

## Cheltenham Borough Council

Council – 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

### Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy - Pre Submission Version for public consultation

#### REPORT OF THE LEADER

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Jordan – Leader</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Tracey Crews – Head of Planning</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the strategic plan being prepared to provide a framework for development in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury to 2031.</p> <p>This report summarises the Pre Submission version of the JCS and seeks Council approval to publish the document for publication under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as the version of the JCS proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.</p> <p><i>Note to members: A hard copy of the draft JCS has been provided to all members via pigeon holes <b><u>PLEASE BRING THIS COPY TO THE COUNCIL MEETING</u></b></i></p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Approves the Joint Core Strategy Pre Submission, set out in Appendix 1, for publication under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as the version of the JCS proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination;</b></li><li>2. <b>Delegates authority to the Chief Executives in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury and the Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods for Gloucester City Council in consultation with the relevant Lead Members to make any necessary minor amendments including the identification of any saved plan policies as considered appropriate by the three JCS Councils prior to:</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. <b>publication of the Pre Submission JCS and</b></li><li>ii. <b>submission of the JCS to the Secretary of State for independent examination.</b></li></ol></li></ol>
<b>Notes</b>	<p><b>It should be noted that the JCS team will advise the JCS Member Steering Group of any technical advice or evidence which arises after the publication of the Pre-Submission version of the JCS and of the outputs of the next stage of transport modelling.</b></p>

<p><b>Financial implications</b></p>	<p>Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury councils contribute approximately £60,000 annually to support delivery of the JCS. In addition, the councils have access to a reserve of £146,000 carried over from 2013/14.</p> <p>These funding streams are used to support the current and future funding of the joint working arrangements, including completion of the evidence base and future contribution to meeting costs of an independent examination. This will continue to be reviewed and monitored to ensure sufficient resources are available to complete key pieces of work, carry out the necessary consultation and adequately resource examination procedures.</p> <p>Additional costs will arise from the testing of the JCS via an examination in public. Indicative costs are being assessed, but as the three JCS councils will share the costs of a single examination, substantial cost savings will be achieved compared to the option of individual local plans.</p> <p>The JCS Pre Submission is being considered by all 3 authorities. Should the recommendations be accepted, there will be no financial implications associated with this report, given that the JCS is being prepared from within existing budgets.</p> <p>Should the recommendations of this report not be accepted by the Council, there is likely to be a considerable delay in the production of the draft JCS. This could also result in work on the JCS being suspended and there will be an increased risk of speculative planning applications for all three JCS authorities in advance of the development plan process.</p> <p>It is also important that the JCS progresses quickly in order to progress the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any Community Infrastructure Levy preparatory work. A delay in agreeing the JCS may result in difficulties in defending against inappropriate development, which may lead to the need to incur significant expenditure on defending refusal decisions at appeal and potentially, to challenge decisions made by the PINS.</p> <p>The JCS budget is monitored by Cross Boundary Programme Board.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Mark Sheldon, <a href="mailto:mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk">mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>, 01242 264123</b></p>
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<p><b>Legal implications</b></p>	<p>The JCS Pre Submission has been produced for publication under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (“Local Planning Regulations”) as the version of the JCS proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination as the key document in the Council’s development plan. Local authorities are required by law to prepare a development plan for their administrative area and the process for doing that is governed by statute. The regulations require local authorities to notify and invite comments from a range of specified persons and organisations on their development plan proposals.</p> <p>The JCS forms part of the Council’s statutory emerging development plan and it is essential to have a “plan led” system if the planning process is to deliver sustainable growth. In the absence of an up to date JCS and supporting Local Plan, local authorities are vulnerable to challenge when they are unable to demonstrate a robust 5 year housing land supply (HLS).</p> <p>In the absence of a 5 year HLS, local authorities are having imposed upon them by decision of the Secretary of State, planning permissions which need not necessarily comply with the current or emerging Local Plan or any of the emerging strategic policies within the JCS. It is therefore essential that Local Plans and the JCS are progressed expeditiously if the threat of adverse planning decisions being forced upon JCS partners is to be avoided.</p> <p>Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as inserted by the s110 of the Localism Act 2011) (“s33A”) provides that local planning authorities must co-operate with other local planning authorities in maximising the effectiveness with which activities such as the preparation of local plan/development plan documents are undertaken so far as they relate to strategic matters. This ‘duty to cooperate’ requires the local authority to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any process by means of which activities such as the preparation of local plan/development plan documents are undertaken.</p> <p>If the person appointed to carry out the independent examination considers that the local planning authority has not complied with its duty under s33A in relation to the preparation of a local plan/development plan document the person can neither recommend adoption nor modifications and in such cases, the local planning authority cannot then adopt the local plan/ development plan document.</p>
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	<p>Under regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations before submitting a local plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination the Council must make a copy of all the proposed submission documents and a statement of representations procedure available via their website, their principal office, such other places within their area as they consider appropriate for a period of 6 weeks.</p> <p>The proposed submission documents are to be the local plan which the Councils propose to submit to the Secretary of State; a submission policies map where the local plan if adopted would result in changes to the adopted policies map; a sustainability appraisal report of the local plan; a statement setting out the consultations undertaken, a summary of the main issues raised by the representations received and how those main issues have been addressed in the local plan; and such supporting documents as in the opinion of the local planning authority are relevant to the preparation of the local plan.</p> <p>The Statement of representations procedure must include the date by which representations about the local plan must be received and the address to which representations about the local plan must be made (representations may be made in writing or by way of electronic communications).</p> <p>In addition to the proposed submission documents, on submission for independent examination the Council must also send a statement setting out the number of representation received in accordance with the representations procedure, copies of those representations and a summary of the main issues raised in those representations.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Cheryl Lester, Cheryl.lester@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272013</b></p>
<p><b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b></p>	<p>There are no staffing or Trade Union implications.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Julie McCarthy, julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 777249</b></p>
<p><b>Key risks</b></p>	<p>Failure to progress a Core Strategy that identifies future strategic development requirements for the area and strategic locations where these requirements can be accommodated will result in a policy vacuum, increasing the risk of ad hoc development proposals being submitted and potentially, to decisions being secured by appeal.</p> <p>The absence of a JCS could result in an uncoordinated approach to development, leading to inappropriate and incremental development being allowed on appeal that does not take account of cross boundary implications and requirements for supporting infrastructure, with the potential for adverse environmental impacts. There are applications already submitted relating to strategic sites identified by the draft JCS and other major applications pending. It is therefore critical that progress is made on agreeing the draft strategy. Any delay in progressing the JCS to submission and examination increases the risk of inappropriate development and lack of delivery of key infrastructure. It is equally critical that each Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable land for housing development, without which the policies for the supply of housing for the JCS authorities will not be considered to be up to date.</p>

<p><b>Environmental/Social/Equality Implications</b></p>	<p>The JCS must go through a sustainability appraisal process and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) which consider the environmental, social and economic outputs of the Plan and ensures that development meets the needs of both present and future generations. The Sustainability Appraisal supporting the draft JCS (available to view on the JCS website at <a href="http://www.gct-jcs.org">www.gct-jcs.org</a> ) encompasses Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by EU Directive (2001/42/EC). In addition HRA has been undertaken as required under the European Directive 92/43/EEC on the "conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora for plans" that may have an impact on European (Natura 2000) Sites.</p> <p>An addendum to the JCS Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared; this iterative process has informed the JCS Pre Submission.</p> <p>The submission version of the Plan will be accompanied by a full range of assessments which will address equalities and other issues.</p>
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** All local authorities are under a statutory obligation to prepare a development plan. Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Councils agreed in 2008 to prepare a JCS covering the entirety of the administrative areas of each of the districts, which would consider and plan for future strategic development needs up until 2031.
- 1.2** Many of the characteristics and the issues which the area faces, such as flooding, outstanding landscape and the need to plan for sufficient development to provide jobs and housing for future residents are common across the JCS area. There are strong functional, economic, infrastructure, policy and cross boundary relationships which mean that working together on a JCS makes good planning sense. The JCS is based on collaborative research and this information forms part of the evidence base for the plan which can be viewed on the JCS website ([www.gct-jcs.org](http://www.gct-jcs.org)).
- 1.3** The JCS is just one part of the development plan for the three local planning authorities; it identifies the strategic development requirements, as well as providing a framework for the preparation of district local plans for the three Councils and for local communities preparing neighbourhood plans.
- 1.4** Following the formal removal of both the South West Regional Spatial Strategy and the Structure Plan in 2013, the JCS will provide the strategic development framework for the area to 2031. The Government objective of the removal of this strategic layer of plan making was to decentralise as much power as possible to local level decision making. These major changes to the planning system have been supplemented by the removal of the suite of national Planning Policy Statements and Guidance and through the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the publication of supporting national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) both can be viewed via the following link <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk>
- 1.5** Decision making on how we meet our long term strategic needs for housing, employment, retail, community facilities, open spaces etc. now rests with district planning authorities. This is a major step change together with a more proactive and enabling stance adopted by the NPPF, which requires local authorities to take ownership of strategic planning decision making, shaping the lives of existing and future communities. The significance of the decision of identifying long-term development needs cannot be underestimated. Across the JCS area, a balance needs to be struck between ensuring that there are enough jobs and homes for the area's population, enabling economic growth, delivering of supporting infrastructure and managing the impacts of incursion into the green belt to accommodate sustainable development and wider countryside.

- 1.6** We have now reached an important stage in the preparation of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury JCS, following an extended period of public consultation (15 October – 13 December 2013). We now have for consideration a JCS Pre Submission which the three JCS authorities are each required to consider and approve for public consultation. Pre Submission is a key stage of the plan making process; it means that this is the version of the JCS that the three councils would like to submit to the Secretary of State for examination – with the councils confident that a sound plan can be presented to an Inspector for examination. Before it is submitted, the JCS councils must invite representations on the plan, and that is the purpose of the publication sought by the recommendations of this report.

### **Previous consultations**

- 1.7** A wide ranging evidence base has been developed which supports the JCS Pre Submission and this, together with public consultation, work with stakeholders and the programme framework of the JCS, have enabled the three authorities to present a detailed plan which sets out a clear spatial strategy together with a suite of associated strategic development management policies. Forming part of the evidence base are a significant range of contributions made by statutory consultees, stakeholders and the wider local communities of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. Public consultation has been extensive and ongoing throughout the preparation of the JCS to date, including;

- Key Issues and Questions - November 2009/February 2010
- Developing the Preferred Option - December 2011/February 2012
- Draft JCS – October-December 2013

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT JCS**

- 1.8** Comments received to date have been informative and wide ranging and have been considered and balanced within the context of the overall evidence now supporting the JCS Pre Submission being presented to Councils. The JCS authorities have fully assessed and considered the representations and the evidence contained within the representations, made at each stage of the JCS. The Draft JCS consultation Response Report forms Appendix 2 to this report and will be published alongside the Pre Submission JCS.

- 1.9** Key issues arising in the Draft JCS have been taken into account, including:-

- Duty to co-operate: clearer explanation of how the JCS is working with other local authorities
- Concerns regarding flood risk
- Need to fine tune the objectives of the plan
- Scale of new development overall: representations for both higher and lower housing requirements, concerns about the detailed methodology used to define the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)
- Scale of development in the rural areas: representations for both higher and lower scales of growth
- Concern about the strategy identifying urban extensions to the urban areas and the impact on the green belt
- Concern about the infrastructure requirements of the proposed strategic allocations, the ability to deliver them and the likely impact on existing infrastructure and local communities
- Plan needs a proper analysis of the scale of development and the associated transport implications
- Some of the policies need to be strengthened to reflect the latest legislation, guidance and published evidence
- Various suggestions were made around detailed green belt boundaries, particularly at

#### Shurdington and Cheltenham Racecourse

- Respondents suggested that the green belt review process was unnecessary and/or was neither sufficiently robust nor comprehensive and needed an early review
- Objections to the removal of specific allocations from the green belt
- Use of brownfield sites should be encouraged and prioritised over greenfield sites
- Policies on housing mix and standards and affordable housing should reflect the outputs of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- More guidance on specialist housing needs, particularly for older people
- Affordable housing policy needs to be subject to viability testing
- Transport policies need to be strengthened and to consider sustainable transport more fully
- Suggestions for additional park and ride sites
- Many concerns regarding congestion on the existing road network and the potential exacerbation by new development

The policies on strategic allocations generated significant representations, the key issues on each were:

#### **A1 Innsworth and Twigworth**

- Concern about flood risk
- Impact of traffic on existing roads
- Objection to loss of green belt land
- Objection on the basis of landscape quality and the loss of important views
- Concern about the loss of farmland
- Lack of local community facilities
- Impact of the airport has not been addressed, for example in terms of noise
- Support for the urban extension and the benefits it would bring in terms of green infrastructure

#### **A2 North Churchdown**

- Development will destroy the local village character and Churchdown will become part of Gloucester
- Development will breathe new life into Churchdown and it would be good to build a new community
- Other non green belt sites should be looked at instead
- Concern over congestion on existing roads
- Concern about existing infrastructure and its ability to cope
- Impact on the operation of the airport
- Proper assessment of aircraft noise and public safety required

#### **A3 South Churchdown**

- Destroying village character
- Good accessible site to serve the needs of Gloucester – should be increased in size
- Existing services already at capacity
- More focus should be on brownfield sites
- More information needed on traffic impact on the strategic road network
- Concern over the impact of the listed building at Pirton Court

#### **A4 North Brockworth**

- Proposal would result in the over development of Brockworth
- No jobs available locally
- Existing infrastructure will not cope
- Priority infrastructure requirements should be made clear
- Housing density should be lower to reflect the edge of city and countryside location
- Concern about the impact on the AONB and green belt

- More evidence on the impact on the strategic road network needed
- Concerns about high noise levels and poor air quality
- A through historic environment assessment is required

#### **A5 North West Cheltenham**

- Objection to loss of the green belt, but also support for the removal of the site from the green belt
- Needs to be a landscape buffer between the development and Swindon Village
- Suggest the employment land is located to the west, closer to the M5
- Existing infrastructure cannot cope
- Concern regarding hazardous waste and landfill site, there should be no development within 1km of these
- Development would swallow up Swindon Village
- Historic environment impact – needs to be assessed
- Impact on the M5 and junction 10 needs to be addressed including consideration of an all ways junction
- Flooding is already an issue and development will exacerbate this

#### **A6 South Cheltenham – Leckhampton**

- Concern over increased flood risk
- Concern of loss of countryside and wildlife habitat
- Loss of views
- Concern over loss of green belt that would lead to the coalescence of Cheltenham and Gloucester
- Impact on AONB
- Proposal would create major transport disruption on local road network
- Better to build smaller develop on the edge of some villages to minimise the impact on the green belt
- Consider Local Green Space Designation
- Not enough jobs to support the level of housing proposed
- New housing development is not needed as younger people at staying in their family home longer
- Leckhampton is the most deliverable and sustainable location for growth
- Several suggestions that the allocation should include additional land

#### **A7 South Cheltenham – Up Hatherley**

- Need to be clear on levels of affordable housing
- Concerns over increased flood risk
- Already inadequate infrastructure and facilities proposed development would exacerbate this
- Concern over relationship with AONB
- Loss of green space, ancient woodland and hedgerows and access to the countryside
- Loss of farmland
- Objection to removal of the Green belt
- Up Hatherley way provides a firm boundary between the urban development and the countryside
- Impact on listed building – brickhouse farm
- Support for the allocation which could deliver 1,000 homes
- Concerns over increased congestion, air pollution
- Increased levels of noise

#### **A8 MOD Site at Ashchurch**

- General support for the allocation if MOD vacate the site
- Support for re-use of brownfield site
- Questions over need for addition of greenfield site to the north of the allocation



- Concerns over the impact on the rural character of the area
- Concerns over the overall scale of development
- Capacity issues on A46, M5 junction 9 already exist. Measures would be needed to make the impact acceptable
- Strategic opportunity for rail/road interchange
- Concerns over phasing and viability
- Impact on views out of the AONB from Bredon Hill. Increase green infrastructure buffer needed
- Opportunities for green infrastructure which will benefit wildlife
- Allocation boundary should be redrawn to remove medium/higher landscape sensitivity

### **A9 Ashchurch**

- Implications of allocations A8 and A9 cannot be easily mitigated
- No development should be permitted until existing congestion is resolved
- Allocation should not include any retail that would harm Tewkesbury town
- Retail would be a good job opportunity.
- Land to the south of the allocation should be considered to expand the business location

### **Omission Sites**

- 1.10** Through representations made to the Draft JCS, a total of 42 sites were promoted for consideration to accommodate development either as alternatives to or in addition to the strategic allocations set out in the draft JCS. 33 of these sites fall below the threshold used in the JCS of a strategic site, which is considered to be approximately 450 units. Sites submitted have been cross checked against sites known to local authorities through the district Strategic Land Availability Assessment process. These sites would be most appropriately considered through the district plan making process. Of those sites submitted which would fall within the definition of a strategic allocation these have been assessed against the spatial strategy of the JCS Pre-Submission. No site submitted either offers the potential of an alternative site to be allocated for development or an additional site.

### **Review of Responses to the Draft JCS**

- 1.11** When reviewing the consultation representations and changes made to the JCS there are issues where local communities and lobby groups in particular will feel the JCS Pre Submission has not been changed to reflect particular comments received, in particular regarding the level of housing need to be met over the JCS period to 2031 and the strategic sites identified to help meet this need. Significant objection was received in regards to both housing numbers and identification of strategic allocations within the Green Belt.
- 1.12** Elected members and officers fully understand the concerns expressed, but alongside public opinion all elements of the NPPF must be considered and the core principle of sustainable development which is at the heart of the NPPF and clearly expressed in the NPPG. In particular, paragraphs 14 and 15 of the NPPF indicate that Local Plans “should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development”. This should be done by identifying and providing for objectively assessed needs and by indicating how the presumption will be applied locally.
- 1.13** The NPPF makes it clear that in plan making, local authorities can review their Green Belt boundaries to accommodate sustainable patterns of development. There is a distinction to be drawn between the approach to the Green Belt when preparing a plan, in this case the JCS, and in decision taking on planning applications. Due to the very constrained environment of the JCS area, the three JCS Councils undertook a Green Belt review to inform plan preparation. The decision for this to form part of the plan preparation process was not taken lightly, and the evidence, including an independent sustainability appraisal demonstrates that the strategic allocations which form part of the JCS Pre Submission offer the most sustainable solution to meeting the area’s long term development needs. As such the spatial strategy of the JCS

necessitates a number of changes to the Green Belt.

- 1.14** In the final stages of agreeing the JCS Pre Submission to be presented to Councils, a meeting was arranged between the JCS MSG (and wider members together with relevant MPs) and key representatives of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Notes from this meeting are available to view [www.gct-jcs.org](http://www.gct-jcs.org) and are appended as appendix 3 to this report. The conclusions drawn from this meeting were that whilst the JCS Councils have struggled with the competing demands, priorities and issues in bringing forward a plan that meets the JCS areas long term development needs – the way in which the strategy has been developed is sound and reflects the principles of the NPPF.

### **What is the Joint Core Strategy Pre Submission?**

- 1.15** Once approved by each of the three Councils, the JCS Pre Submission will be published for publication under regulation 19 of Local Planning Regulations as the version of the JCS proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination (dates to be confirmed). The purpose of this stage of the process is to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the matters that will be considered by the Inspector who conducts the examination, i.e. whether the plan:

- (a) has been prepared in accordance with the duty to cooperate, legal and procedural requirements, and
- (b) is 'sound'. Soundness means:
  - Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is practical to do so consistently with the presumption in favour of sustainable development
  - Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence
  - Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
  - Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

(Source: NPPF, DCLG 2012).

- 1.16** The policies within an emerging plan may be give weight in decision making according to:
- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
  - the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given) and;
  - the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given)

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.17** The SA/SEA process for the JCS began in 2008 with the production of an initial SA/SEA Scoping Report and since 2012, the process has been progressed by independent SA/SEA consultant Enfusion. SA/SEA is an ongoing and iterative process and consequently the assessment occurs over the various stages of plan making. The SA/SEA process allows consideration of reasonable strategic options or alternatives. It is used to assess the extent to which the emerging JCS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In October 2013, a Sustainability Appraisal report was published for the Draft JCS.

- 1.18** For the Pre Submission stage of the JCS, an addendum to the October 2013 report has been

produced which assesses the changes made from the Draft JCS and their significance with regard to the SA/SEA. In addition, the addendum then provides a reappraisal of those changes which are deemed to be significant alterations to the plan. The Sustainability Appraisal Addendum is attached as Appendix 4 to this report. This report is supported by an update to Habitats Regulation Assessment, this is provided at appendix 5.

## **JCS Pre Submission – Key Changes Arising**

**1.19** Section 2 below sets out the key changes made in drafting the JCS Pre Submission. Taking into account the extensive evidence, including representations arising from public consultation, the JCS as drafted responds positively to the NPPF in the context of recognising the physical and environmental limitations of the JCS area together with the ability to ensure that the plan is viable and the required infrastructure can be delivered. Careful consideration has been given to the soundness of the plan, informed through the JCS Programme Board and Member Steering Group and informal discussions with the Planning Advisory Service and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

**1.20** In September 2013 the three JCS councils considered the detail of the draft JCS and approved the document and in approving the draft JCS it was also resolved that,

*The JCS Authorities note that, through housing allocations and expected supply across the plan period, the Draft Joint Core Strategy meets the needs of the three authorities as a whole. However, taken individually the needs of each authority are not exactly matched with the supply of homes the Joint Core Strategy is expected to deliver for each area. Following consultation and taking account of additional evidence produced during this period, housing and employment allocations will be reviewed to improve this relationship between need and supply for each area.*

**1.21** In addition on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014 Cheltenham Borough Council considered a petition received under the Council's petition scheme. Minutes of this meeting can be viewed via the following link <https://democracy.cheltenham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=6703>. The resolution from the debate was as follows:

*This Council directs that the JCS Team reconsider the status of Leckhampton and Up Hatherley as strategic sites within the JCS and explores the possibility of withdrawing these locations from the Strategy and report back to Council in April.*

**1.22** The response to these requests reflected in the JCS Pre Submission and outlined further below reflects the biggest challenge for the JCS. This challenge remains unchanged from the challenge identified to members when considering the draft JCS back in September 2013 - the fundamental of establishing the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing as required by the NPPF.

**1.23** Work on refining the OAN since the publication of the draft JCS has been ongoing informed by representations received through the public consultation. Consultants Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners and Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research have been working collaboratively to support the JCS Councils in preparing an OAN that plans positively for the demographic profile of the JCS area to 2031 and is balanced with the forecast needs of the economy and other wider market considerations. It also reflects the requirements of NPPF and the more detailed guidance now set out in the PPG.

**1.24** Set out below is a short summary of the key issues which have been taken into account in the OAN now being presented to members.

- The 2012-based National Population Projections suggest that the population of England will grow by 16% less between 2011 and 2021 than the previous (2011-based) projections (those upon which the JCS is based). The biggest part of this reduction is attributable to fewer births. This fall in births will not have a significant impact on the number of households in the next 20 years, therefore for the purposes of the JCS this does not affect the number of households proposed. The remainder of the reduction 7-8% is attributable

to a continued reduction in household formation with a smaller impact derived from changes in international migration.

- In identifying the OAN the need to support sustainable economic growth is a key factor. The JCS has a close inter-relationship with the emerging Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Gloucestershire being prepared by Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. The SEP is an aspirational plan for economic growth and one which promotes the JCS area as the key driver for delivering new jobs and increased Gross Value Added (GVA). The approach to balancing housing and the economy in both plans and strategies is a sound one which reflects the principles of NPPF. However, in supporting the SEP the JCS needs to plan for the population that will support economic growth. The JCS Pre Submission has sought to plan taking account of the evidence provided by consultants Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners. The SEP embodies the view that the economy will recover much more rapidly; the top end of the OAN reflects a situation of full economic recovery. The economic projections now supporting the JCS Pre Submission are indicating that the economy is improving at a faster rate than previously projected, but this does not lead to the conclusion that a full economic recovery will be achieved within the plan period.
- The trend identified in the ONS projections is one of a reduction in household formation – continued debate has taken place in the preparation of the JCS Pre Submission regarding whether the propensity to form a separate household has been affected into the longer term by the impact of the recession and affordability issues and if so whether the climate will improve and as a result lead to higher levels of household formation. The demographic element most affected by the reduction in household formation is younger adults, with evidence suggesting that adult children are living with their parents for longer and that there are more young adults living in shared accommodation. It seems likely that these are not changes which those concerned have freely chosen to make but changes forced by economic conditions and the high cost of housing both to rent and to buy. This suggests that, if conditions improve, some move back towards the longer term trend is likely.
- New official population and household projections are produced every two years so new projections appearing during the preparation or examination of a core strategy are not an uncommon event. The general advice from the Planning Inspectorate is to press ahead but to be prepared to submit an updated report if need be. The JCS Councils are committed to moving forward the JCS; therefore the proposal was made by the JCS MSG to not wait for the projections expected in May 2014, but to make progress with the JCS. The recommendation of this report concerning new technical advice or evidence reflects this.

**1.25** Table 1 below sets out the key changes to the JCS Pre Submission, a summary of changes for all parts of the plan is provided at appendix 6. The consultation response report sets out the changes made to policies following consideration of representations to draft JCS public consultation, engagement with specialist officers and statutory stakeholders, this should be read alongside the table below and is provided at appendix 2.

**Table 1: Summary of key changes to the JCS**

<b>JCS Pre Submission – Key changes</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<p>OAN revised to 30,500</p>	<p>The JCS Pre Submission includes a revised OAN. The starting point for the assessment is 2011 ONS projections. Throughout the plan making process the key concern around the statistical baseline has been both the fall and deterioration in household formation rates for younger adults (those falling within the 25 -34 age group).</p> <p>The revised approach to OAN allows for a partial return to trend for this age group, recognising that it is likely that there will be some return to historic trend as the economy recovers, access to mortgages improve, and the JCS delivers improvement in housing supply.</p> <p>The OAN may need to be reviewed when updated ONS local projections and CLG household projections are available, this is referenced in the notes to the recommendations of this report. A breakdown of the OAN by district is provided at Table 2.</p> <p>The revised OAN and strategic allocations are set out in SP1 and SP2 of the JCS; as a consequence discussions took place with Members and the following sites are proposed to be removed.</p> <p>Removal of strategic sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Cheltenham – Up Hatherley – removal of whole site</li> <li>• Innsworth and Twigworth – removal of Twigworth parcel (northern area) from strategic allocation</li> </ul>
<p>Restructuring of the document to reflect deletion of policies</p>	<p>To aid clarity and readability of the document. Appendix 7 sets out the changes in policy numbering between the Draft JCS and Pre Submission JCS.</p>
<p>Incorporation of Green Belt at north Cheltenham (south of Racecourse) back into the Green Belt</p>	<p>The proposal to add land at north Cheltenham back into the Green belt has been put forward by Cheltenham Members</p>
<p>Amendments to capacity figures of strategic allocations</p>	<p>All strategic allocations have been reviewed to ensure that the number of homes and amount of employment land that could be delivered reflects detailed work as part of masterplanning of sites, viability evidence, transport modelling and other relevant evidence.</p> <p>As set out in paragraph 1.21 above, Cheltenham Borough requested the JCS team to reconsider the status of Leckhampton as a strategic site. Following a review of the evidence, this site continues to contribute to meeting the needs, specifically of Cheltenham, but also in meeting the wider JCS OAN. There are sound planning reasons why the site should be brought forward as part of the JCS spatial strategy. Public objection specifically raised concerns regarding the transport implications of the allocation. As set out in paragraph 1.27 below, more detailed work is being undertaken which will inform the JCS Submission; this does not however justify removal of the site as a strategic allocation. The capacity numbers have been amended to</p>

	reflect the views of the Environment Agency in respect of strategic flood risk assessment.
Amendments to the list of service villages	<p>Following a review of the consultation representations received and evidence regarding the level of services/facilities at rural settlements, a number of changes have been made to the list of service villages and a simplified approach has been adopted to the inclusion of villages within this category. Service villages offer 2 or more primary services, 2 or more secondary services and a bus and car/road access score of 2 or more.</p> <p>This information and the amended approach would result in the inclusion of two settlements not previously identified; Stoke Orchard and Twigworth. It also results in the deletion of Apperley, Ashleworth, Dumbleton and Little Witcombe.</p>

Table 2 below sets out the revised OAN and its breakdown across the three JCS authority areas.

**Table 2: OAN breakdown across the three JCS authority areas**

	Draft JCS OAN	JCS Pre Submission OAN	% change
<b>JCS area</b>	33,200	30,500	- 8.1
<b>Gloucester</b>	13,100	11,300	-13.7
<b>Cheltenham</b>	10,000	9,100	-9
<b>Tewkesbury</b>	10,100	10,100	0

## The Joint Core Strategy

- 1.26** National Planning Policy Guidance states that where there is a joint plan, housing requirements and the need to identify a five year supply of sites can apply across the joint plan area and the approach being taken should be clearly set out in the plan. The approach of the JCS authorities is to plan to meet the development needs of Gloucester and Cheltenham in and adjoining the two urban areas through the proposed urban extensions: no wider provision will be made elsewhere within Tewkesbury Borough to meet these unmet needs. Given the Joint Core Strategy authorities are planning together to meet need, the supply of housing is considered in terms of the JCS area as a whole in the context of this approach. This is particularly important given the geography of the authorities and their administrative boundaries. Therefore, when assessing five year housing land supply in accordance with NPPF paragraph 47 housing requirements and supply will be tested in relationship to the requirements and supply of the three authorities taken together.

## An evidence-based plan

- 1.27** At the time of approving the draft JCS in September 2013, all Councils raised concerns regarding outstanding parts of the evidence base. To help understand the issues facing the JCS area, the councils have gathered a range of background information and technical evidence, both to support the development strategy and to ensure that it is deliverable, it should be noted that the evidence base should be considered as a whole in the context of the principles and objectives set out in the NPPF. The JCS evidence base is available via the JCS website ([www.gct-ics.org](http://www.gct-ics.org)). A summary of each of these is provided below.

## **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

- 1.28** The Joint Core Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan (JCS IDP) helps to evaluate the transport, utilities, community and green infrastructure and services that will be required to support the levels of housing and employment growth proposed in the Core Strategy. The JCS IDP provides evidence supporting the preparation of the JCS; it presents estimated infrastructure costs and secured sources of infrastructure funding, including the potential for developer contributions towards infrastructure through S106 Planning Obligation and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) mechanisms. The JCS IDP will help to inform the Councils' decision making on priority areas for investment and how they wish to structure a CIL or CILs. In addition to enabling development to come forward, securing delivery of infrastructure will contribute to the achievement of JCS objectives. These include limiting flood risk, reducing dependency on the car, and enhancing access to community services within local centres. The JCS IDP is an essential piece of evidence to demonstrate to the independent Inspector at the Examination that the JCS could be delivered. The draft JCS IDP was consulted upon at the public consultation of the Draft JCS and the responses at that time have been fed into the updated JCS IDP Refresh. The IDP refresh will be available at the time the Pre Submission JCS is made available for public consultation.

## **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

- 1.29** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update was undertaken by HDH Planning and Development Ltd on behalf of all Gloucestershire councils. It provides an update to the previous SHMA report that was published in January 2009. The final SHMA Update report was completed in March 2014.
- 1.30** The SHMA provides a quantitative and qualitative profile of the current and future housing market identifying both the extent of affordable housing need locally and the nature of additional housing required to best provide for the whole population. The outputs of this report have been critical to informing the strategy and relevant policy drafting, and ultimately the levels of affordable housing required, in the JCS. The SHMA has informed the thresholds now included within policy SD13.

## **Transport Modeling**

- 1.31** The JCS Transport Model Output report provides a strategic assessment of the impact on the highway network of the development proposals outlined in the Draft JCS. The strategic assessment Transport Model which has been used includes two 'Do minimum' scenarios from which the modelling outputs are used to assess the impact of the strategic allocations on the highway network. The 'Do minimum' scenarios represent the highway network without any transport mitigation measures. The outputs from the 'Do Minimum' scenarios have informed the identification of two 'Do something' scenarios. These outputs provide the basis of likely transport interventions required to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development. The Transport Output Model report will be available when the Pre Submission JCS is made available for public consultation.
- 1.32** The Highways Agency has requested additional transport modelling outputs to enhance their understanding of the impacts on the JCS strategy on the Strategic Road Network. This additional work includes: a revised assessment methodology for the A46 M5 Junction 9 corridor; a review of transport interventions included within the transport mitigation scenarios in terms of deliverability, affordability and Local Transport Plan / JCS policy compliance; and a non-strategic assessment of the strategic allocations on a site by site basis. A meeting is scheduled for early April to discuss these outstanding modelling issues. The outputs from the transport modelling work are essential to understanding the deliverability of the strategic allocations and the strategy as a whole. The remaining stages of the transport modelling work and the outcomes of further discussions with the Highways Agency, if needed, will be used to inform the submission of the JCS Submission where this work does not indicate that substantive amendments need to be made to the Pre-Submission version of the JCS. If substantive amendments are needed then discussion on the implications arising will be undertaken with the JCS CBPB and JCS MSG.

## **Viability Assessment**

- 1.33** The NPPF requires that in delivering sustainable development, plans should be viable and deliverable. The NPPF advises that the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. A consultant (District Valuer Services) have been engaged to help carry out a viability assessment of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) as a whole and the individual strategic allocations. The consultants have looked at the proposals and made recommendations that will help to ensure that the JCS is viable which have informed other parts of the supporting evidence base. This assessment as a formal report will be delivered May 2014.

## **Historic Assessment**

- 1.34** Environmental consultants ECUS were commissioned to undertake a Historic Environment Assessment (HEA) and delivered the final report in March 2014. The overall purpose of the HEA is to formulate:
- An assessment of the potential for heritage assets to survive within the area of study;
  - An assessment of the importance of the known or predicted heritage assets considering their valued components;
  - Strategies for further evaluation, intrusive or non-intrusive, where the nature, extent or importance of the resource is not sufficiently well defined;
  - An assessment of the impact of proposed development or other land use changes on the importance of the heritage assets and their settings; and
  - Proposals for further archaeological investigation, beyond evaluation, within a programme of research.
- 1.35** As part of the HEA there is a detailed appraisal of each of the proposed Strategic Allocations including an assessment of existing heritage assets, the potential for development to impact on them, and mitigation measures that should be put in place to protect them. The report makes recommendations for the sites and sets out the planning requirements that are necessary to adequately conserve historic assets. The recommendations and advice set out in HEA has directly informed the development of SD9 – Historic Environment and the Strategic Allocation policies. The Historic Assessment report is available via the following link [www.gct-jcs.org](http://www.gct-jcs.org).

## **Economic forecasting**

- 1.36** In order to ensure the plan is based on the best and most recent evidence, up-to-date economic forecasts have been obtained from 3 separate sources (Experian, Oxford Economics and Cambridge Econometrics). These all indicate that improved economic growth is likely over the plan period, forecasting job growth to 2031 of between 21,000 and 31,000 jobs. The average of the three forecasts would suggest a growth of about 28,000 jobs, and this level of growth would be supported by the amount of land (about 64 hectares) allocated in the JCS
- 1.37** Further work is being undertaken to assess the impact of more positive economic growth, particularly in terms of the levels of associated economic activity. Until this work has been completed, it is unclear whether this would lead to pressure for additional housing to be provided, or whether the forecasted economic growth could be adequately supported by the level of housing proposed in the Pre-Submission version of the JCS.

## **2. FURTHER MINOR AMENDMENTS REQUIRED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION OF JCS PRE SUBMISSION**

- 2.1** Members will appreciate that the JCS Pre Submission has been prepared within a very ambitious timetable with much discussion with the JCS MSG and CBPB which has resulted in changes to the document now presented. The Pre Submission version of the JCS subject of this report is provided for the purposes of decision making. Prior to formal publication of the JCS Pre Submission for public consultation work is needed as follows:

- Delivery section of each policy needs to be finalised (will not affect principles of policies if



agreed at Council)

- Inset maps and Proposals map need to be checked and finalised
- Editorial work is needed on the whole document to ensure all cross referencing to policies and objectives is correct and that the formatting, grammar and language is appropriate
- Clarification required to aid understanding

2.2 The recommendation of this report seeks to delegate responsibility for sign off of these minor changes to Chief Executives of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, the Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods for Gloucester City Council and Leaders of the Councils.

### 3. Member/officer engagement

3.1 When the three Councils formed the JCS partnership in 2008 a programme structure was agreed. Two elements of the programme structure have been fundamental in driving the programme forward:-

3.2 **Cross Boundary Programme Board (CBPB)** – CBPB is the key officer group which has provided strategic input to the JCS process, monitoring the programme to ensure delivery of JCS objectives and where required escalating issues to Members and local authorities.

3.3 **Member Steering Group (MSG)** – MSG is made up of Leaders (or their nominated representative) together with Leaders of the remaining political groups within each authority. MSG has guided the JCS and provided a key point of contact within each political group to enable dissemination of information across all parties and to all members. MSG is not a decision-making body, but the political lead for the whole cross boundary joint working process. The activities of MSG do not replace decision-making that takes place within each of the individual local authorities, but does inform the decision making processes at Council level. MSG has been chaired independently by Mr Jim Claydon, former President of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), member of the RTPI's General Assembly and Visiting Professor of Spatial Planning at the University of the West of England. Cheltenham representatives of the MSG are Councillors Jordan, Harman and Godwin.

3.4 In addition to the above, engagement has been ongoing across wider officer/member groups within each authority. For Cheltenham this has included:-

- Planning and Liaison Scrutiny Task Group – Regular meetings to help steer the JCS, provide scrutiny to the process and in respect of specific strands of work (e.g. consideration of household formation) provide detailed scrutiny and assessment; and support to the plan preparation process. Representatives of the Scrutiny Task Group are councillors Harman, Bickerton, Godwin, McCloskey, Wall and Wheeler
- Member seminars – To inform members on technical parts of the evidence base.
- 1-2-1 with members – Regular meetings with the Leader of the Council and with individual councillors upon request.
- Engagement with relevant officers/teams on the drafting of policies.

3.5 A schedule of meetings which have informed the key stages of preparation of the JCS is attached at appendix 8.

### 4. DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

4.1 Local planning authorities now have a statutory duty to cooperate on plan-making and in addressing strategic matters which cross boundaries including development requirements. The

preparation of a joint plan recognises that those needs are not confined to administrative areas and presents an effective way of planning across boundaries. This duty also applies to other neighbouring authorities and authorities within the Housing Market Area. Whilst the draft JCS seeks to meet the needs of the JCS area, the extent of those needs and the constraints in meeting them pose difficult challenges both now and for the longer term and discussions with neighbouring authorities about the best way to help meet those needs are continuing.

- 4.2** The National Planning Policy Guidance states that where there is a joint plan, housing requirements and the need to identify a five year supply of sites can apply across the joint plan area and the approach being taken should be clearly set out in the plan. The approach of the JCS authorities is to plan to meet the development needs of Gloucester and Cheltenham in and adjoining the two urban areas through the proposed urban extensions; no wider provision will be made elsewhere within Tewkesbury Borough to meet these unmet needs. Given the Joint Core Strategy authorities are planning together to meet need, the supply of housing is considered in terms of the JCS area as a whole in the context of this approach. This is particularly important given the geography of the authorities and their administrative boundaries. Therefore when assessing five year housing land supply, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 47, housing requirements and supply will be tested in relationship to the requirements and supply of the three authorities taken together.
- 4.3** A key issue which has been a challenge to the JCS councils is the relationship of potential sites located to the South of Gloucester, falling outside the JCS area within the administrative area of Stroud. Cheltenham submitted representations to the Submission version of the Stroud Local Plan which sought to gain contribution from potential development to help meet the OAN of the JCS. Cheltenham was represented at the Stroud examination on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014. The outcomes of this examination are awaited.
- 4.4** To take forward the duty to co-operate the JCS councils have entered into a statement of co-operation with Stroud District Council, a copy of this statement can be viewed [http://www.stroud.gov.uk/info/plan\\_strat/CDA6\\_Duty\\_to\\_Co-operate\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/info/plan_strat/CDA6_Duty_to_Co-operate_Statement.pdf)

## **5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1** Before reaching the current stage of the draft JCS, a range of alternative options have been considered and tested in terms of the overall strategy, strategic policies and strategic site allocations. The draft JCS has also been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal and through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. These are outlined in the separate Sustainability Appraisal document.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1** If approved by all three Councils, the Pre-Submission JCS will be published for a period of 6 weeks (dates to be confirmed). Details on procedures and the test of soundness can be viewed via the following links [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/ldf\\_dpd\\_soundness\\_guide.pdf](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/ldf_dpd_soundness_guide.pdf) [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/dpd\\_procedure\\_guide.pdf](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/dpd_procedure_guide.pdf) . Any person may make representations on the plan and those made in accordance with the representations procedure will be considered at the independent examination.
- 6.2** The consultation period will be widely publicised using all relevant media sources.

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

### **What happens next?**

- 7.1** Following publication, the three Councils will consider representations received and where appropriate make minor changes to the JCS prior to submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination. At this stage there will be the option to make minor changes to the

JCS, however in line with the NPPF, PPG and statutory regulations the Councils should not be making significant changes. Review of the representations received to the JCS Pre Submission will be managed through the JCS programme arrangements and representations packaged and passed to the Inspector considering the examination of the JCS.

**7.2** The timetable for the production of the plan can be viewed on the dedicated JCS website at [www.gct-jcs.org](http://www.gct-jcs.org) . The timetable from this point onwards is as follows:

Pre-Submission Publication	Summer 2014
Submission of the JCS to Secretary of State	Winter 2014
Examination	Spring 2015
Adoption	Summer 2015

**7.3** Because the JCS is a strategic plan it provides the strategic context to inform district plan policies which will supplement the Core Strategy in a number of areas and provide local detail. Because the new district plans have not yet been prepared it will be necessary in the meantime to retain parts of the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan and the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan second review and Gloucester Local Plan where they accord with the NPPF and JCS. The council mandates officers to identify and save these policies where necessary. These retained parts of the current local plans and the JCS along with County plans on Minerals and Wastes constitute the development plan going forward.

**8. RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**8.1** The JCS provides a comprehensive basis for reviewing existing land use, transportation, social, economic and environmental policy covering the Borough. It will address all of the Council's outward facing priorities and objectives.

**9. RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**9.1** The National Planning Policy Framework.

**10. RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

**10.1** The three Councils agreed to prepare a Joint Core Strategy in July 2008, approved the 'Issues and Key Questions' document for public consultation in September 2009 and approved the 'Developing the Preferred Option' document for public consultation on October/November 2011. The three Councils also agreed to continue with the preparation of the JCS in December 2012. The three Councils approved the Draft JCS in September 2013.

**11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

**11.1** To agree the Pre-Submission JCS for publication to enable the Council and its partner authorities, to meet the timetable for preparation of the JCS.

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<p><b>Appendices</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gloucester, Cheltenham &amp; Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy Pre Submission (Circulated to all members in hard copy)</li> <li>2. Draft JCS Consultation Response Report</li> <li>3. Note of meeting between Members and DCLG 21<sup>st</sup> March 2014</li> <li>4. Addendum – JCS Sustainability Appraisal</li> <li>5. Habitats Regulations Assessment Report</li> <li>6. Summary of changes made to policies</li> <li>7. Changes in policy numbers between draft JCS and JCS Pre Submission</li> <li>8. Schedule of Member involvement in JCS preparation</li> </ol>
<p><b>Background information</b></p>	<p>All background information can be viewed via the JCS website at <a href="http://www.gct-jcs.org">www.gct-jcs.org</a></p>