



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES – 6 MARCH 2024</b>
Subject	<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: REPRESENTATION TO THE CIRENCESTER REGULATION 14 DRAFT CONSULTATION</b>
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: <a href="mailto:juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk">juliet.layton@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Charlie Jackson, Assistant Director, Planning and Sustainability Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report Author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: <a href="mailto:joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk">joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
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