;*
- 2) working from home, enabling extensions and small new buildings;*
- 3) enabling microbusinesses.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

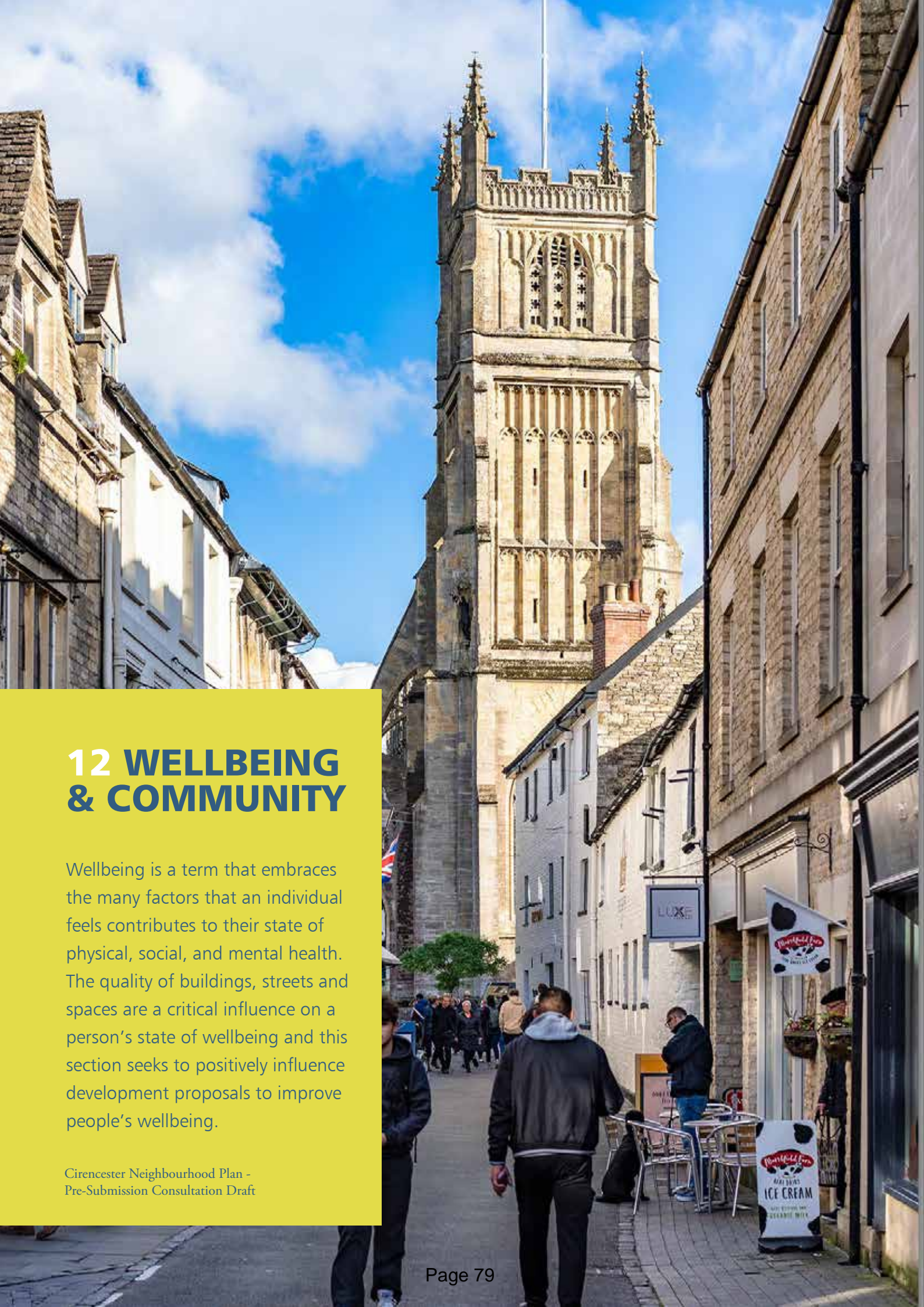
- 11.17 Innovative new models of town centre economic activity, such as hybrid or mixed-use spaces that support start-ups, co-working, and community activity will be supported across Cirencester.
- 11.18 Increasingly, the changes to town centres and high streets have resulted in them needing to be adapted and redefined to support a greater diversification of uses and bring back active street level uses, as the retail dominant function diminishes.
- 11.19 New hospitality businesses should be directed to the north side of the Market Place to create a café culture.

POLICY LE3 – SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- a) Development proposals will be supported where they provide opportunities for training, the obtaining of skills, and education.*
- b) Proposals that provide enhancements to existing skills and training facilities will be supported, including the encouragement of local apprenticeships and T-Level placements.*

POLICY LE4 – NEW EMPLOYMENT PREMISES & DESIGN QUALITY

- a) Proposals for new employment development outside existing industrial and employment areas should through its design, scale, and materials provide an attractive business environment which takes account of the character and appearance of Cirencester.*
- b) New employment and industrial proposals should demonstrate through a Design & Access Statement how they respect the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area. Where their location provides practical opportunities to do so, development proposals will be supported where, as appropriate to their scale and location, they provide clear and convenient connections with the town centre and create public access to the surrounding areas.*



12 WELLBEING & COMMUNITY

Wellbeing is a term that embraces the many factors that an individual feels contributes to their state of physical, social, and mental health. The quality of buildings, streets and spaces are a critical influence on a person's state of wellbeing and this section seeks to positively influence development proposals to improve people's wellbeing.

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WELLBEING & COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 12.1 Wellbeing is a term that embraces the many factors that an individual feels contributes to their state of physical, social, and mental health and while it recognises the aspects that are determined by people themselves, for example smoking, the potential to support individual wellness comes mainly from where they live and the quality of their local area. This includes enjoying a safe and pleasant environment, access to facilities for leisure, affordable and varied local services and being part of a cohesive community.
- 12.2 When people think about what makes a healthy place, they often naturally think about primary health care and hospitals, the services provided by the NHS, this is to be expected and is certainly important.
- 12.3 However, health care services have much less influence on people's health and general wellbeing than is often assumed. The NHS is good at treating people once they get ill. However, in terms of helping people stay happy and well, some of the most important factors are the neighbourhoods in which they live. In 2017 Public Health England acknowledged that a decent home, a job, and friends are more important to good health than the NHS.
- 12.4 The links between wellbeing and the environment around us shape our daily life by creating neighbourhoods where people have a sense of belonging and feel they are thriving. Such neighbourhoods include places to relax or play sport, opportunities to connect and socialise, access to nature and tranquillity with walkable neighbourhoods that are clean with good air quality and safe, not isolated.
- 12.5 Within Cirencester, the population of approximately 20,000 at the last census shows a town with a quarter of its residents aged 65+ an age band that may be more dependent on their primary health care and local services being easily accessible, not requiring a car.
- 12.6 Intermittent or poor public transport can add to frustrations, anxiety and feelings of loneliness and social isolation. In addition, community assets and communal places to go and socialise are increasingly under threat. Community clubs, essential to many, need buildings to exist and are reliant on volunteers, yet are often vulnerable to budget cuts and justify strong policies on maintaining their venues. There is an ongoing loss of public houses, historically one of the most common socialising environments, now threatened by changing consumer behaviour and viability. Cirencester has now lost most of its neighbourhood public houses.
- 12.7 The changing retail scene has also accelerated the numbers of vacant central empty ground floor premises which, with change of use, could become future hubs for recreational and social activity, hybrid working and community clubs, even the modern church.



- 12.8 Planners recognise vacant ground floor spaces could add to or replace non-viable community assets, providing flexible venues that could change throughout the day, for example a toddler soft play area during the day and a martial arts club in the evening. Protecting such spaces is essential.
- 12.9 Similarly, children need good socialising facilities near their homes, not requiring transportation to access if they are to develop independence and life skills. Scouts and Guides, youth clubs, gym and dance clubs all need places to use, easy to access and well maintained.
- 12.10 Young adults, as they move away from formal education, can feel their community no longer provides age-appropriate facilities near their homes resulting in less meaningful opportunities to spend time with peers and declining mental health. Cirencester particularly lacks indoor facilities for the 16-18 age group unless in an organised activity such as Air Cadets.
- 12.11 All of these create a picture of the community infrastructure needed to facilitate the elements of wellness for all ages.
- 12.12 The Neighbourhood Plan has the opportunity to strengthen the community infrastructure and improving the environment that contributes to helping people within the town flourish, providing opportunities for enrichment, encouraging physical health and ensuring wellness is supported through the following policies.

POLICY WBC 1 – AIR QUALITY

a) Measures that reduce traffic volume near educational establishments, particularly at peak times, will be supported.

b) Developments that encourage idling traffic, such as drive-through food outlets, within the Plan area will be resisted.

c) Measures that reduce vehicle movement in the town centre's historic streets will be supported, particularly Park Street, Dyer Street, Thomas Street, and the Market Place.

d) Development construction traffic will be required to monitor air quality, including particulates, to ensure net neutral is achieved throughout site development, and if necessary, instigate mitigation.

e) Development proposals should be operationally designed in a way that minimises any impact on public health through emissions and dust.

f) Monitoring of air quality within the town should be increased through locations identified as having greater risk of deterioration and particularly near educational establishments.

12.16 Limiting traffic through the historic streets of Cirencester and near its educational establishments is an important aim of the Neighbourhood Plan alongside the support of active travel measures that enhance opportunities to walk, cycle or use public transport. Measures to limit emission pollutants will also have the further advantage of protecting the heritage of the town, its architecture and historic core, from the damaging effects of acid rain to which exhaust gases contribute.

12.17 Other measures to consider include the siting of drive-through food establishments, especially near housing and education, where idling engines create air health inequalities with any compulsory air monitoring from large scale developments. There are currently two sites with a drive through which are situated within the Plan boundary near housing.

12.18 The Neighbourhood Plan looks to strengthen and support maintaining and improving air quality through active strategies. New development proposals will be required to contain information on air and dust quality monitoring and mitigation.

12.19 Other strategies related to air quality issues include the support for active sustainable transport to encourage less frequent personal car use and restrictions on all vehicle movement through the central core of the town centre. Restrictions on vehicle movement near educational sites at peak times and a resistance to drive-through food outlets.

12.20 The benefit will not only be the maintenance of good air quality Cirencester currently has, but the mitigation of any deterioration or rise in particulates from any shift, domestically or commercially, to electric vehicles that use the core road network of the town.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.13 Air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Long term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, leading to reduced life expectancy. Even short-term elevation of air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts including the exacerbation of asthma. Vulnerable groups such as children, people with chronic diseases and the elderly, are particularly sensitive to the dangerous effects of air pollution which also affects the fabric of our buildings, acidification of our ecosystems and the loss of biodiversity.

12.14 Air quality is not only affected by the carbon and nitrogen oxide from vehicle emissions but by particulate matter (PMs), small compounds that are gaseous and consisting of many chemical compounds, some of which are known to be toxic. Research is showing children with their young lungs may be particularly affected by these particulates which are known to travel large distances. Some of these toxins are known to be able to enter the bloodstream and thus transported round the body, lodging in organs such as the heart. These particulates are known to travel large distances in the atmosphere, half of which we know come from wood burners but the rest, in the main, are from vehicle tyre and brake wear. The heavier the vehicle the greater the friction with the road surface and the greater the displacement from the vehicle.

12.15 Electric cars, whilst having no emissions, can be 30% heavier than their petrol or diesel equivalent and so the encouragement and support for alternative electric vehicles, has a consequence through the increased weight of an electric body on tyres. This means particulates in the air could and have been shown to rise. This is of particular concern with larger electric vehicles such as buses and lorries driving through the town where air dispersion is less efficient, and pollution is trapped for longer within the urban environment.

POLICY WBC 2 – HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

a) Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) will be required in the design and access statement of developments over 10 residential units to support the 20 Minute Neighbourhood principle.

b) A rapid HIA assessment for developments of fewer than 10 homes will be required, or where the development is over 10 homes or greater than 10,000m² of commercial space a comprehensive HIA assessment will be required.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.21 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted more than ever the importance our immediate environment has on personal wellbeing such as the ability to walk easily and safely, access local food stores, enjoy green and open spaces and develop strong community cohesion. Planning decisions can unfairly impact upon vulnerable groups creating social isolation, limited food choices, poor transport links and lack of access to local services.

12.22 The Royal Town Planning Institute recognises that town planners have an important role in tackling public health issues from making streets safer and more attractive for walking creating new green spaces and locating housing where there are services, reducing car dependency.

- 12.23 However, whilst the NPPF recognises that health as a parameter in planning decisions is useful, it makes no requirement for their use and inclusion as a tool despite stating planning should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified health and wellbeing needs. The use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA) would address this anomaly.
- 12.24 Traditionally planners use Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) as they are established and have more testable parameters with better time controls requiring little or no public participation.
- 12.25 The adopted Cotswold District Council Local Plan requires EIAs which focus on key physical factors such as archaeology and hydrology, putting the environmental impact of development at its heart, but not the human factors, despite requiring the need for safe, sustainable, and healthy communities. As such they fail to measure how residents' access local services, employment or education opportunities, transport networks, primary care and community activities that support social cohesion.
- 12.26 HIAs in contrast, recognised by the World Health Organisation as a tool that puts health at the heart of the planning process, may require wider consultation and collaboration with implications for partnerships, money, and timetable. In doing so they can give local communities the voice to empower how and where housing is built, creating sustainable communities that do not unfairly affect disadvantaged groups. Support will be given to the future development of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) for town planning decisions which include health and environment.
- 12.27 The population of Cirencester is generally healthy. However, this status conceals the existence of some that experience poor health outcomes or have health-limiting living conditions. The 2021 census shows 1% of the town still live without central heating. These conditions are usually associated with socio-economic deprivation and occur in some wards of Cirencester. Children living in poverty within the town account for 10.9% of all children under the age of 16, a figure that has remained relatively unchanged for the last decade. To reduce these vulnerabilities, future housing and infrastructure must address employment access, social cohesion, and opportunities for physical health.
- 12.28 The Neighbourhood Plan will drive the use of HIAs with progression towards IIAs to ensure that development holistically supports all parameters of health through active connections, community infrastructure and recreation, food stores and the principles of the 20 Minute Neighbourhood model. The key health and wellbeing components of a HIA are shown below and form the basis for rapid and comprehensive assessment.

Table 3 – Principal Components & Considerations of a Health Impact Assessment

Theme	Planning Issue	Impact On Health & Wellbeing	Possible Mitigation/Enhancement Measures in Planning
Construction	Vehicle Movements Noise and Air Quality	Disturbance and stress caused by construction activity Deterioration of air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mitigate and monitor air quality changes ✓ Limit the noise disturbance levels on nearby residents
Housing	Quality House Design Mixed Housing Affordable Housing	Overcrowding Poor ventilation Mental illness from social isolation and fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure a mix of housing types and tenures cater for all population groups ✓ Housing design and quality provided to a high standard - ensure appropriate size, ventilation, daylight, and warmth standards ✓ Ensure that houses are placed appropriately in relation to the provision of green, open spaces, public services, and infrastructure
Active Travel & Connectivity	Promoting Active Transport Minimising Car Use Connectivity to Services	Physical inactivity Mental illness from social isolation Noise and air pollution from traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide safe and attractive walking and cycling routes with footpaths to ensure that people can use them to access facilities and community hubs ✓ Cycle storage ✓ Park and stride parking to increase walking to the town centre ✓ Ensure that people in new developments are well connected to amenities by walking and cycling paths
Access to Public Services and Infrastructure	Healthcare Services Education Access Community Infrastructure Public Transport Provision	Access to services and amenities Mental illness from social isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that new developments are located in sustainable locations with a 20 minute trip on foot to primary care, education, and social infrastructure such as community hub and local food shop ✓ Ensure that new developments do not reduce the accessibility of amenities for existing communities
Open & Green Spaces	Open, Green, and Recreational Space Biodiversity Net Gain Views and Vistas Protected	Physical inactivity Mental health benefits from access to green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure provision of open green spaces within developments. ✓ Ensure that the new developments do not reduce existing access to green and open spaces ✓ Provide opportunities for recreation and physical activity for all population groups e.g. outdoor gyms or circular walks ✓ Provide benches in strategic places i.e. bus stops and regular intervals to allow elderly and other population groups to rest when needed ✓ Provide communal bumping spaces to support social cohesion

Theme	Planning Issue	Impact On Health & Wellbeing	Possible Mitigation/Enhancement Measures in Planning
Healthy Eating	Local Food Stores Growing Food Hot Food Takeaways Locations	Opportunities for household food production Limited access to fresh, affordable food linked to poor health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide food growing opportunities such as community gardens and allotments ✓ Ensure easy access to local food shops ✓ Limit access to hot food takeaways e.g. limits on distances from schools or limit the proportion within the town centre
Community Safety	Traffic Management Lighting Crime Prevention in Design	Traffic speed management measures Perceptions of safety and Feeling vulnerable impacts on their wellbeing and movement Prevention of accidents - road and traffic injuries External lighting position and brightness in public areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limit unlit and non-overlooked corners, alleys, and pathways within developments ✓ Provide traffic calming measures within developments ✓ Avoid landscaping that creates opportunities for crime
Equality & Social Cohesion	Facilities And Infrastructure Are Accessible To All	Poor health exacerbated by isolation and fear of crime Poor accessibility can restrict vulnerable groups from participating in everyday life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide attractive, clean, and safe streets which provide sense of pride and increase people's satisfaction and sense of wellbeing ✓ Ensure that amenities are accessible for all, particularly the visually and physically limited. ✓ Provide social infrastructure
Employment & Economy	Local Employment Opportunities	Mental illness and poor self-esteem associated with unemployment and poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide and support new employment opportunities ✓ Ensure that people can access work places through variety of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport
Environmental Hazards	Air Quality Including Dust Noise Contaminated Land Waste	Poor air quality associated with health issues such as asthma Stress and sleep disturbance from noise Health risks from toxicity of contaminated land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that developments are free from environmental hazards ✓ Provide adequate waste disposal in development ✓ Limit vehicles near schools and in built up areas and restrict drive through food outlets near residential ✓ Implement best practice methods to minimise noise and dust pollution in development
Climate Change	Flood Risk Rising Air Temperatures	Flooding and mental health Physical health and overheating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide flood mitigation measures in development ✓ Ensure that all developments provide at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity for carbon capture and provide shade in landscaping ✓ Protect street trees and increase urban shade ✓ Provide benches in shade

POLICY WBC 3 – EQUAL ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES FOR ALL

a) *Development proposals should accommodate the needs of all users, including those with mobility needs, in the design and landscaping of public spaces.*

b) *Access to new and existing green infrastructure should be provided through well-connected paths of appropriate widths, smooth non-slip surfaces, and navigation aids such as signs.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.29 Equal access to public and green open space is a right protected by the Equality Act of 2010 which prohibits direct and indirect discrimination meaning Local Authorities managing urban green and blue spaces have a duty to advance equality of opportunity in access, ensuring that disabled people can use them to the same standard as everyone else.

12.30 Similarly, developments must accommodate movement around and from residential buildings to the outside although proposals and outcomes may be silent on how the landscaping relates to all residents, for example, how safe females feel walking along the footpaths to onward destinations, or how those with visual impairments can navigate obstacles and links.

12.31 The main physical, psychological and organisational barriers in using or accessing outdoor space include:

12.31.1 are there easy and well signposted alternatives to steps?

12.31.2 are disability toilet facilities accessible?

12.31.3 are there flat and good links to the spaces from disability parking?

12.31.4 are footpaths wide and well lit, easily seen by other members of the public supporting the perception of safety?

12.31.5 are there appropriate site guides for all?

12.32 In development these may extend to how planting is arranged, ground level or some raised, use of fragrant landscaping with benches in shade for rest and the avoidance of dense high shrubs.

12.33 The Neighbourhood Plan has the key requirement that quality of landscape design in new development is high to improve equality and enjoyment of the environment with appropriate access requirements for all users. Better accommodation for those with disabilities will allow them to enjoy green and open spaces through signage and improved access provision and the benefit will be the green and open spaces within Cirencester can be enjoyed by all.

POLICY WBC 4 – ACCESS TO PLAY SPACES

a) *Developments of greater than 10 houses should provide appropriate play spaces for the site size, easily accessible to all users, which are maintained as part of ongoing social management plans.*

b) *The development of new fitness trails and outdoor gyms in open green spaces, where appropriate, will be supported, especially those that connect to the cycling 'wheel and spoke' network of the town.*

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.34 Physical exercise, which is accessible, easy to use and free has never more been important at a time when life is increasingly distracted by screen time, staying inside over venturing out and socially connecting digitally rather than face to face. The result is rising obesity, heart disease, other life limiting diseases and children who are failing to play outside.

12.35 Outdoor play is especially crucial for a child's development although it benefits people of all ages. All children benefit from being outside, interacting with their environment, learning from nature, as part of a team on a sports field or using a playground.

12.36 These experiences can be powerful for children with disabilities and why accessible inclusive playground equipment provided in all play areas is important. A variety of equipment can accommodate not only inclusivity but sensory play or calm areas for those with autism who are sensitive to noise.

12.37 Play through sport for any age can relieve stress, supercharge learning, and make work more productive whilst connecting with others. Cirencester has benefited from the installation of recent free for use outdoor gym equipment in Four Acre Field, Thistle Park, City Bank and Kingshill Sports Complex. It is hoped more can be added at other sites. Comments collected through community engagement showed protection of town play spaces was very important.

12.38 Support will be given to improving existing play spaces, including at the Abbey Grounds and St Michael's Park, and to creating new facilities in neighbourhoods where these facilities are lacking, particularly identified in the Beeches ward. Design and equipment specifications should pay due diligence to inclusivity and mobility access particularly the appeal to all genders, girls have been shown to prefer areas of quiet seating and avoid environments that focus on only one activity alone such as the skateboard park at the Kingshill Sports Complex.

12.39 Support will also be given to extending access to sports fields in the town, particularly when not being used by sports clubs and educational establishments.

12.40 In new developments, play spaces should:

12.40.1 be easily accessible and not difficult to access behind any physical barrier;

12.40.2 be accessible to the general public and be designed so as to feel that it is part of the public and not private realm;

12.40.3 create a safe environment, appropriately considering lighting and layout to reduce the fear of crime;

12.40.4 be inclusive and gender neutral.

12.41 The benefit of this approach will be to provide accessible and inclusive playgrounds and outdoor fitness spaces for all ages.

12.42 'Play on the Way' interventions as a method of encouraging children to walk are supported by the Neighbourhood Plan. These should be integrated into the streetscape on different street levels to create interest and diversity and can include unique paving elements such as hopscotch grids, steppingstones, and items to navigate.

POLICY WBC 5 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES

a) Existing community facilities that are designated as Assets of Community Value (ACV) will be protected from change of use or closure.

b) The loss of existing community buildings (Use Class D1) will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists.

c) Flexible multi-functional spaces that allow for the widest possible use and activity, particularly daily community needs which are missing, will be supported.

d) Development proposals will be required to demonstrate the provision of community infrastructure in proportion to the increased population brought about by that development, particularly recreation and primary care, either on site or off-site through developer contributions.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.43 Community assets or the infrastructure that enable members of the community to meet are defined as buildings or facilities, as opposed to organisations and services; typically, these include pubs, community halls, churches, and venues in public ownership, for example the Bingham Library in The Waterloo.

12.44 They can also be privately owned, used regularly as places for worship or on an ad hoc basis for events and activities such as scouts and gym clubs, providing space for socialising, cultural activity or as an affordable space for private hire.

12.45 Some buildings provide for one type of activity whilst others offer diverse facilities in response to the needs of the local community. For example, Cirencester Baptist Church, a relatively new building, offers room hire for non-religious meetings and clubs and the Bingham Hall regularly hosts theatre productions and dance groups. All contribute to the wellbeing and social cohesion of the town, typically enhancing and maintaining quality of life.

12.46 Venues such as the Barn Theatre, exhibitions at the Coronium Museum and craft workshops at New Brewery Arts are much loved and used, although the town lacks a permanent dedicated cinema facility, the original having been demolished and never replaced.

12.47 Live music is enjoyed during the annual Phoenix Festival with regular events at the Sundial Theatre based at Cirencester College, but within the core of the town centre there is limited capacity to enjoy regular live music. A strong cultural scene attracts support of the local economy by residents and visitors alike, compensating in part for the changing retail economy by increased use of hospitality and the night economy.

12.48 The retention of public houses post pandemic has become particularly poignant as the public regain the confidence to return to social indoor spaces. Some neighbourhoods have either lost their local pub to new residential housing or only saved after a change of ownership, such as the Plough at Stratton.

12.49 These community facilities within Cirencester provide an important resource for all residents and responses from community engagement show there was strong support for the protection and retention of such with over 50% of respondents saying they were very important.

12.50 The viability of a community asset proposed as being removed will therefore require a report, prepared by an independent professional, justifying financial and marketing evidence for the sale or change of use. This should include evidence that the asset has been marketed for sale or to rent at local and regional level for a minimum of 12-18 months with the applicant covering the cost of the assessment before any planning application is submitted for change of use.

12.51 Ground floor town centre retail space that has become redundant will also be viewed as having the potential to extend community space for hybrid working or as a shared facility for local activities or groups.

12.52 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to resist the loss of ground floor redundant town space to residential usage and will support its retention as a community facility. It will also require viability assessment for the loss of a community asset while extending where possible current community provision particularly for live music, indoor sport, youth provision and a cinema. The benefit will be to protect and where possible extend community assets and their contribution to physical and mental wellbeing.

POLICY WBC 6 – DESIGNING OUT CRIME

a) Development plans should demonstrate in the design and access statement how principles that deter crime have been incorporated.

b) Support will be given for the development of upper floor empty town centre premises to residential use to increase crime vigilance and create less opportunity for unobserved crime and anti-social behaviour.

c) Support will be given for prevention of crime opportunities in the urban built environment by improvements to hidden or dark pedestrian footpaths.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.53 Crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour can all have negative impacts upon community wellbeing and the quality of life. As well as the direct costs of crime experienced by its victims, the fear of crime contributes to social exclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, children, and ethnic minorities. Crime also threatens the success and vitality of town centres and employment areas by acting as a hindrance to economic activity and particularly night-time prosperity.

- 12.54 Research shows crime is less likely to occur where there is a perception of being seen, alongside a strong sense of public pride when anti-social behaviour is more likely to be challenged.
- 12.55 Promoting good design and layout in a development is one of the most important ways in which policy can address community safety issues. They can make crimes more difficult to commit, increase the likelihood of detection and improve public perceptions of safety. Conversely, poor landscaping and urban design can directly compromise the safety and security of people and properties.
- 12.56 Poorly positioned trees and shrubs or the use of inappropriate species close to buildings, lighting, pedestrian routes, and public areas can increase crime and anti-social behaviour by obscuring vision or providing hiding places. Planting shrubs with thorns or sharp spines in front of vulnerable boundaries or buildings can deter potential intruders whilst planting schemes should consider growth rates, heights and spread. There should also be the avoidance of potential climbing aids such as the poor placement of commercial bins, which may give easy access to properties.
- 12.57 Other design approaches include:
- 12.57.1 having the main access to a building at the front, facing the street or communal entrance courtyard;
 - 12.57.2 making sure doors and windows face onto the street and other places where surveillance is needed;
 - 12.57.3 avoiding blank walls that enclose public areas;
 - 12.57.4 private areas being clearly defined through appropriate boundary treatment, and care taken to limit opportunities for intruders to gain easy access to the rear of buildings;
 - 12.57.5 car parking being open and clearly observed close to occupied buildings.
- 12.58 Mixed residential developments also have many benefits but significantly encourage different lifestyle patterns of activity, another deterrent. Developments that house diverse demographics with different lifestyle patterns better deter opportunistic crime. Cul-de-sacs and dead ends should be avoided with their reduced pedestrian movements and opportunities for unobserved crime.
- 12.59 Town centre criminal activity and anti-social behaviour can also be reduced through the mixed use of its buildings, particularly change of use to upper floors for residential, essentially 'living over the shop' as supported elsewhere in this Plan. This increases the diversity and inclusiveness of the area and thus increases natural surveillance throughout the night. This in turn can alter people's existing perceptions and reduce the fear of crime.
- 12.60 National planning policy (NPPF refers) makes clear that crime prevention can be a material consideration in determining planning applications and the Neighbourhood Plan looks to support crime avoidance in design. The benefit will be the limitation of opportunist crime and improved public perception of safety and feeling safe.

POLICY WBC 7 – LIGHT POLLUTION

a) Development should mitigate through design minimising night blight by using lower lumen lighting suitably positioned in a downwards direction and avoiding reflections onto surfaces.

b) New commercial and external light signage will only be permitted with justification for operational, safety or security reasons, designing in such a way to minimise spillage beyond the application site using guidance on lighting by the Institute of Lighting professionals (ILP) GN01, the reduction of obstructive light.

- 12.61 The benefits of reducing light pollution and gaining darker skies are wide ranging and include astronomy education, mental health, benefits to wildlife, sleep patterns, energy saving and carbon targets.
- 12.62 Aside from humans, plants and animals depend on earth's daily cycle of light and dark rhythm to govern life-sustaining behaviours such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators. Scientific evidence suggests that artificial light at night has negative and deadly effects on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects, and plants. The impact of light pollution on wildlife corridors is particularly detrimental to nocturnal animals, who sleep during the day and are active at night, radically altering their night-time environment by turning night into day. According to researchers for nocturnal animals the introduction of artificial light probably represents the most drastic change human beings have made to their environment that is detrimental to wildlife.
- 12.63 Glare from artificial lights can also impact wetland habitats such as the River Churn that is home to amphibians such as frogs and toads whose night-time croaking is part of the breeding ritual. Artificial lights that disrupt this nocturnal activity, interfering with reproduction can reduce populations with reports the common toad has declined by two thirds since the 1950s.
- 12.64 Humans also adhere to a circadian rhythm; this is our biological clock, a sleep-wake pattern governed by the day-night cycle. Artificial light at night can disrupt that cycle. An increased amount of light at night lowers melatonin production, which results in sleep deprivation, fatigue, headaches, stress, anxiety, and other health problems. Melatonin helps keep us healthy. It has antioxidant properties, induces sleep, boosts the immune system, lowers cholesterol, and helps the functioning of the thyroid, pancreas, ovaries, testes, and adrenal glands. Reduced production of melatonin and particularly its consequence on sleep quality has therefore enormous implications for physical wellbeing.
- 12.65 Alongside this, the natural beauty of the environment is diminished through glare, shown in a 2016 survey by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE).
- 12.66 Compiled from interactive satellite maps it shows the extending skyglow within the town, each pixel shows the levels of radiance to the night sky, the darker the colour the higher the concentration of light pollution.
- 12.67 According to the Cotswold Conservation Board statement of 2019 (Dark Skies and Artificial Light) there has been a significant decline in the darkest of dark skies within the Cotswold's since the 1990s.

12.68 Planning policies and guidance do make some provision to control light pollution. The NPPF in 2019 states planning policies and conditions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light with no further requirement. The Cotswold District Local Plan references external signage, mainly in a commercial capacity, but is less detailed in how. On a practical level, where lighting is required, better spectrums of 3000 kelvins or less with shielding of upward glare and a downward orientation would go some way in the first instance to improving the situation.

12.69 Beyond this, measures could involve passive infrared motion sensors, orientation and position of glazing/windows and dimming measures. This will become particularly important where residential development will extend the currently green boundaries of the town.

12.70 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore has the key requirement that developments consider lighting intensity, height and angle, shields, control mechanisms and timers or motion sensors and that reflective building materials are avoided especially large areas of glazing near water bodies and wildlife corridors. This will support a dark skies strategy for the town that limits new external unjustified lighting, protecting areas of recreational dark sky with street lights that are orientated downwards, limiting upward spillage. The benefit will be better protection of the dark night sky and the wellbeing of nocturnal wildlife.

POLICY WBC8 – NOISE POLLUTION

a) Support will be given for measures that reduce town centre vehicle noise especially at night through encouragement to use peripheral roads.

b) Developments will be encouraged at the design stage to consider better noise insulation with features such as trees and hedges in landscaping, and wall insulation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.71 Hearing as a sense evolved to alert humans to changes in their environment whether foraging for food or warning of nearby danger. Modern life has filled ears with considerably more sounds than our ancestors, many useful still but they become 'noise' when they are unwanted, interfering with concentration, working, talking, listening, or sleeping. Unwanted noise can go on to cause serious long-term harm to health.

12.72 Today, noise is the second largest environmental cause of ill health after air pollution and a WHO (World Health Organisation) study found that at least one million healthy life years are lost every year in Western Europe as a result of exposure to excessive environmental noise. Furthermore, a UK focused study by the Science for Environment Policy showed that exposure to noise above recommended levels resulted in additional cases of dementia, stroke, and heart attacks.

12.73 Towns such as Cirencester are noisier places than the surrounding rural countryside. Travel networks particularly create sound, even with a greater use of the quieter electric vehicles. Typically, housing growth extends the population movement in cars.

12.74 Other noise disturbance can come from construction, the night economy, haulage vehicles cutting through local streets and anti-social behaviour taking the opportunity to use the quieter traffic conditions for speeding or racing.

12.75 WHO defines a daytime noise threshold that minimises health impact as 55 dba, moderate traffic is typically 75 dba. At this level research has shown the noise from this moderate level of road traffic impairs cognitive functioning in children, including attention, concentration, sound discrimination, memory, and reading ability. Some children as a result, develop deficits in reading ability and suffer lower school performance.

12.76 Similarly, WHO also stated a night-time level of 40 dba is conducive to quality sleep. Noise above this can make it difficult to fall asleep, and abrupt noises can cause awakenings, which the sleeper may not sense or recall but still affects the sleep rhythm. Even at levels below which awakening may occur, noise produces measurable physiological reactions, such as an increase in heart rate and body movements and can cause disturbances of natural sleep patterns by causing shifts from deep or REM (rapid eye movement) to lighter stages.

12.77 People affected by noise may get up tired or not rested in the morning. For the level of noise produced by a busy road, the proportion affected by sleep disturbance becomes significant. Chronic or repeated exposure to sounds at or above 85 db can also cause hearing loss.

12.78 While urban noise may seem inevitable and unavoidable, especially in an environment like Cirencester, even the most dense and active places can take steps to limit noise within the urban environment or mitigate in design. Town landscaping can look to increase the extent and height of evergreen landscaping and street trees which absorb traffic noise and act as a buffer to residential areas. Additionally, trees will benefit carbon capture, add character and ambience especially where urban layout is dense.

12.79 Traffic calming measures can act as a deterrent to car speed and support consequent noise prevention through needless acceleration or the ability to use road networks as rat runs.

12.80 Local community engagement showed residents valued the relative tranquillity of Cirencester and want it protected as much as they value other reasons for enjoying living here. Growth will bring an unavoidable increase in the level of movement and noise, the Neighbourhood Plan will support mitigation measures that minimise the unnecessary extension of current levels.

12.81 The Neighbourhood Plan therefore requires at the design stage, that all proposals should provide adequate wall acoustic insulation to protect households from external noise, combined with better or less glazing or reduced window space and improved ventilation that limits the need to open windows.

12.82 Landscaping noise transfer buffers, combined with reduced or better hard ground surface barriers, that are near the source of noise will help minimise urban noise pollution, alongside visual greenery and soil mounds, which can reduce the perception of noise.



APPENDIX 01

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA) TEMPLATE

RAPID HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT MATRIX

The assessment matrix is designed to rapidly assess the likely health impacts of development plans and proposals, including planning frameworks and masterplans for large areas, regeneration and estate renewal programmes and outline and detailed planning applications. It should be used at the earliest possible stage during plan preparation, or prior to the submission of a planning application to inform the design, layout, and composition of a development proposal.

The matrix does not identify all issues related to health and wellbeing but focuses on the built environment and issues directly or indirectly influenced by planning decisions. It focuses specifically on four key topics or broad determinants, active travel, safety, primary health and social provision, and food access. It is generic and should be localised for specific use.

Not all the issues or assessment criteria may be relevant, and the user is encouraged to prioritise specific actions which focus on key impacts.

Health impacts may be short-term or temporary, related to construction or longer-term, related to the operation and maintenance of a development and may particularly affect vulnerable or priority groups of the population. This should be indicated in the details / evidence section. Where an impact is identified, actions should be recommended to mitigate a negative impact or enhance or secure a positive impact.

- Name of assessor / organisation
- Name of project (plan or proposal)
- Planning reference (if applicable)
- Location of project
- Date of assessment

Assessment Criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancements
Accessibility and active travel				
<i>Does the proposal address the ten Healthy Streets indicators?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal prioritise and encourage walking, for example through the use of shared spaces?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal prioritise and encourage cycling, for example by providing secure cycle parking, showers, and cycle lanes?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal connect public realm and internal routes to local and strategic cycle and walking networks?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal include traffic management and calming measures to help reduce and minimise road injuries?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Is the proposal well connected to public transport, local services and facilities?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal seem to reduce car use by reducing car parking provision, supported by the controlled parking zones, car clubs and travel plans measures?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal allow people with mobility problems or a disability to access buildings and places?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment Criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancements
Crime reduction and community safety				
<i>Does the proposal incorporate elements to help design out crime?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal incorporate design techniques to help people feel secure and avoid creating 'gated communities'?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal include attractive, multi-use public spaces and buildings?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Has engagement and consultation been carried out with the local community and voluntary sector?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Access to health and social care services and other social infrastructure				
<i>Does the proposal retain or re-provide existing social infrastructure?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal assess the impact on health and social care services and have local NHS organisations been contacted regarding existing and planned healthcare capacity?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal include the provision, or replacement of a healthcare facility and does the facility meet NHS requirements?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal assess the capacity, location, and accessibility of other social infrastructure, e.g. primary, secondary and post 19 education needs and community facilities?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	

Assessment Criteria	Relevant?	Details/evidence	Potential health impact?	Recommended mitigation or enhancements
<i>Does the proposal explore opportunities for shared community use and co-location of services?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
Access to healthy food				
<i>Does the proposal facilitate the supply of local food, for example allotments, community farms and farmers' markets?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Is there a range of retail uses, including food stores and smaller affordable shops for social enterprises?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	
<i>Does the proposal avoid contributing towards an over- concentration of hot food takeaways in the local area?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertain	



APPENDIX 02

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROJECTS

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

1. Develop a multi-agency flood mitigation town strategy including river management and flood warden activity.
2. Establish a strategy for the location and provision of vehicle re-fuel stations (to include electric and hydrogen fuel) and photovoltaic arrays in appropriate locations across the town.
3. Audit mapping of natural habitats and wildlife corridors including riverine to enable protection, enhancement and to identify for public enjoyment.
4. Seek to ban single use plastics across the Plan area through a town centre policy.
5. Document key habitats, wildlife corridors and plan enhancements.

ACCESS & MOVEMENT PROJECTS

6. Establish a series of connected cycle and walking paths around the edge of town ('the wheel') that connect to routes into the town centre ('the spokes'). This will help address the physical barrier caused by the inner ring road.
7. Establish longer distance walking and cycle paths as follows: from Cirencester to Kemble; from Cirencester to South Cerney; from Siddington to Stratton (improving the current inadequate shared space along the Gloucester Road); and from Cirencester to Sapperton.
8. Develop enhanced regular, all-week (including late evening) rapid and frequent public transport connections to key regional centres (e.g. Cheltenham), rail interchanges, hospitals, and local destinations (e.g. Fairford and Tetbury).

9. Research and locate potential site for new Park & Stride car parks.
10. Create an updated walking map for Cirencester and its countryside connections that includes the wheel and spokes and identifies small spaces for social encounters, together with green and pleasant routes to link where people live with the town centre.
11. Changes to the A419 and A429 dual carriageways to create direct, convenient, safe, street level, priority pedestrian and cycle crossings on desire lines to allow Cirencester's most important active travel routes to cross the dual carriageways and access the town centre. Seek reduced speed limits on the A419 and A429 on the approaches to the new crossings.

WELLBEING PROJECTS

12. A project to encourage the opening up of education buildings and grounds for community and public use during holidays, weekends, and evenings.
13. Increase the number of neighbourhood community assets (e.g., halls and similar spaces, play areas etc) in The Beeches, outer Watermoor, Kingshill, Kingshill Meadow and Chesterton.
14. Audit of all social, sports and recreational facilities to ensure the type, distribution, and quantity is appropriate for a growing population and that they are inclusive of gender, age, and disability. Create an action plan to meet shortfalls.
15. Raise awareness, locate, and develop potential sites for Community Supported Agriculture projects and allotments within the peri urban areas of the town and linked to the 'wheel' and 'spoke' cycle route system. This will increase the economic resilience and sustainability of the town.

TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS

16. Establish a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town centre.
17. Establish a Town Centre Business Manager to develop a stronger economic voice for the town, to enhance the night-time economy, the promotion of the town to more employers and to lobby infrastructure investment.
18. Reconnect the Roman Amphitheatre to the town centre core, the Old Kennels car park, and other neighbourhoods, working with AQIVA and Gloucestershire Highways to identify a new connection location, funding, and type, to be supported by brown heritage signage and improved maintenance.
19. Identify a town centre site/building and an operator for a new cinema project, to possibly be part of a venue that can also support live music.
20. Research, map, and audit for potential residential accommodation over retail within the town centre.
21. Proposals for the transformation of the town centre car parks. To enhance the townscape and urban form to create quality public open space of the Forum, Brewery Sheep Street and Station car parks closer to the traditional northern quarter of the town. To enhance walkability and connectivity and create potential capacity for residential and commercial accommodation and community assets.

VISITOR ECONOMY, CULTURE & SKILLS PROJECT

22. Create a cultural strategy and map of the town including a digital walking app.
23. Digital walking app for the Amphitheatre and its connection to other areas of Roman Corinium.
24. Support for a heritage trail, new wayfinding systems and quality signage.
25. Create a Cirencester Sustainable Tourism Strategy, to enhance the visitor experience separate but linked to a Cotswold-wide strategy that includes the Water Park.
26. Establish better links with regional/Gloucestershire business and skills bodies and exploit Cirencester's education cluster reputation to attract new businesses to add placements for digital, agri-tech, finance and other high value skills and to provide routes into local work.
27. A cyber strategy to better facilitate hybrid working and improve facilities for tourists and townspeople by upgrading broadband connectivity, providing Town Centre Wi-Fi and improving mobile phone data signal.
28. Draw up a model for developers to support local construction skills development for A-Level students on long placements at Cirencester College through to T-Level placements and taking on apprentices.
29. Encourage businesses to offer placements for young people to develop skills which the town needs for the future and to provide routes into work locally.
30. Research and locate a site for a replica 'Roman Garden'.
31. Promote the establishment of cultural festivals within the town, such as music, fine art, craft, and literature.

APPENDIX 03

NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY ASSETS

GROCERY SHOPS

1. Stratton Store
2. Abbey Way Services Spa
3. Tesco Express, Cricklade Street
4. Marks and Spencer, Dyer Street
5. Waitrose
6. Tesco Express, Chesterton Lane
7. The Steadings (proposed)
8. Budgens Store, Chesterton Lane
9. Lidl Store, Midland Road
10. Aldi Store, Cricklade Road
11. Tesco Store, Cricklade Store
12. The Beeches Store, Upper Churnside
13. Co-op Store, Burford Road
14. Siddington Store (outside of Plan area in the Parish of Siddington but an important community asset within walking distance of the Parish of Cirencester)

PUBS & CAFÉS

15. The Plough Inn, Gloucester Road
16. Drillman's Arms, Gloucester Road

17. Corinium Court, Gloucester Street
18. The Marlborough Arms, Sheep Street
19. Black Horse, Castle Street
20. The Brewers Arms, Cricklade Street
21. The Twelve Bells, Lewis Lane
22. The Golden Farm, Upper Churnside.
23. The Bear, Dyer Street
24. Bees Knees, Watermoor Road
25. The Golden Cross, Black Jack Street
26. The Crown, West Market Place
27. The Talbot Inn, Victoria Road
28. The Steadings (proposed)
29. Odd Socks Café, Elliot Road
30. Gilo's Café, Love Lane
31. Baptist Church Café, Chesterton Lane
32. Waitrose Café, Hammonds Way
33. Town Centre Cafés (various)

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

34. Powell's School, Gloucester Street
35. Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road

36. Chesterton Primary School, Apsley Road
37. The Steadings Primary School (proposed)
38. Stratton Primary School, Thessaly Road
39. Watermoor Primary School, Kingshill Lane

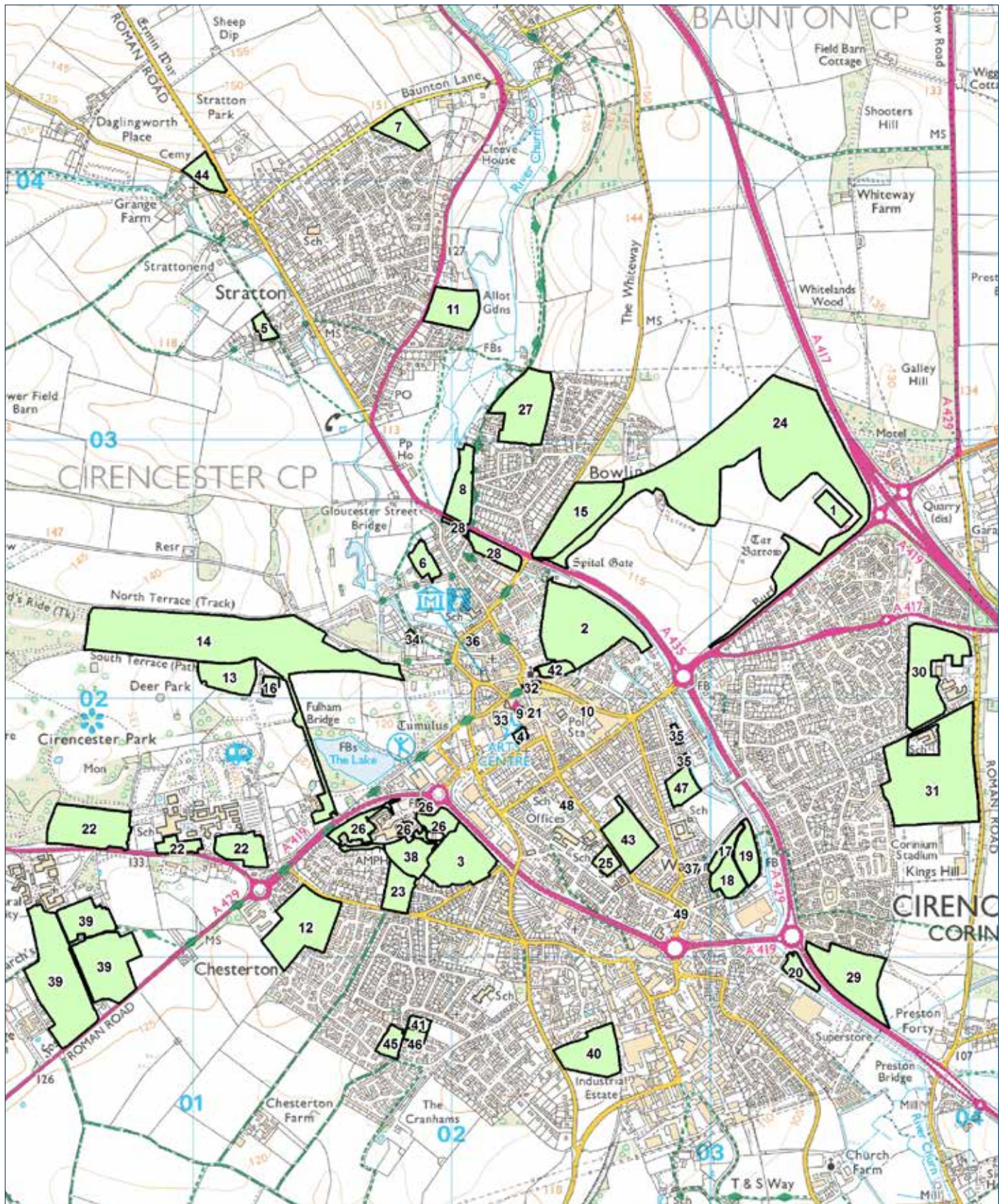
AMENITY GREEN SPACES

40. Baunton Lane Playing Fields
41. Humpty Dumps
42. Jack Gardner, Abbey Way
43. Cirencester Park
44. Abbey Grounds
45. Querns Wood, Amphitheatre, and Four Acre Field
46. St Michael's Park
47. City Bank Field/Victoria Road Meadow
48. Kingshill North Open Space
49. Kingshill Meadow Country Park
50. Thistle Park and Two Acre Field
51. The Steadings Public Open Space (proposed)
52. Stratton Meadow
53. Harebushes



APPENDIX 04

LOCAL GREEN AND OPEN SPACES





1. ABBEY FARM ALLOTMENTS HAREBUSH

Accessed from London Road or through Harebush Woods, this site is owned and managed by the Chester-Masters.



2. ABBEY GROUNDS

Hidden behind the large parish church of St John Baptist, the Abbey Grounds is the site of St Mary's Abbey, demolished in 1539, and forms an informal, free public recreational facility of 8.44 hectares, incorporating the former Abbey's trout lake, the only remaining Abbey structure in the Norman Arch, a children's playground, a bandstand, remains of the roman wall and large areas of mown grass used for a variety of informal games and leisure activities. Extending to the River Churn it retains some of the 17th century landscaping. It is bordered by the A417 Grove Lane Bypass, the rear of the town's Market Place and the later residential housing off Dugdale road, with winding pathways and extensive views across the grounds, especially from east to west towards the parish church tower. Pedestrian access is from Gosditch St next to the church, through the Norman Arch from Grove Lane, via Corinium Gate or through the pay and display Abbey grounds car park on Dugdale Road. The open grounds, lake, wildfowl, trees and greenery form an impressive pastoral centrepiece, inviting restful contemplation of the general town scene. During August it hosts a free three day Phoenix music festival with other annual events such as the food and drink festival. Ownership is with Cirencester Town Council.



3. AMPHITHEATRE

Cirencester Amphitheatre stands on the site of a former limestone quarry, just outside what was the original roman wall, to the west of the town. It is now bordered by the A429 Bristol Rd bypass, the residential housing of Cotswold Avenue and Querns wood which sits within Cirencester hospital grounds. Built around the early 2nd century and one of the largest in Britain, today all that remains are the grassy mounds of its oval structure covering 5.2 hectares. Open to the public it is used as a thoroughfare by locals connecting Chesterton to the town centre, occasional historical events with the Ermine Street Guard and recreational use. The main entrance is Cotswold Avenue with information boards and limited parking. Ownership rests with Cirencester Town Council and English Heritage.



4. ASHCROFT ROAD BOWLS CLUB

Formed in 1930 the outdoor town lawn green bowls club is a private members club of 0.14 hectares located and accessed through the Brewery car park, well supported with league tournaments and a modern clubhouse with a licensed bar. Owned and managed by Cirencester Bowls Club.



5. BARN WAY ALLOTMENTS

Accessed from Barn Way, this site of 0.59 hectares sits on the peripheral of the town and is owned and managed by the Bathurst estate.



6. BARTON LANE ALLOTMENTS

Barton Lane Allotments are situated to the west of Cirencester, close to the town centre, tucked to the north behind Gloucester Street. There are 41 plots managed over 0.92 hectares owned and managed by St John's Hospital and Other Almshouses Charity. The site is well hidden and many residents of Cirencester are unaware of its existence, often pleasantly surprised when they discover it for the first time.



7. BAUNTON LANE PLAYING FIELD

Full size football pitch and recently renovated children’s playground with tunnels, slides and climbing frame, accessed off Baunton Lane. Also used for community gatherings and maintained by volunteers. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



8. BROMFORD ALLOTMENTS BOWLING GREEN LANE

Accessed from Bowling Green Lane this site Of 2.14 hectares sits with the River Churn along its length and is owned and managed by the Chester-Masters.



9. BREWERY COURT

Pedestrian 0.08 hectare area of open space with seating, within the former location of

an 18th century town Brewery, now the New Brewery Arts Crafts building which dominates the square. The area connects foot traffic from its boundary with Cricklade Street through to the Brewery Car park with several retail units within. Multiple private ownership.



10. CATALPA SQUARE

Demolition of several building in Dyer St during the 1960s and 70s created the area now known as Catalpa Square, 0.04 hectares in size and named after the four Catalpa trees planted within, now removed. Bordered by shops it serves mainly as a seating area dominated by the relocated Jubilee column of 1935. Privately leased.



11. CHELTENHAM ROAD ALLOTMENTS

Site of 2.63 hectares accessed from Cheltenham Rd on the peripheral of the Town in Stratton, owned and managed by St John’s Hospital and Other Almshouses Charity.



12. CHESTERTON CEMETERY

Opened in 1871 and still in use as a burial ground, the site of 4.57 hectares is accessed from Chesterton Lane through the former neo-gothic keepers lodge gate with on road parking. The site contains many war graves and a former non-conformist chapel, now used for storage. Owned by Cotswold District Council.



13. CIRENCESTER CRICKET CLUB

Membership private cricket club with pitch and clubhouse formed in 1842. It is one of the oldest in the country, sitting within Cirencester Park, towards the education quarter, next to Cirencester Tennis Club and accessed by vehicle from Tetbury Road or on foot through the park from Cecily Hill. Well supported with matches and junior level coaching.



14. CIRENCESTER PARK AND OLD KENNELS

Cirencester Park as a whole, stands at the north-west edge of the town and covers over 1000ha in area, extending towards the parishes of Coates, Duntisbourne Rouce, Daglingworth and Sapperton. It lies on gently undulating land, bounded to the south by the A419, to the west by a minor road from the A419 to Winstone, and on the other sides by agricultural land.

An extensive wooded park divided by straight line avenues which define key viewpoints, it was established by Allen, first Earl Bathurst, from 1714 to 1775, with the help of Alexander Pope and much influenced by Bathurst’s association with Stephen Switzer.

The Broad Ride, identified here, forms the central axis of the park. Privately owned the park is open to the public. A path connects Broad Ride with Old Kennels, redeveloped open land owned by the Bathurst Estate which now serves as an area of rewilding, car park and retail site with a footpath connecting the Education Quarter on the Tetbury Road roundabout through to Cirencester Park when open.



15. CIRENCESTER RUGBY CLUB

The current site of the Rugby Club sits on the fringes of the town, at the traffic lights on Grove Lane, with the Whiteway junction. It has existed here since 1953/4 using an old Nissen Hut as a clubhouse. Later additions formed the facilities now seen, including the spoils of the bypass to create and level up the pitches. A new car park was added in 2020 and today the club provides training for youth teams as well as professional fixtures. The site covers 4.86 hectares and is owned and managed by Cirencester Rugby Club.



16. CIRENCESTER TENNIS CLUB

Membership private tennis club run on a lease from the Bathurst estate, with 4 hard surface outdoor courts. It sits within Cirencester Park towards the education quarter and has been there since 1993. It is accessed by vehicle from Tetbury Road or on foot through the park from Cecily Hill. Well supported with tournaments, coaching and recreational play.



17. CITY BANK ALLOTMENTS

Located off Queen St along the River Churn, City Bank allotments of 1.02 hectares are owned and managed by and connect with the City Bank nature reserve area. The site has easy access to plenty of water due to the close proximity of the river. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



18. CITY BANK NATURE RESERVE

City Bank was established in 2018 and is part of an area covering Victoria Road Playing Fields, The Glade, City Bank field and the Old Nursery. Nestled amongst the nearby houses, this area is a sanctuary for wildlife and a great space for recreation whilst connecting walkers to City Bank Park and beyond. Volunteers maintain the area which is a haven for wild orchids, a wide range of birds with otters, kingfishers, and water voles. Wildlife themed events and activities are regularly held as part of Love Parks Week and by local wildlife groups offering guided tours and talks. Access is from Victoria Rd or through City Bank Park. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



19. CITY BANK RECREATIONAL GROUND

Flat open recreational field of 1.56 hectares bordered and enclosed by City Bank Park and City Bank View, with footpath access through to the adjacent nature reserve. Used mainly for leisure it also connects, by footpaths, the Beeches area of the town to Watermoor, and is well used by dog walkers. Access has been improved with the addition of a wood bridge over the River Churn which meanders along its edge. Fitness equipment sits near the remains of a sluice gate to one of the towns former mills. Ownership with Cirencester Town Council.



20. CRICKLADE ROAD PICNIC AREA

Enclosed by the A419 Swindon Rd Bypass and Cricklade Rd retail sites, this 1.21 hectare parcel of land provides a free opportunity for the public to sit and enjoy the wide stretch of the River Churn within and from several picnic benches. No allocated parking but well served by pavements and a nearby pedestrian crossing. Owned by Cotswold District Council.



21. CRICKLADE STREET/WEST WAY SEATING

Pedestrian connection and vehicle turnaround point between Cricklade Street and West Way containing seating and landscaping, sometimes used as a spot for busking musicians. Adopted public highway, owned and maintained by Gloucestershire County Council.



22. DEER PARK SECONDARY SCHOOL & CIRENCESTER COLLEGE PLAYING FIELDS

Deer Park Secondary School (2.9 hectares) and Cirencester College (2.42 hectares) are accessed from the Tetbury or Stroud roads and used by students of each establishment.



23. FOUR ACRE FIELD

Four Acre field covers 1.7 hectares in the Chesterton area of Cirencester and is bordered by Querns Wood, Chesterton Lane, Cotswold Close and the rear gardens of Chesterton Park. Used by dog walkers, weekend footballers and for other recreational activities, it contains a small playground and some outdoor fitness equipment. Recent re-wilding has extended its biodiversity and wildlife value with footpaths connected walkers through Querns wood to the town centre. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



24. HAREBUSH WOOD

Harebush Wood was created in the 1820's by Jane Chester Master as a working 26.8 hectares wood with active timber production and remains privately owned by the family. It is open to the public as a circular walk on the edges of the town, home to bluebells and wildlife, accessible opposite the Norman Arch on the A417 Grove Lane or through the Burford Rd allotments. Owned by the Chester-Masters.



25. HOLY TRINITY GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

Garden of Remembrance within the grounds of Holy Trinity Church Watermoor Rd, accessed through the churchyard towards the rear of the church. It is 0.08 hectares in size with some seating and a memorial stone plaque stating its function. Not a burial ground.



26. HOSPITAL GROUNDS

Cirencester Hospital has the largest NHS grounds in Gloucestershire at 6.76 hectares and contains areas of meadow and courtyards that provide a respite for staff and patients, whilst connecting, through a footpath, to Querns wood and onwards to the Amphitheatre, well used by walkers. A cleared open space with seating provides the opportunity for outdoor small events or performances and there is a small orchard. NHS ownership.



27. HUMPTY DUMPS

Humpty Dumps is an area of open land (0.28 hectares) bordered by Bowling Green, Road and Crescent with Berry Hill Crescent and Road. To the north west is a working farm with parts of the area used to graze sheep. Foot and bridle paths run through the site, both well used by riders and walkers, with other recreational activity including sledging from the sloping parts, mountain bike riding, kite flying and star gazing. Informal paths connect the area to the town centre as well as providing a visual link between the urban landscape and agricultural land. The site is a haven for wildlife. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



28. JACK GARDNER MEMORIAL GARDEN

Named after former Cirencester UDC Councillors John Edward Gardner and Graham Jack Brookes, the garden is a linear strip of recreational parkland, 1.87 hectares in size

fronted by the A417 Abbey Way, bordered by Spitalgate Lane, Gooseacre Lane and the housing of Trafalgar Road. It contains a stretch of the River Churn and within has had the recent addition of rewilding areas with further tree planting to support others including a memorial tree to the actor Robert Adie. Appreciated by dog walkers, it also connects by footpath over Gooseacre Lane bridge, the East or Stratton area of the town with the town centre. Ownership with Cirencester Town Council.



29. KINGSHILL COUNTRY PARK

On the site of an old water meadow this 2.34 hectare Country Park sitting alongside a recent large housing development bordering the A419 Swindon Rd bypass and hosts an outside gym with a running/walking track. There are benches for picnics and a community orchard. Well used by local residents with access from Griffiths Close, it provides a circular recreational space alongside acting as a green buffer between residences and a major highway. Located within are 50 allotment plots. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



30. KINGSHILL SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS

The Kingshill School Playing Fields sit adjacent to Kingshill Sports and Recreation Facility on Kingshill Lane and are used by students of the school.



31. KINGSHILL PLAYING FIELD (ALSO KNOWN AS KINGSHILL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT)

Kingshill Park covering 12.92 hectares sits adjacent to Kingshill secondary and Watermoor primary schools on Kingshill Lane, an open area of field which sits alongside Coronium Stadium, home to Cirencester football team. Within is an open-air skate park, opened in 2014, and several footpaths connect walkers from here and London Road to the Beeches past former railway lines and on to the town centre roads. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



32. MARKET PLACE

Dominated by the church of St John Baptist, the Market Place forms the principle space of the town having acted as the focus for social, religious and community activities since the early Medieval period. It retains its pre-eminence as the most important community space to a significant degree as a triangular area bordered by West Market Place at its most northern point leading south towards the junction with North Way. The mainly listed buildings within evolved as the town established itself from its medieval origins as a major centre of trade including a 14th century coaching inn, now the Kingshead Hotel. Significant structural changes to the area occurred from the eighteenth century onwards and most extensively during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as the opening of the Corn Hall in 1861. Recent changes have included extending the pedestrianised areas

by removing the central parking bays. Today it still serves as the main location for trade, religious services and an annual mop fair. Various ownership.



33. OLD TESCO SUPERMARKET SEATING AREA

Pedestrian area of 0.09 hectares with bench seating with foot traffic connection from the Brewery Car park to Castle Street or through an open passageway to the Sheep Street car park, dominated by the larger retail units that surround it. Privately owned



34. OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL

Located on the edge of Cirencester Park, 0.15 hectares and accessed from Riverside Walk off Thomas St, Cirencester Outdoor Pool is one of the oldest open-air pools in the country. Built by the Bathurst family about 1869 and later given to the town, now run as a charity, there is a 28-metre main pool, fed by a natural spring, with slide, separate children's paddling pool and a small refreshment café. Very popular with residents and visitors, it opens seasonally between May and September with booking essential to gain admission. Run as a charity by the open-air pool association with the land leased from Cirencester Town Council.



35. PURLEY ROAD ALLOTMENTS

Owned by the Bingham Library Trust and managed by Cirencester Town Council, the Purley Road allotments of 0.17 hectares are located behind the early 20th century Purley Road properties at the Cirencester primary school playing field end. They are the smallest town allotment sites with just 7 plots.



36. QUAKER MEETING HOUSE QUIET GARDEN

The Quaker Garden is to the rear of the meeting house at 53 Thomas Street 0.02 hectare in size. Once a burial ground, it was re-landscaped by WW1 German prisoners as a garden and the headstones moved to its perimeter wall where they still rest. Open to the public once a week as a place for quiet reflection with mature trees and seating. Owned by the Quakers.



37. QUEEN STREET ALLOTMENT GARDENS

Located behind private homes on the corner of Victoria Road and Queen Street - near to, but not part of, the City Bank Allotments.



38. QUERNS WOOD

Querns Wood, accessed from and bordered by the hospital grounds, the Amphitheatre and Four Acre field, is an area of woodland with the NHS hospital grounds which includes a network of footpaths used by walkers to connect Chesterton to the town centre and for recreational use. Originally an arboretum established by the owner of Querns House, now the hospital, the site is believed to be part of the Quarry area that became the Amphitheatre. Mainly maintained by volunteers several new trees have been donated by local businesses. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



39. ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY PLAYING FIELDS

The Royal Agricultural University Playing Fields (4.85 hectares) are accessed from the Tetbury or Stroud Roads and used by students of the establishment.



40. SOMERFORD ROAD ALLOTMENTS

The Somerford Rd allotments of 3.4 hectares are situated to the north west of the town accessed from Somerford road and backing on to the residential housing of Oaklands, owned and managed by the Bathurst estate.



41. SPRINGFIELD ROAD ALLOTMENTS

Located next to Thistle Park. The site has a secured gated access but limited parking and is owned by Cirencester Town Council.



42. ST JOHN'S CHURCHYARD

To the rear of the church of St Johns the Baptist, the cemetery was closed to burials in 1871 and contains 25 grade 1 listed tomb monuments and other headstones in various states of repair with many mature trees and a recent war memorial bench. Accessed through a passage from the Market Place or by the rear door of the church on Gosditch St the area is maintained by volunteers.



43. ST MICHAEL'S PARK

St Michaels Park is located a short walk from the Market Place, bordered by Watermoor Rd, King St, the Avenue and Chester St. The main entrances are from the Tower St direction and on King Street, with public access daily, there are no allocated parking. Formal and informal open lawns and spaces include hard surface tennis courts, a children's play area, mini golf, boules, table tennis and crazy golf. The Park was developed in 1984 by , is 2.72 hectares and has a variety of formal and informal sports and recreation facilities and large open lawns. A winding path connects King street to Tower Street, much appreciated as a route from and towards the town centre. A variety of events are held at the park throughout the year such as Love Parks Week, a Teddy bears Picnic and outdoor cinema. A seasonal café provides refreshments and BBQs can be rented. Ownership with Cirencester Town Council.



44. STRATTON CEMETERY

Opened in 1888 and sitting next to St Peters Church, Stratton, the site is 1.1 hectares, still in use and accessed through a small car park from Overley Rd. Owned and managed by Cotswold District Council.



45. THISTLE PARK CHESTERTON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Thistle park community garden is set within a green open space landscaped with flowers and benches in the Chesterton estate, accessed along Springfield Rd. It contains a playground, open gym equipment and allotments owned and managed by Cirencester Town Council.



46. TWO ACRES

Two Acre field covers 2.2 hectares in the Chesterton area of Cirencester is bordered by Cranhams Lane on which there is gated access and the rear gardens of Foxes Bank Drive and Countess Lilius Rd. Used by dog walkers and for other recreational activities it connects by footpath to Thistle Park and onwards to the Thistle Park Community garden. Owned by Cirencester Town Council.



47. VICTORIA ROAD MEADOW

Located to the rear of Cirencester Junior School on Victoria Road, this former playing field has been restored to a meadow of wild flowers through the Wild Town rewilding scheme. Access from a passageway off Victoria Rd, a footpath connects through the meadow to City Bank nature reserve and the Beeches area of town. Well used by walkers.



48. WATERMOOR ROAD CEMETERY

Dissenter burial ground of 0.03 hectares on Watermoor Road no longer in use through a gated entrance next to several Almhouses. Owned and managed by Cotswold District Council.



49. WATERMOOR ROAD/WAY CORNER SEATING

Development of an unused piece of open land by a local community group as and bordered by Watermoor Rd, Watermoor Way and School Lane, with seating, landscaping and a large art sculpture Hare used as part of the town's walking Hare trail. Adopted public highway, owned and maintained by Gloucestershire County Council.

APPENDIX 05

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Using the criteria outlined by Historic England's local heritage listings advice, the Neighbourhood Plan has identified the following as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs). This is not an exhaustive list and further NDHAs may be identified in the future that meet the criteria provided. Evidence for the justification is included and state of repair is not considered a relevant consideration.

CRITERIA

- A** ARCHITECTURAL – age and locally distinct in material retaining significant structure
- B** ARCHAEOLOGICAL – that there is clear evidence
- C** GROUP VALUE – having association through use or design
- D** RARITY – as judged against other features
- E** LANDMARK – striking and strong association with location, event, or community
- F** DESIGNED LANDSCAPE – garden setting, structured landscapes, and parks
- G** EVIDENTIAL – documentation of past historical use or history
- H** COMPLETENESS – enough fabric and features to be understood
- I** SOCIAL HISTORY – illustrative of historic local life
- J** ECONOMIC HISTORY – illustrative of historic commercial activity
- K** COMMUNAL VALUE – connected with collective local memories



1. Open Air Swimming Pool at Riverside Walk



In the Conservation Area but unlisted as there are no heritage structures on the land (English Heritage) although some argue the pool is one. Could be vulnerable for development if deemed unviable. Historic documentation of establishment and use from 1869 including membership, ownership, and funding. Land currently owned by the Town Council with a peppercorn rent paid.



2. Council Offices on Trinity Road



Site of the Cirencester Union workhouse from 1837 although a parish workhouse existed on the site from 1724 as a different structure. The cruciform design remains, designed by Sampson Kempthorne to keep genders separated in newly constructed workhouses following the poor law amendment act of 1834. This significant layout remains and is evident and consistent with a 1902 map of the site (workhouses.org.uk). Later used as Watermoor Hospital from 1948 before becoming the Cotswold District Council offices. Listed lock-up (relocated) in the grounds but the building and site is unlisted and outside the conservation area.



3. Wall-Mounted Red GR Royal Mail Post Boxes in Five Locations



There are four wall mounted GR post boxes installed, three during the period 1910-36 for King George V, one later 1936-52 for King George VI. There was a massive expansion of wall mounted post boxes from

1900 to extend the mail service, wall mounted boxes were cheaper and frequently used in more rural areas. Given how difficult they are to remove from boundary walls they have remained and remain in use. Group value in five locations:

- Beeches Car Park on London Road
- Junction of The Avenue and Victoria Road
- Ashcroft Road
- Lewis Lane
- Coxwell Street



4. Army Reserve Centre at 55 Somerford Road



Currently the home of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars squadron of the Royal Wessex Yeomanry, the main building was built as Hampton House in 1868, later a school then used during WW2 for an anti-aircraft regiment defending the docks of Bristol, Cardiff, and Gloucester. Post war the Hussars moved in and remained. Now expanded as an active base, the original home remains and can be clearly seen. Unique to the area representing military presence in a market town post war.



5. Blue Enamel Street Signs in Eight Locations



A group of surviving in-situ examples of early street signs made by Garnier and Co of London and erected by the then Urban District Council post 1894. Uniform in style, colour, size, fixtures they are set at the wall quoin or close by, a particular characteristic. Legal ownership is suggested as being with the owner of each property not the Highways Authority. Not currently protected by any heritage or planning legislation. Locations are:

- Ashcroft Road and Cricklade Street junction
- Gloucester Street and Barton Lane junction
- Castle Street and Park Lane junction
- Cecily Hill
- Spitalgate Lane and Dollar Street junction
- Lewis Lane and Cricklade Street junction
- Queen's Street and Victoria Road
- Mount Street and Somerford Road junction



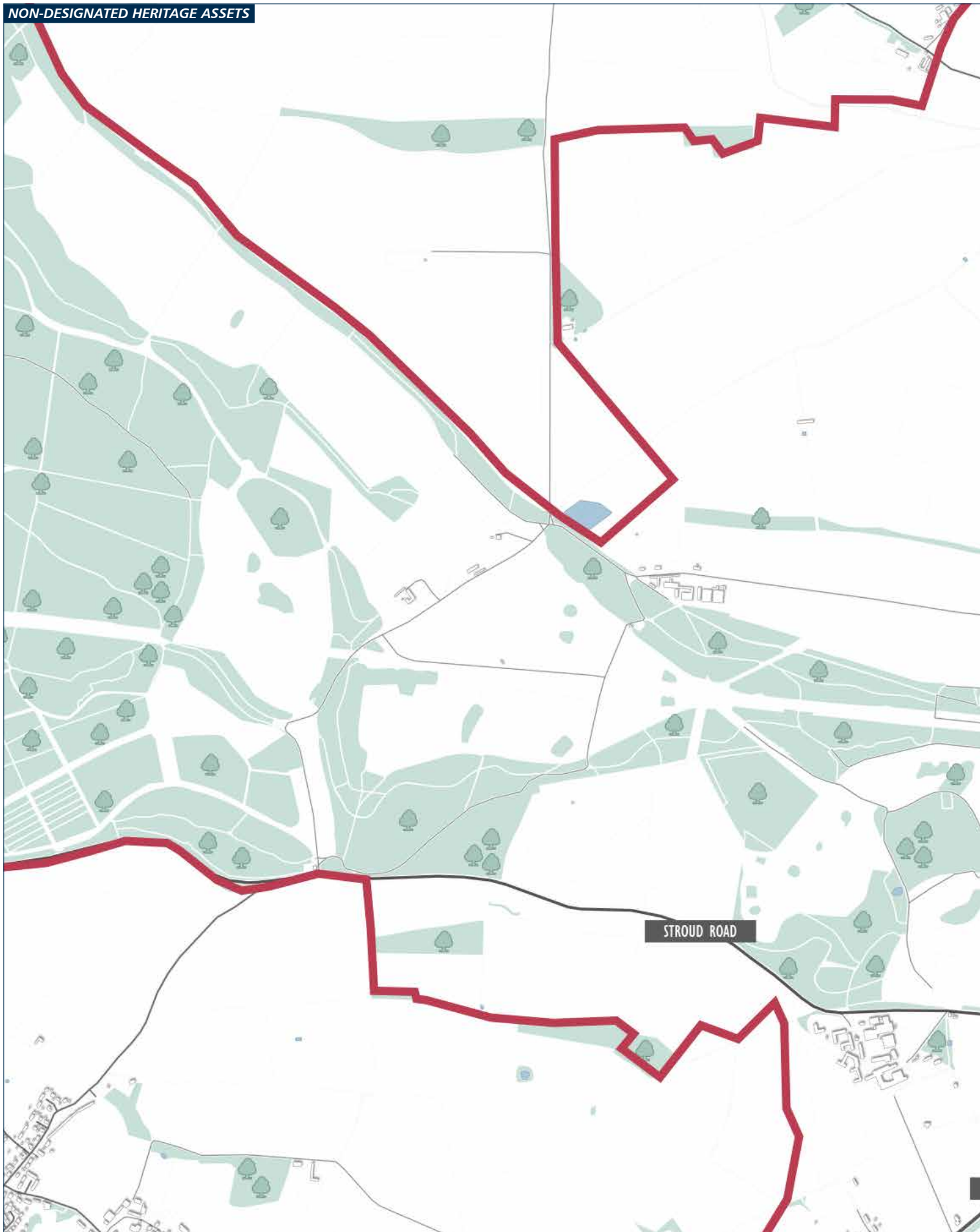
6. Air Raid Shelter within Sheep Street Car Park and Associated Museum at Sheep Street



Museum housed in former hospital cottage which shows home front artefacts from WW2 with the associated former Memorial Hospital air raid shelter. The air raid shelter has been previously proposed for protection which was denied by the Secretary of State (2016) as it was not 'under threat'. The former hospital site has recently been developed by Cotswold District Council with potential future review of nearby land currently occupied by a supermarket. There is now a vulnerability to the site which would be best retained with the associated museum. An important part of the wartime history of the town.



NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS





7. Commemorative Enamel Street Benches in Three Locations



Made from iron, painted green and all commemorate a Jubilee event:

- Tetbury Road opposite the Leisure Centre, the Silver Jubilee of King George V 1910- 1936
- Abbey Grounds near Monk's Garden, the VR Jubilee of 1887
- Gloucester Road north of Overhill Road, the Silver Jubilee King George V 1910-1936



8. Former Oakley Hall Prep School Entrance Gate on Chesterton Lane



Confirmed in communication by the former school owner's son and pupil Quentin Letts as one of several entrances, although not the main, to Oakley Hall School, formerly Oakley Hall House 1890. Later occupied by Pelham House Prep School which relocated from Folkestone following bombing in 1914. Pelham prep became Oakley Hall School in 1928. Following closure of the School, the site was sold for housing in 1994. The unlisted gate on Chesterton Lane remains a public right of way through to the new housing. Metal gate brackets remain on the side walls showing evidence of use possibly through to the playing fields of the time.



9. Former Oakley Hall Prep School Chapel War Memorial Highfield Lane



Now located on the exterior garden wall of the former Oakley Hall School Chapel, which is now a private house, the memorial was commissioned and laid in 1919 when the chapel was built to commemorate the former headmaster of the school with those lost 1914-18, 48 names in total. Previously on the interior wall of the chapel towards the rear door, it was designed by Leonard Barnard FRIBA, a Cheltenham architect.



10. Commercial Shop and Business Signage



Evidence of previous commercial activity in various parts of the town remain on walls and pavements, contributing to the historical record of Cirencester as a market town with a diverse economy. Most are on walls of currently occupied buildings in the Conservation Area, despite which they currently afford no protection during renovation or alteration, two are embedded into pavements as mosaics.

- Gloucestershire Dairy Co. signage The Old Dairy building late 19th Century on Ashcroft Road

- Cabinet maker signage on 52 Lewis Lane
- Café Tariff menu signage on the wall at 17 Gosditch Street
- Preston’s doorway mosaic (a grocer from the 1950s) on 69 Cricklade Street
- Ovens & Sons pavement mosaic (former furniture retailer) on Dyer Street
- Golden Farm Pub freestanding metal sign Beeches Road



11. Remains of Roman Pedestal West Way



Relocated to its current position and unprotected despite being archaeological evidence of Roman architecture.



12. Chesterton House Gate on Somerford Road



Former carriage entrance to Chesterton House on Somerford Road, home of Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, the gate was restored by the Civic Society and hosts a blue plaque and whilst the house, now flats, is listed not the gate.



13. Boundary Walls on Watermoor and Albion Street



Boundary walls on Watermoor Road and Albion Street are representative of the distinct features of these two areas, both of which are outside any conservation boundary. Materials, design, and workmanship are evidenced in various locations as having group value:

- Watermoor Road various parts
- Albion Street various parts

The following have group value as evidence of the former railway line



14. GWR Railway Track Beds and Bridge



The railway station and its lines out from the town closed in 1964 but evidence of this past transport remain:

- End of Meadow Rd path to Sheep St Cirencester to Kemble track bed 1841-1964

- City Bank track bed
- Beeches track bed former line to Andoversford
- Bridge City Bank
- Chesterton Lane, remains of brick wall



15. Former Chapel at 14 London Road



Former Catholic Chapel shown on the OS map of 1844-1888, later a garage with commercial wall signage still showing. Unlisted and distinct in architecture as a former church with distinct window design.



16. Numbers 143 and 145 Cheltenham Road



Mid-19th Century and possibly associated with the former Vale Yard commercial site shown on the 1939 OS map.



17. The Old Post Office 25 Albion Street



Former Post office from the early 19th Century, the red brick architecture is unusual for the area.



18. The Old Schoolhouse School Lane Stratton



Former association with education as a School House (OS map 1844-88) with its location on School Lane. Victorian architecture, Pevsner architectural guide to buildings in the Cotswold's references a national school here in 1858.



19. The Plough Inn at 5 Gloucester Road and The Drillmans Arms 34-38 Gloucester Road

A B C D E F G H I J K

Two of the remaining public houses in this area, unlisted, the other being the closed Salutation Arms now lost, all near a former brewing site and representative of commercial and social activity 19th Century with associated cottages on a major highway for trade and travel.



20. The Old Barn 33 Gloucester Road

A B C D E F G H I J K

Rare example of former 19th century agricultural barn within a town boundary now residential, thatched roof replaced but architecturally still representative of its previous use with low roof line and length of the building.



21. Former Hope Inn Public House Querns Lane

A B C D E F G H I J K

Closed in 1975, the former Hope Inn originates from the 19th Century but is unlisted. Advertising signage of Simonds Brewery Ales, now hidden behind the current retailer's sign, shows this evidence of previous commercial activity. Architecturally plain, it is 19th Century architecture as a simple beer house is evident near what was the canal basin.

22. Stratton Mill

A B C D E F G H I J K

Former Corn Mill with some structure from the early 19th Century with later additions.



23. Former New Mills Sluice Gate City Bank Nature Reserve

A B C D E F G H I J K

Built about 1530 New Mill was a cloth mill until about 1830 when it became a flock mill. Demolished in 1912/13 some parts remain of which this sluice gate is one, used to control the water level in the adjacent mill stream.



24. Tudor Cottage at 25 Gloucester Road

A B C D E F G H I J K

Rare and the only remaining example of a thatched roof in the town.



25. Copelands Baunton Lane Stratton

A B C D E F G H I J K

Modernist design by Arthur Saint, architect, and the owner, built in 1948.



27. 3 and 7 Barnway

A B C D E F G H I J K

Formerly known jointly as the Alma buildings, number 3 remains intact. 19th century architecture refers.



26. Numbers 38-40 Somerford Road

A B C D E F G H I J K

Neo-Gothic Architecture.

The following have group value (C) for 19th Century architecture (A) on the Cheltenham Road





A B C D E F G H I J K

28. 5 Cheltenham Road

29. Heathfield House ,31 Cheltenham Road

30. 33 Cheltenham Road

31. Spinnet Cottage, 35 Cheltenham Road

32. Rosemary Cottage, 37 Cheltenham Road

33. 39 Cheltenham Road

34. Claremont, 41 Cheltenham Road

35. Hill House, 43 Cheltenham Road

36. Old Quarry Cottages, 51 - 83 Cheltenham Road

37. Owl Cottage, 93 and 95 Cheltenham Road

38. Hillside Villas, 131-133 and 135-141 Cheltenham Road

The following have group value (C) for 19th Century architecture and early 20th Century architecture (A) on Albion Street





A B C D E F G H I J K

39. 9 Albion Street

40. 12-16 Albion Street

41. Orbel Cottages, 24-32 Albion Street

42. 27-31 Albion Street

43. 33-37 Albion Street

44. 53-57 Albion Street

45. Peartree House, 61 Albion Street

46. 63 Albion Street

47. 65 Albion Street

The following have group value (C) for 19th Century architecture (A) on the Gloucester Road



A B C D E F G H I J K

48. 6-16 Gloucester Rd (also qualifies as a Landmark E)

49. 19-21 Gloucester Road

50. 22-25 Gloucester Road

51. Thessaly Croft, Gloucester Road

52. Thessaly Lodge, 62 Gloucester Road

53. Thessaly Cottage, 64 Gloucester Road

54. 66 Gloucester Road

55. 72-74 Gloucester Road

56. Wheel Cottage, 90 Gloucester Road

57. 94 Gloucester Road

The following have group value (C) for 19th Century architecture (A) on the Mount Street



A B C D E F G H I J K

58. 4-6 Mount Street

59. 11-17 Mount Street

The following have group value (C) for 19th Century architecture and early 20th Century architecture (A) on the Somerford Road



A B C D E F G H I J K

60. 2-14 Somerford Road

61. 4-10 Somerford Road

62. 20 Somerford Road

63. 21 and 23 Somerford Road

The following have group value (C) as distinct post-war architecture (A) on the Gloucester Road



A B C D E F G H I J K

After WW2, Britain was faced with a housing crisis causing a board of local people including the 8th Earl Bathurst to form the Cirencester Housing association. Land was donated by the Chester-Master family of which land on Shepherds Way was used, in the early 1950s, to build numerous Easi-form houses and the flats known as Beresford House. The houses on Chesterton Lane are in the same style as Park View, Stratton.

64. 53-87 Chesterton Lane with 37-47 Somerford Road

65. 1-15 and 2-16 Park View in Stratton

66. Beresford House Shepherds Way

Representation to the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 14 consultation

Please find below comments from **Cotswold District Council** (CDC) on the Cirencester Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan).

CDC acknowledges the work that has been put in by the team behind this Plan and commend the team on a well presented and attractive document, which should engage residents and other stakeholders.

The following comments, observations and suggested amendments have been written to try to identify either points which may not meet the Basic Conditions against which the NDP will be assessed, or where the wording used may be open to interpretation during the development management process. We hope these suggestions will enhance the policies and the plan.

Front page. Neighbourhood Plans need to be clear on the plan period – it is a common modification from examiners to specify that the plan period be added to the front cover, so we would suggest that future drafts add this point. On review, the Plan itself is not explicit about the Plan period. Neighbourhood plans to date in Cotswold District have chosen to run their plan period to the expiry of the adopted Local Plan, 2031. Running the Plan to the same timeframe ensures that there is an established strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan. While there is an attraction to a longer timeframe, particularly in the context of Cotswold District Council's recent decision to commence work on a full Local Plan Review, we note that no plan is likely to remain current against the evolving landscape of planning policy and indeed the changing townscape for a prolonged period of time. We endorse an end date of 2031, and encourage a review in the late 2020s, if not earlier.

p.18, Para 2.39 CDC suggest this paragraph could benefit from review – the ambitions are admirable, but there's rather too much going on, and it feels like it overloads 'design and landscaping statements' with responsibility beyond their influence in the planning system.

p.18, para 2.41. The first sentence of this paragraph should be amended. It is not clear what is meant by 'Growth by default', but CDC notes that any growth, with or without the neighbourhood plan or indeed an up-to-date Local Plan would still need to conform to planning requirements and building regulations. Further, the sentence references 'green belt'. While in this instance it is not capitalised and may not be intended as a reference to Greenbelt as a formal designation, it risks adding to the general misconceptions about this term. The only 'Greenbelt' land within Cotswold District is a small part of the Greenbelt surrounding Cheltenham, and thus the term is not relevant to Cirencester.

p.25. Policies TC1 Town Centre (General Development) and TC2 Town Centre (Areas of Change).

CDC welcomes the approach taken here to complement the Cirencester Town Centre Masterplan, and reiterate its thanks to the community volunteers and Cirencester Town Council for their contributions to the Masterplan.

Aside from the geography, is there really a difference between being 'in accordance with' in TC1 and 'not compromise, conflict or are in any other way incompatible' in TC2? We wonder whether these two could be simplified to one, rather less nuanced requirement? This would avoid challenge or uncertainty should the 'Areas of Change' change as the Masterplan progresses.

It is noted that the NDP seeks to alter the TC boundary as presented in the adopted Local Plan, it will be important to justify these changes and to be cognisant of the iterative nature of plan-making, which includes taking account of evidence supporting the emerging local plan update and town centre masterplan.

Pg 27, general principles, CDC supports the proposed principles listed on page 27. However, it should be noted that these principles are subject to the 'planning balance', which may mean needing to determine applications that may be in conflict with stated principles and policies. This is an accepted and normal function of the English planning system. For example, some trees may need to be removed to facilitate wider regeneration – although it is helped by other local and national policies that seek to ensure a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.

p.26, paragraph 5.8, introduces the Integrated Mobility Hub, and a three-letter acronym, IMH. We wonder whether the use of this acronym thereafter, rather than reference in full or as 'the Hub' or similar, reduces the accessibility of the document. It requires the casual reader to find the first reference to understand the acronym.

p.26, paragraph 5.8, The NDP states "The preferred site for the IMH is unknown at this time. CDC has previously shared Cirencester Area Public Transport Study - Potential Public Transport Hub for Cirencester (ITP, Jan 2023), which provides an indication of possible suitable locations with the Forum and Brewery sites achieving the highest score. The paragraph further explains, "...but criteria to indicate the most viable location is set out in the supporting information to Policy AM 4." AM4 criteria include a requirement for the IMH to be a terminus for a light railway between Kemble and Cirencester. It will be important that CTC demonstrate the deliverability of this requirement so CDC recommends considering the following options study available on the council's website - <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/lrrd1zej/cirencester-area-public-transport-study-cirencester-kemble-public-transport-options-study.pdf>

p.27 clause 21 encourages modern methods of construction – however we note that the use of more traditional methods and materials may actually be an alternative or better way of reaching net zero, for example the use of straw-based buildings. We suggest perhaps 'innovative methods of construction should be encouraged in order to help deliver net zero' rather than 'modern'.

p.29. para 6.3. For the avoidance of doubt, the LCWIP is a publication of Gloucestershire County Council, although CDC sought to play a full and active role in its development.

p.29. Policy AM1 The Cirencester Spoke and Wheel Network.

Encouraging active transport is a key component to tackling climate change in our area, and moreover has significant health and wellbeing benefits for residents.

However, we fear that there are technical issues that have not been fully appreciated in the drafting process. Whilst starting and finishing within the neighbourhood area, route a) passes through Siddington Parish, outside the boundary. Neighbourhood Plans cannot have policy weight on land outside the neighbourhood boundary. Therefore, this aspiration, while clearly part of a coherent strategy, must only have the status of a community ambition rather than policy. On a similar note, the upgrade of a footpath to a bridleway is not a land use planning matter but an issue for Gloucestershire County Council's Rights of Way team. We would suggest the policy concludes at the end of the first paragraph, with the additional points including as explanation/community ambition.

p.33. Policy AM3 The Pedestrian Experience.

We support the aspiration to enhance the pedestrian experience and view this as vital to encouraging active travel and reducing pollution and CO2 emissions from road traffic.

As drafted, we question how this policy operates as a mechanism to determine planning applications. At examination, it could well be 'downgraded' as a community action. The policy could be given planning 'teeth' by a redraft, along the lines of: **'Development proposals which bring forward measures to enhance the pedestrian experience will be supported. These measures include....'**

It would be good to see an additional clause in here about making pedestrian routes more attractive and biodiversity-rich in order to encourage pedestrians to actually use them. We should avoid new or "improved" cycle and pedestrian routes that are fine in terms of surfacing etc but that are not welcoming and that do not deliver on their potential to increase biodiversity connectivity.

p.33. Policy AM4 Integrated Mobility Hub (IMH).

As a planning policy, designed to support the development of a particular facility, we wonder why many of the criteria in the policy itself are 'operational' rather than physical - surely a hub does not 'include' the long-distance coaches, but the infrastructure to enable this? This is explored in the supporting text, which talks about ease of access and ability to accommodate, but not really picked up in the policy wording. CDC supports the proposition of a new IMH to be the focus of long-distance drop offs but this may not be deliverable – see <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/nhebyw1i/cirencester-area-public-transport-study-potential-public-transport-hub-for-cirencester-itp-jan-2023.pdf>. CDC wishes to work with CTC to establish the best policy mechanism for determining the selection criteria and location for an IMH: Given the strategic nature of the infrastructure to the district it may be that the council's Local Plan Update and GCC's Local Transport Plan are better placed. Be that as it

may, CDC seeks to work closely with CTC to alight on an agreed set of criteria and a preferred location.

p.33 Policy AM5 Strategic Connections & Transport Links.

We don't disagree with the ambition but struggle to see how this can be interpreted as planning policy. Consider something like (new text in bold) '**Development which creates or enhances effective connections through public transport links with towns which are economically important to Cirencester will be supported.**'

p.37 7.13. There are a number of references within the NDP to planting more trees, which is to be welcomed but we note that there are areas of the town where it is a real challenge to plant trees as scheduled monument consent is required – making it even more important to retain the trees that are already present in those areas.

Para 7.14 We would suggest more reference could be made to the Town Council's own public realm design guide - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/563789b6e4b03c7ded1a9ff2/t/591981723e00be506919c13a/1494843896685/Cirencester+Town+Centre+Design+Code+2017.pdf>

p.37. Policy DBE1 Design Quality.

The first clause is a little explanatory, rather than purely directional. The wording at the start of the policy is slightly confusing and it implies that the policy is about public realm. This makes it long, and arguably harder to interpret. We note that many of the design issues picked up here are more easily applied to the development of multiple units – we invite the qualifying body to consider whether it feels this policy and all its sub-clauses could work for single unit infills for example or whether it might consider introducing a unit number threshold.

There is a clause about the design checklist – however please note that we would struggle to refuse an application solely on the grounds that they have not “had regard” to the checklist. The checklist appears more to be a validation requirement, rather than policy but it is not possible to have possible or practical to have separate validation requirements for one settlement.

There is no reference in this section to the existing or emerging Cotswold Design Code, although it is mentioned earlier in the NDP at p.23.

p.40 Policy DBE2 Protection of Landscape / Townscape Views.

As drafted, the requirement imposed by this policy does not appear to exclude development proposals which have no relation to the protected views – we assume this is not the intention, as this would be unduly onerous. The reference to where impacts on views (i.e. DAS or visual impact assessment) is not required. There are various types of documents where this could be shown, it would be better if the first clause of the policy was amended:

Development proposals should demonstrate ~~through a Design and Access Statement or Visual Impact Statement~~ how they will protect and enhance the following views, identified as important to the landscape and townscape of Cirencester:

p.41 Policy DBE3 Conversion of Existing Properties.

Clause (a) Conservation areas are designated heritage assets, and thus the planning test that must be met is set out in the NPPF, paragraphs 200 through to 202.

Clause (b) is problematic, as planning usually operates on use classes rather than more specific occupancy. The occupier or tenant could change at any moment, potentially undermining the argument for a permission just given, yet not empowering its removal. Retail premises could be merged to allow use by a pharmacist, for a vape shop to move in upon completion. We note that 'much needed services' is a subjective point.

Clause (d) Is there a risk this could undermine the HMO policy, DBE 7? Does it facilitate a landlord unable to get HMO permission to formally subdivide into separate flats instead, and thus circumvent?

p.42. Policy DBE4 Protection of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Clause (a). We wonder whether this is compatible with the NPPF:

209. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Clause (b) refers to the setting of designated and undesignated heritage assets. 'Undesignated' heritage assets are not defined, so it would be better to use the phrase 'non-designated'. This is not quite in line with the NPPF for non-designated heritage assets. There is a need to balance (great weight being given to the conservation of designated heritage assets) with public benefits.

Clauses (c) and (d) are validation requirements not policy.

We suggest that this policy is re-drafted to state that those buildings and structures listed in appendix 5 should be considered as non-designated heritage assets and the appropriate local and national policies applied to them and note that further NDHAs may be identified subsequently; as noted in para 7.41, appendix 5 is not a definitive list. There is no need to add anything further.

Appendix 5

The layout is designed to be simple, and contains appropriate imagery, but on frequent occasions, the images have become separated from the text which describes them, impacting on comprehension, for example, the benches at the bottom on p.101, the images of the Drillmans Arms, and the various dwellinghouses on pp.106-108. Images at the bottom on p.109 are mislabelled as being on the Gloucester Road.

Clearer maps to show the extent of the NDHAs would be useful, particularly in enabling them to be shown as constraints within the CDC's mapping systems.

p.43 7.32 Talks about the absence of a local list- there is what might be called a local list developing as more data comes forward.

7.33 We question how identification as a NDHA helps to prevent neglect of a building.

7.37 The absence of a comprehensive local list does not mean that NDHAs are not considered in determining planning applications – NDHAs are identified through the development management process. That said, it is obviously helpful to have a list, noting that a list of this type will never be complete so there will always be instances where “new” NDHAs are found. We suggest this paragraph is deleted or amended.

7.38 This paragraph refers to tightening the wording around planning applications and NDHAs, but surely any policy must still be in tune with the NPPF. The identification of NDHAs through an NDP, does not alter the strength of the policy, but makes it much more obvious which buildings or structures are NDHAs.

p.44 7.48 The wording states that already permitted (by outline app) developments should be net zero. While worded as a strong imperative, this cannot be “forced” if outline consent has already been granted, so risks building false expectations on current permissions.

p.44 Policy DBE5 Net-Zero & Energy Efficiency Measures in the Design & Construction Process

This is a notably tricky policy area, where we have seen alternate support and restriction from government policy and ministerial statements, leading to inconsistency in how the Planning Inspectorate have been dealing with this, and similarly a degree of inconsistency within neighbourhood plans. In broad ambition CDC is supportive, but we'd advise you keep abreast of how similar approaches are received in other emerging plans – we will endeavour to share this information.

There is no mention of embodied carbon, with the policy much more focused on energy efficiency.

Clause (e) states carbon offsetting is not permitted. We assume this means ‘as a way of meeting the environmental requirements of the policy’ – we would assume that where a development proposal has sought to minimise impact, and still sought to offset any residual environmental harm, say from construction traffic, the Plan would welcome that commitment. Please see Policy CC3f Energy Offsetting in our Emerging Plan.

p.45 Policy DBE6 Energy Use in New Buildings.

CDC supports the ambition – see the Climate Change policies in our Emerging Local Plan. However, please note the Written Ministerial Statement from 13 December 2023 - [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#). Whilst for the time being this statement potentially constrains ambitious plan-makers, we advocate proceeding on the basis that such policy approaches will be necessary to stay true to the vision for the Neighbourhood Plan, for the United Kingdom to meet its international Carbon Reduction commitments.

e) 'On-site renewable energy should meet all the energy consumption needs of new residential buildings'. We're not sure what is meant by 'energy consumption needs of new buildings'? High performing buildings with on-site renewables, may meet heating and lighting requirements, but we imagine the occupant's needs may still outstrip local production if they include, for example electric car charging, home working ICT, cooking, cleaning and laundry.

p.46 Design Checklist. Although there is a policy 'hook' in DBE1, it is not clear how this is to be used. What is its status? Is it a sort of validation requirement? It reads more like policy than a checklist, with the use of "should". Alternatively, is it simply a helpful list of things for applicants to consider? A good example is that the checklist states that support will be given for upward extensions, of traditional or contemporary design; these can be quite problematic with over-looking and over-shadowing, character etc. This concept is not covered in the design policy itself. It would be useful to establish the status of this checklist and potentially, if it is to be an expansion of policy or mini design code, we believe needs more work to ensure that it can be used effectively and flexibly to reflect the different character areas and different architectural approaches in Cirencester.

It talks about street sections emulating medieval street patterns – is that appropriate in the outer suburbs of the town? Many of the points in the checklist seem to reflect the town centre but may be of less relevance towards the outside of the town, e.g. clause on building heights and use of fourth stories. We are concerned that it is very focused on design and requirements of the town centre, and the surrounding streets within the ring road. It doesn't seem to fully reflect the mostly 20th Century context of Cirencester's suburbs and out of town industrial area.

There are quite a few points in this checklist which could cause issues in determining applications if it is to be considered as policy. e.g. 'The size, proportion, materials and detailing of replacement windows should reflect the original within Conservation Areas and those listed as Non-Designated Heritage Assets.' What happens if those windows are within a contemporary extension, where we would not want them to necessarily look like the windows in the original part of the building. Similarly, 'Windows and doors should be setback behind the wall face to create a 100mm reveal, and stone cills with a 50mm overhang. This creates a shadow to the reveal and creates a sense of solidity.' Is the setback a minimum or a specific measurement - and how does it apply to the range of possible uses and designs we might see? It presupposes stone cills on all development, yet as drafted applies across Cirencester, from the town centre through to Love Lane industrial estate.

Street and Spaces, bullet four. The second line of this is only really appropriate for the town centre.

Materials and details - specifies, at para 5, that buildings should respond to the Cotswold vernacular and to the distinctive Cirencester context. Vernacular means "architecture

concerned with domestic and functional rather than public or monumental buildings." Cirencester is certainly somewhere that has grander buildings, so unless a character area approach is undertaken, we would suggest simply referencing the Cirencester context, encouraging developers to take design cues directly from the town.

It states that concrete "will be resisted" – does that mean that applications using concrete materials should be refused?

Bullet six is highly specific as to the location of parking in new development - while the approach suggested may be appropriate on larger sites, it is probably too prescriptive, for smaller developments and in-fill where the design may need to better reflect existing properties.

p.51. 8.15. This paragraph seems to cover multiple issues from signage to use of limestone and would benefit from being separated out. The points raised about signage are also ambiguous and could be more clearly drafted.

p.51 Policy QPR2 Quality Streets & Spaces.

Clause (a). In terms of detrimental impact - it might be useful to consider what constitutes 'unacceptable', as the current drafting risks this being a subjective matter.

Clause (b) raises the question - is the intention to expand the use of the Cirencester town centre Public Realm Design Code palette to the whole of the town? That would appear to be the effect, but we question whether that is truly appropriate – rather we'd expect development in the 20th and 21st century suburbs to reflect their immediate setting.

p.55 We're not sure that the explanatory text fully explains the two diagrams – it isn't wholly clear which text refers to the plan with polygons, versus the text for the plan indicating circles.

p.56 Policy TMN1 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

We note that many of requirements are more easily applied to the development of multiple units – we invite the qualifying body to consider whether it feels this policy could work for single unit infills for example or whether it might consider introducing a unit number threshold.

Clause a) The first sentence reads as though applications which support the 20-minute neighbourhood model – such as applications to add key facilities, will be supported. However, the second sentence potentially undermines this reading, as it rather introduces a reading of 'contribution' as being a financial contribution/contribution with a financial value attached. How does one determine what contribution is in scale?

The policy includes some strong support for enhancing cycle and pedestrian links. We fully recognise the importance of these links in enhancing 20-minute neighbourhoods, but we wonder whether perhaps the clarity of expectation - Proposals that remove barriers to cycling and walking across the Plan area will be supported – would sit better in the Access

and Movement section. We wonder whether having several slightly different references and expectations around cycling and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the plan undermines the clarity of message, versus focussing these requirements into a single policy.

TMN1(e) As a point regarding the wording, this clause does not fit the pattern of the other clauses, and requires some additional wording, such as 'New Developments should....'

p.59 Policy NE 1 Biodiversity Net Gain

This policy duplicates national regulatory provisions and therefore it is unlikely to be consistent with NPPF para 16(f), which seeks to ensure local plans and neighbourhood plans do not duplicate higher tier policies.

The draft policy NE1 refers to "Development" – this would imply that 10% BNG should apply to all developments, this goes beyond the mandatory requirements of the Environment Act. Is this the intention? Is there any evidence for why that is appropriate? e.g. for household applications? The RJ does refer to the Act only covering certain types of development.

While the prioritisation of on-site is supported, we would like to see an amendment to the second expectation – our strategy with off-site net gain will be much more opportunity-focused to ensure the maximum uplift in nature recovery. It is important to ensure that any off or on-site BNG is delivered in a way that is ecologically meaningful, that reflects local habitats, delivers connectivity. The approach advocated by the policy risks the creation and enhancement of unconnected spaces, where an opportunity to enhance connected green infrastructure could be supported to much better effect. We suspect this policy as drafted inadvertently undermines the vision within Policy NE3 Wildlife Corridors.

NE2 It is unclear what is meant by re-wilding in the context of Cirencester, and how it is different to NE4. It may be more appropriate to refer to the creation of areas of natural or semi-natural habitat. The areas that are mentioned will still need to be managed, for example along the edges of play spaces, and often the concept of rewilding is considered to be around areas that will receive no management but be left to evolve on their own.

Paragraph 10.21 refers to a local nature recovery strategy – but does not specify where this strategy can be found. The LNRS required under law is being developed at a county level and is unlikely to go into the level of detail suggested in this paragraph. It also refers to the NDP's 'recommended off site opportunities' but these do not appear to have been identified. These would need to be agreed with the landowners and mechanisms put in place to deliver off site BNG in these locations.

Paragraph 10.23 This reads as policy but does not sit within a policy text. We note that this would present challenges, for example 10.23.3. requires consultation with local ecology experts – who and how? The focus for BNG is implied to be within the town on existing greenspaces but there are limitations to this in achieving sufficient BNG units given the potential level of disturbance from people and dogs etc.

p.61 Policy NE4 Green and Blue Infrastructure Protection & Enhancement.

Clause (d) Removal of Highway verge is a matter for the County Council. In most instances will not require consent from CDC, so is beyond the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Clause (e) While CDC supports the ambition, and will encourage the same through its design policies, as drafted we consider this clause to be a community action not a policy.

Para 10.42 Please note that our Green Infrastructure Strategy is no longer draft.

p.62 Policy NE5 Flood Mitigation

Recognising this is clearly a significant and emotive issue in parts of Cirencester, we cannot see how this policy introduces anything not required by extant policy, falling foul of the expectations of Paragraph 16 of the NPPF discouraging policy duplication.

p.63 Local Green Space Designations

Clause (a) does not align directly with the approach to Local Green Space, as set out in the NPPF. Why the reference to 'built development'? We are aware in other instances that examiners have amended LGS policies to ensure that they do not create different conditions for consent than set out in the NPPF.

Clause (b) refers to 'community green or open spaces.' It is not clear from the wording or the context if these are 'local green spaces' or other spaces – not otherwise mapped or defined. If the intention is that this clause relates to development on designated Local Green Spaces, it is unnecessary - there is already an established approach, through Green Belt policy, to consider development proposals on Local Green Space. If the intention is to create a test for community green or open spaces, these spaces will need to be mapped and defined.

In terms of the sites proposed, CDC objects to the inclusion of a number of sites.

Ashcroft Roads Bowls Club
Brewery Court
Catalpa Square
Cricklade Street/West Way seating
Old Tesco Supermarket Seating Area
Market Place

The allocation of these sites would unduly constrain the town centre masterplan, and thus we believe they are not in general conformity. CDC recognises the value these sites currently provide as open areas and casual seating areas – but this value comes from their function in the current townscape. As the townscape evolves, the priority must be to provide this function in a way that makes sense for the new streetscene, not to unnecessarily constrain a design, i.e. the priority should be to create appropriate casual seating and bumping spaces that relate to the new street scene, not protect spaces that relate to the street scene as is.

We note that in fact, these spaces are not 'green areas', and thus may not qualify under a simple reading of the term 'Local Green Spaces'. At no point does the NPPF describe or suggest that Local Green Space covers town squares and smaller incidental urban space.

Building on this last point, we believe there are other spaces which do not qualify for this reason - the Cirencester Outdoor Swimming Pool is essentially a structure not a space and not green, and thus should not be designated as LGS. We contend the same is true of the Quiet Garden at the Quaker meeting House, which is ancillary to the building. As the Meeting house is a listed building, the garden is already subject to protective planning constraints.

Looking at other sites, it would be fair to observe that many of them, Abbey Grounds, the Amphitheatre, Allotments, Cemeteries and Churchyards, St Michaels Park, Cirencester Park, are already subject to strong constraints. We question whether designating these as Local Green Spaces does anything other than double down on these constraints. In planning terms this is unnecessary - if the existing constraint can be overcome, then the Local Green Space predicated on that same constraint will equally be satisfied and development would proceed.

As a final grouping, the Plan seeks to designate a number of sports pitches, both those linked to the town's schools and sports clubs. The amenity of these sites is already protected – their designation as Local Green spaces would prevent their development, even if alternative space could be found. This feels unduly onerous – in particular for the schools, which may find their opportunity for expansion on-site constrained, even if further space is found for sports pitches. We would advocate that sports pitches are best suited for LGS designation where they serve additional functions within the townscape – for example within the setting of heritage assets.

We do not understand the purpose of the final column denoting 'Local Community Space' – is this a subset, or a different designation, and what rationale underpins the data - e.g. how is Baunton Lane Playing Field –overseen by the town council, and hosting a children's play area and home ground to the Stratton Youth Football Club not a Local Community Space, but the privately owned Cirencester Park is?

p.69 Policy NE7 Green Gaps

The first clause restates a well-established principle of preventing coalescence between settlements. We do not disagree with the intention but cannot see how the policy would work in practice. Where Cirencester is closest to neighbouring settlements - for example at Preston and at Siddington, referenced in the Reasoned Justification, the gaps are outside of the parish boundary, and thus outside of the jurisdiction of the neighbourhood plan. We understand that this aspiration is shared by neighbouring settlements, so a more robust approach may be possible where these gaps sit within other neighbourhood areas.

It is hard to envisage how the second clause could work - in the event that a buffer is diminished in scale, the mitigation really needs to be in that location through some form of enhancement. The impact cannot be compensated for nor mitigated offsite.

p.72 Policy LE1 Protect & Enhance Economic Activity

It is not clear how this criterion conforms with NPPF para 16(d). I.e. how would the planning officer, applicant, planning committee use this policy? The first clause rather risks building unrealistic expectations. Permitted development rights and changes to use classes enable some significant changes without permission being required, thus the policy will not be engaged in many/most instances. Should the policy be retained, we would encourage the addition of some text to manage expectations, such as, 'Insofar as planning permission is required, ...'

The same points as above can be made for economic uses outside the town centre.

Noting the same point that in many instances, permission will not be required - where Clause (c) is engaged, in practice it is likely to be ineffectual. There is a limited range of economic use classes, and a well-developed range of such across the town, so it is likely in most instances that alternative premises will exist. It is not clear what criterion (d) is seeking to achieve, what is meant by 'flexible growth' and adaptation of existing employment areas, and does this only apply to Love Lane? It is not evident how a decision maker should react to this criterion.

Policy LE2 Provision for Innovative Work Spaces, New & Small Businesses

Clause (b)1 is directed at employment land, whereas Clause (b)2 would appear to be directed at residential extensions. We cannot really see how Clause (b)2 follows from the introductory text and would suggest that including a residential buildings clause in this section confuses rather than enables. Homeowners will often already enjoy permitted development rights to extend their properties, enabling homeworking.

Policy LE4 New Employment Premises & Design Quality

Clause (b) is awkwardly phrased. There are two sub-clauses referencing location, 'Where their location provides practical opportunities to do so...' and 'as appropriate to their scale and location,...' which we think could be picked up in one sub-clause to enhance readability and understanding.

p.75 Policy WBC1 Air Quality

It is difficult to conceive of clauses (a) (c) and (f) as planning policy. We would suggest editing this policy and retaining these clauses as community actions/aspirations.

Policy WB2 Health Impact Assessments

In principle, we are very supportive of improving health and wellbeing. In order to implement this policy, however, there would need to be evidence of health implications from development proposals. We're not clear that the threshold in the policy is consistent with National Policy and regulation; for example, it needs to be consistent to the NPPG <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application#Design-and-Access-Statement>; at this time it is not clear that the threshold is well-justified.

p.79 Policy WBC3 Equal Access to Green Spaces for All

Clause (b) considers access to new and existing green infrastructure. This presupposes GI is supposed to be publicly accessible, when GI encompasses a range of uses, including wildlife connectivity, and natural water management, where public footfall may not be wholly welcome or appropriate. Perhaps the policy should focus on public open space rather than GI.

p.79 Policy WBC4 Access to Play Spaces

Paragraph 12.38 suggests that support will be given to existing play spaces – but the requirement in the policy is to create new opportunities on sites of more than 10 houses, without reference to current availability within the locality. The policy expects the maintenance to be assured through social management plans, but other than this reference, there is no policy requirement for such agreements in either the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan. We would suggest a more flexible mechanism – the district council is keen to see more public open space and other amenities transferred to parish and town councils as parties with a greater interest in their upkeep.

p.80 Policy WBC5 Community Facilities

Clause (a) We note that currently there are no designated Assets of Community Value within the Neighbourhood Area.

It is beyond the power of the neighbourhood plan to prevent an asset from closing – this is not a function of planning but a function of viability.

We contend it is not appropriate to propose a blanket ban of change of use: change of use may be permitted development – thus the policy builds unrealistic expectations; it removes the opportunity for a balanced judgement to be made, where circumstances change, but 'locks in' a use that may cease to be appropriate; and, change of use may well be necessary to preserve the fabric and amenity of building, and to enable an appropriate community use.

Clause (b). We would encourage you to refocus this on viability rather than demand. Demand can be unrealistic and economically unfeasible.

Clause (d). This clause reads rather like a restatement of the purpose of the Community Infrastructure Levy – 25% of which will accrue to Cirencester Town Council once the Neighbourhood Plan is made. The headroom for additional contributions will be limited, and subject to site specifics, such as highways access and improvements, flooding etc.

Policy WBC 6 Designing Out Crime

Clause (b) How do you envisage this interacts with DBE3, which seeks to apply stricter criteria to Upper Floor conversions?

p.81 Policy WBC7 Light Pollution

Clause (b). To manage expectation, we would suggestion the addition of 'Insofar as development consent is required...'

p.82 Policy WBC8 Noise Pollution

Much as we agree with the intention of **Clause (a)**, the likelihood is that such measures as this envisages are not going to be within land use planning, but instead in highways planning, through mechanisms such as Traffic Regulation Orders. As such, the clause may sit better as a community aspiration.

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Agenda Item 3



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES DECISION MEETING – 6 MARCH 2024
Subject	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: DECISION TO MAKE THE DOWN AMPNEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Wards affected	The Ampneys and Hampton
Accountable member	Juliet Layton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services Email: juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the result of the referendum held on the 29 February 2024, in line with statutory duty.
Annexes	Annex A: Declaration of Results: Down Ampney Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (to follow after the referendum results are given on 29 February 2024)
Recommendation(s)	That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulatory Services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Considers the referendum result. 2. Subject to the referendum returning a simple majority in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, agrees to make the plan;
Corporate priorities	Responding to the Climate Emergency Delivering Housing Supporting Communities Supporting the Economy Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by or on behalf of parish councils, and express their priorities, albeit that they need to be in general conformity with the policies of the Local Plan. In this instance, the ambitions of Down Ampney Parish Council echo the Council's Corporate Priorities, supporting greener development.



Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The plan has been consulted on by the Parish Council, and subsequently by the District Council, in line with the statutory process for neighbourhood plans. Local residents, businesses and a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations have participated in these consultations. The plan has been subjected to independent examination by a suitably qualified person, prior to undergoing public Referendum.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report updates on progress with the Down Ampney Neighbourhood Plan, and addresses the Council's responsibility regarding the result of the referendum, which took place on 29 February, post-dating the drafting of this report. Accordingly, the result will be presented to the meeting as Annex A.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Down Ampney Parish Council (DAPC) applied to this Council in late 2018 to designate a Neighbourhood Area. The area applied for, and subsequently approved, was the entirety of the civil parish. Since then, a steering group of local residents, with support from expert consultants, has prepared the Down Ampney Neighbourhood Development Plan (DANDP).
- 2.2** The Plan was duly consulted upon in Spring 2023 – a consultation to which this Council responded – and representations were considered in preparing a submission draft, passed to the Council in July 2023. The 'Regulation 16' consultation was launched on 25 August 2023, closing on 6 October 2023, and the Independent Examination commenced immediately thereafter. On the 29 November 2023 the Independent Examiner issued her report. Subsequently, the Council's decision on her recommendations was made on 13 December 2023, triggering the referendum since held on 29 February 2024.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** Down Ampney Neighbourhood Plan was put forward to Referendum on 29 February 2024. At the time of writing, the result is not known, but this information will be presented to the meeting as Annex A. If a Referendum results in more than 50% of the turnout voting in favour of the proposal the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must make the Plan as soon as reasonably practical unless it considers that this would breach, or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights. For clarification, the term 'make' is the legal term introduced in the Localism Act 2011 for NDPs to enter into force, equivalent to the term 'adopt'. This decision was delegated to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Neighbourhood Planning on 17th December 2016. For information, should the referendum not return a vote in favour, the Plan cannot be made, and thus no Council decision is required.
- 3.2** To date, there has been no suggestion that this Plan breaches, or is otherwise incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights, the only grounds for the Council not to proceed to making the Plan after a public endorsement through Referendum.
- 3.3** The Referendum question asked, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012, was:
- Do you want Cotswold District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for [Down Ampney] to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?



3.4 In recognition of the mandate given to Neighbourhood Plans through the Referendum process, the Council has chosen to expedite this decision. By law, the Council has up to 8 weeks to make an NDP after referendum. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, section 3 makes it clear that post Referendum, Neighbourhood Plans have full force. This means that at the time of this decision, if the Plan has been successful at referendum, the Plan has full weight in planning terms, but requires the decision of the Local Planning Authority for it to be formally 'made'. However, as a decision not to make a Plan is theoretically possible, proceeding swiftly to a decision increases certainty of the Plan's status and gives assurance to the Parish Council that has prepared the Plan. Moreover, it will ensure that the Parish Council qualifies for the increased Neighbourhood share of the Community Infrastructure Levy, which increases from 15% (capped at £100 per dwelling) to a full 25%.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 As outlined above, the Council has a duty to make the Plan should the referendum return a result in its favour, unless it considers that this would breach, or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights. While the Plan would have full weight in planning determinations immediately upon support at referendum, delaying a decision leaves a technical uncertainty, hence established practice at CDC is to expedite this decision. It is considered that there is no alternative option.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Should the referendum have returned a vote in favour of the NDP, the Council should 'make' the Plan promptly. If the vote has not supported the Plan, then no decision on this matter is required, as the Plan cannot be 'made'.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This decision does not have direct income or expenditure impacts, but it does directly affect how any Community Infrastructure Levy contributions raised in Down Ampney will be distributing, increasing the community share from 15% to 25%, with a commensurate reduction in the share available for other activities.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any legal implications are set out in the body of this Report. The Report is necessarily set out in contingent terms given that the outcome of the Referendum is unknown at the point of publication.



8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** This is part of a statutory process and a decision that must be made. To mitigate the risk that there is a challenge to the Council's decision, the Council has participated fully in this process to ensure that the plan and its route to this point has been technically and legally robust.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1** Not required for this decision

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** None directly for this decision. The DANDP does not allocate sites but its policies will play a role in the design and layout of any new development, helping to mitigate the environmental impact.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None.

(END)

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