

Cotswold District Local Plan

A Local Plan consultation document detailing the District's development strategy, proposed site allocations and strategic policies is being made available for public comment from **Friday 16 January to Friday 27 February 2015**.

During this period, you will be able to view the document online at www.cotswold.gov.uk/go/ForwardPlanning and hard copies will also be available at Cotswold District Council's Trinity Road headquarters and Moreton Area Centre office, as well as public libraries across the District. Each Town and Parish Council has also has a copy and you can contact me if you wish to view it. Please also note that **Cotswold DC is hosting two drop-in sessions for residents to view proposals and discuss them with their Forward Planning team – Weds 28 January at Council HQ, Trinity Road, Cirencester and Thurs 29 January at the Council's Moreton Area Centre in Moreton-in-Marsh. Both will run from 2 pm to 6.30 pm.**

The Local Plan will serve as a blueprint for development up until 2031 and CDC has been working closely with many stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils, local communities and landowners to help define how the best ways to meet demanding government guidelines across a range of issues, including: sustainable housing development; creating employment opportunities; infrastructure improvements; and safeguarding environmental assets.

Ahead of the forthcoming public consultation, the Council has compiled a list of facts to help people understand the underlying issues, and this appears in the latest edition of CDC's Cotswold News magazine which should be delivered to your household during the first half of December – please call 01285 623000 if you have not received a copy. You can also view the magazine online at [http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1064728/Cotswold-News-Winter-2014 .pdf](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1064728/Cotswold-News-Winter-2014.pdf)

The Cotswold News article emphasises that the Local Plan must meet the government's sustainability criteria while also taking account of the aspirations of local communities, and Cotswold DC has been working hard with residents to achieve the best possible outcomes. Please note that the Council must comply with government planning policy to ensure the Plan has a good chance of being approved by the government's independent Inspector - sometimes, this means unpopular decisions have to be made to achieve a sound and sustainable plan.

Nevertheless, if you can come up with alternative suggestions which would satisfy the government's stringent requirements, the Council would be very pleased to consider them.

Some of the issues which have been highlighted by the Council are as follows:

- The total number of new homes required in the District to 2031 is estimated at 7500 (an increase of 600 on the previously identified figure of 6900).
- These new homes need to be distributed in the most sustainable places in the District - 17 key settlements have been identified. No green belt land will be developed. Some 80% of the District is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and less than 5% of the proposed new housing will be allocated on sites within it.

- A new rural housing policy will allow for appropriate development in settlements with access to fewer services and facilities.
- Cirencester is the pre-eminent centre in the District for housing, employment and services. It is over three times the size of Tetbury and five times the size of Moreton-in-Marsh. The proposed distribution will allocate Cirencester its fair share of housing and will support its pre-eminent position in the District.
- Having tested many options and combinations, the evidence shows that a strategic site south of Chesterton is the right way to provide some of the required development and offers a unique opportunity to involve the community in shaping the future, sustainable expansion of Cirencester. Although 600 more houses have had to be added to the District requirement, the number of dwellings proposed on the strategic site has reduced slightly to 2,350.
- Whilst it is impossible to prepare a plan which gains universal support, failure to conform with government planning guidelines would result in the Local Plan being rejected by the Secretary of State. An approved, up-to-date, Local Plan is essential when defending reasons for rejecting unwelcome development proposals.

How to comment during the forthcoming consultation

The most effective and direct way to provide comments will be via the online bespoke system on the CDC website which will be running during the consultation period. You will also be able to email comments to localplan@cotswold.gov.uk or submit them by post to: Local Plan, Forward Planning Team, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX. Copies of the draft Plan will be available for inspection or purchase (£5 per copy) at the Council's Trinity Road office and the Moreton Area Centre. The document will also be available to view in hard copy at local libraries

Local Plan Timetable

June/July 2013 – public consultation on Preferred Development Strategy: the district housing requirement and proposed distribution of housing

December 2013 – Consideration of representations on Preferred Development Strategy

January-March 2014 – facilitated events to brief parishes, and seek communities' opinions on potential site allocations.

January-February 2015 – public consultation on Local Plan, including development strategy, site allocations and strategic policies

Summer 2015 – public consultation on whole draft Local Plan, including development management policies.

Autumn 2015 - pre-submission version of Local Plan, inviting public comments on legalities and soundness of the document.

Winter 2015 – submission of Local Plan to Secretary of State for independent examination and approval.