

APPLICATION NO: 26/00763/FUL		OFFICER: Mrs Victoria Harris
DATE REGISTERED: 15th May 2026		DATE OF EXPIRY: 10th July 2026 Extension of time: 27/07/2026
DATE VALIDATED: 15th May 2026		DATE OF SITE VISIT:
WARD: St Peters		PARISH:
APPLICANT:	Cheltenham Borough Council	
AGENT:	Adapt Architects Ltd	
LOCATION:	24 Alstone Avenue Cheltenham Gloucestershire	
PROPOSAL:	Proposed external rear and side wall insulation with a rendered finish to properties at Nos. 24, 25, 33, 37, 41, 48, 53, and 54 Alstone Avenue.	

RECOMMENDATION: Permit



This site map is for reference purposes only. OS Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Cheltenham Borough Council 100024384 2007

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application seeks consent for the addition of rear and side external insulation to Nos. 24, 25, 33, 37, 41, 48, 53, and 54 Alstone Avenue.
- 1.2 The plans have been revised in response to concerns raised by officers and neighbours regarding the principle of rendering the front of the properties. The rendering of the front elevations has been omitted from the proposal, with only the side and rear elevations now proposed to be rendered.
- 1.3 The application is being considered by the Planning Committee as Cheltenham Borough Council is both the applicant and the landowner.
- 1.4 Members will likely recall recent applications for similar works to other properties in the town that have also been presented to the Planning Committee. This application forms part of the Council's ongoing programme of upgrades to its housing stock across the town.
- 1.5 An extension of time has been agreed with the applicant's agent to allow the application to be considered by the Planning Committee.

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Constraints:

Airport Safeguarding over 45m
Principal Urban Area
Non Contact Residents Association

Relevant Planning History:

None

3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2 Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 Decision-making
Section 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 12 Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Adopted Cheltenham Plan Policies

D1 Design
SL1 Safe and Sustainable Living

Adopted Joint Core Strategy Policies

SD3 Sustainable Design and Construction
SD4 Design Requirements
SD14 Health and Environmental Quality

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Residential Alterations and Extensions (2008)
Cheltenham Climate Change (2022)

4. CONSULTATIONS

See appendix at end of report

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1** In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, letters were sent to all adjoining neighbouring properties. A total of 12 neighbouring properties were notified.
- 5.2** A total of 23 representations were received in response to the publicity. The comments are available to view on Public Access; however, in summary, the issues raised relate to the following:
- Rendering the front of the properties is out of keeping with the character of Alstone Avenue
 - Harm to the character and appearance of Alstone Avenue
 - Loss of important architectural features and traditional materials
 - Alternative sustainability measures should be considered, including solar panels, triple glazing, and internal insulation
 - Not all properties within the terrace received notification letters, and no site notice was displayed
 - Potential disturbance arising from construction works
 - The potential for damp to affect neighbouring properties
- 5.3** Following the receipt of revised plans, 23 neighbouring properties were reconsulted, including those that were not originally notified but had submitted comments.
- 5.4** A total of 2 representations have been received in response to the second round of consultation. The comments are available to view on Public Access; however, in summary, they relate to the following:
- Lack of detail in the submitted information.
 - Potential damp issues.
 - Visual impact of the proposed development.
 - Lack of public consultation.

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 Determining Issues

- 6.2** The main considerations in relation to this application are the design, the impact of the proposal on neighbouring amenity, and sustainability.

6.3 Revised plans

- 6.4** The application originally proposed external wall insulation with a rendered finish to the front elevations of the properties. This was considered to represent unacceptable development that failed to adequately respond to its context. The introduction of external wall insulation to the front elevations, incorporating a full rendered finish, would have

resulted in a new facing material being introduced to this section of Alstone Avenue, which is otherwise characterised by a consistent appearance of red brick residential properties.

6.5 As a result, the proposal would have failed to respect the prevailing character of the street scene and would have appeared both jarring and incongruous. Furthermore, the use of a rendered finish would have disrupted the visual balance of the terrace and would not be in keeping with the appearance of surrounding properties within the immediate vicinity.

6.6 Revised plans have since been received, and the proposal for wall insulation with a rendered finish to the front elevations has been removed. The application now proposes external wall insulation with a rendered finish to the side and rear elevations only.

6.7 Design and sustainability

6.8 Policy SD4 of the JCS notes how development should “respond positively to, and respect the character of, the site and its surroundings, enhancing local distinctiveness, and addressing the urban structure and grain of the locality”. Furthermore, development “should be of a scale, type, density and materials appropriate to the site and its surroundings”. This is supported through adopted Cheltenham Plan Policy D1 which requires development to ‘complement and respect neighbouring development and the character of the locality.’

6.9 The Cheltenham Climate Change SPD (adopted June 2022), sets out a strategy for decarbonising homes over the next decade. For residential alterations and extensions there is an opportunity to improve the environmental performance of homes through the inclusion of various technologies and features.

6.10 The application proposes the installation of external insulation to a number of residential properties owned by the Council on Alstone Avenue. The properties subject to this application are two-storey terraced dwellings with pitched roofs, finished in red brick. The proposed insulation has a depth of approximately 100mm and will therefore result in a slight increase to the footprint of the properties.

6.11 The supporting statement explains that an external insulation system has been selected in preference to an internal system in order to minimise disruption to residents. It is also noted that this approach will reduce the risk of potential damp and mould issues in the future. In addition, the statement highlights that the works will assist Cheltenham Borough Council in meeting its target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and that the project is supported by the Government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

6.12 In terms of design and finish, the proposed works would result in the side and rear elevations of the properties being finished in semi-rough white render.

6.13 A number of properties within the terraces have already been rendered or painted at the side and rear. As such, the proposed changes to the appearance of the properties, arising from the addition of insulation and rendered finishes, would be in keeping with the established character and appearance of the area.

6.14 In terms of sustainability, officers welcome the introduction of external insulation which will improve the thermal performance of the properties and therefore complies with the aims and objectives of Cheltenham’s Climate Change SPD.

6.15 Impact on neighbouring property

6.16 It is necessary to consider the impact of development on neighbouring amenity. JCS Policy SD14 and Cheltenham Plan Policy SL1 state how development should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties. Matters such as a potential

loss of light, loss of privacy, loss of outlook, noise disturbances and overbearing impact will therefore be considered.

- 6.17** The proposed external insulation has a depth of approximately 100mm and will therefore result in only a marginal increase in the projection of the external walls of the properties. This alteration will have a very limited impact on neighbouring amenity and will not result in any harmful loss of light or outlook. Given the nature of the works, no concerns are raised in respect of privacy.

6.18 Other considerations

Damp

- 6.19** A number of neighbouring properties have raised concerns regarding the potential for damp issues resulting from the proposed external insulation. The applicant's supporting statement advises, "*An external wall insulation (EWI) system has been chosen over internal insulation as disruption to the residents will be limited and the external insulation system significantly reduces the risk of creating consequential damp and mould problems.*"

- 6.20** Whilst these concerns are noted, matters relating to dampness or damage to adjoining properties are not material planning considerations and therefore carry limited weight in the determination of this application. Such issues are private civil matters between landowners and may be addressed under the provisions of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.

Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED)

- 6.21** As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are three main aims:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

- 6.22** Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage, the duty is to have "regard to" and remove OR minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the PSED.

- 6.23** In the context of the above PSED duties, this proposal is considered to be acceptable.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1** Having regard to the above assessment, the proposed revised works are considered acceptable in terms of their design, impact on the character and appearance of the area, and effect on neighbouring amenity. The proposal is also considered to accord with the objectives of Cheltenham's Climate Change SPD in relation to sustainability. Accordingly, the recommendation is to grant planning permission, subject to the conditions set out below.

8. CONDITIONS / INFORMATIVES

- 1 The planning permission hereby granted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The planning permission hereby granted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in Schedule 1 of this decision notice.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order, with or without modification), no cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with insulation, render or tiles, other than that approved as part of this permission, shall be carried out without the prior grant of express planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, having regard to adopted policy D1 of the Cheltenham Plan (2020) and adopted policy SD4 of the Joint Core Strategy (2017).

INFORMATIVES

- 1 In accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and the provisions of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority adopts a positive and proactive approach to dealing with planning applications and where possible, will seek solutions to any problems that arise when dealing with a planning application with the aim of fostering the delivery of sustainable development.

At the heart of this positive and proactive approach is the authority's pre-application advice service for all types of development. Further to this however, the authority publishes guidance on the Council's website on how to submit planning applications and provides full and up-to-date information in relation to planning applications to enable the applicant, and other interested parties, to track progress.

In this instance, having had regard to all material considerations, the application constitutes sustainable development and has therefore been approved in a timely manner.

Consultations Appendix

Building Control

21st May 2026 - This application may require Building Regulations approval. Please contact the office on 01242 264321 or buildingcontrol@cheltenham.gov.uk for further information.

Ward Councillors

9th June 2026 - I am writing in connection with the above planning application. It is a retrofit of external insulation and cladding to eight local authority houses by Cheltenham Borough Council. This forms part of its contribution to the 2030 net carbon zero target. A number of residents on this street have contacted me as their Councillor for the St Peters Ward. I believe there are material considerations that merit further evaluation with this application. This is why I would like to call-in this application for consideration by the Planning Committee. My reasons for requesting this are as follows:

1. Design, Character and Streetscape - These developments out of keeping with the scale, form, materials, or character of the surrounding area.

Alstone Avenue is not in a conservation area but it is a quiet tree lined street of over sixty Edwardian bay-fronted terraced houses. Despite its uniform appearance there is a mix of privately owned as well as private and local authority rented accommodation. The mix of ownership and tenancy is not immediately apparent as the houses are all of the same design.

The proposed external cladding and render of the eight local authority homes will distinguish between the public and private properties in the area. This will not only affect the heritage impact of this tree lined street but may also affect the cohesiveness of the area by creating a visible difference between public and private housing. At the moment this is not apparent as only one property has (1980's style) cladding.

2. Design - Change in external finish type to render from brickwork.

The application will change the appearance of the eight properties from brick with stone bay windows and opening headers to Semi-rough render on approx 100mm insulation. There will also be smooth render in a contrasting colour to the previously stone areas.

The chosen cladding deviates significantly in style from the existing brick frontages of the street. At the moment only one of the sixty plus homes has cladding on the front. As pointed out by many of the public comments - some of the planning recommendations provided are based upon upgrading Victorian housing. However, as these homes were built circa 1905 then they are Edwardian so alternatives may be more suitable due to different materials or building techniques used.

3. Amenity and Living Conditions

There seems to be three reasons given to justify the choice of external insulation over internal alternatives. These are: the need improve energy efficiency, minimising damp to the property and disruption to tenants. While I recognize that these issues are important, I understand that the energy efficiency as well as damp and mould implications are not appropriate material considerations to be made with regard to this planning application.

I have visited the area myself and noticed that the council properties are well maintained and it seems that the brickwork has recently been re-pointed. I believe that using the chosen external cladding and render will deviate from the cohesive street scene currently visible on the avenue.

The final argument for using external insulation is that it minimises the disruption to tenants. However, I do not believe this is strong enough reason to jeopardise the long-term visual impact of the street.

Conclusion

I object to the above planning application and would like this to be called-in for further consideration by the Planning Committee. I believe the external retrofit of the eight properties is not in-keeping with the design, character and streetscape of this unspoilt Edwardian Avenue.

While I appreciate that the properties are not within a conservation area, this change in external materials is significantly different from the brick fronts that currently exist. At the moment there is no obvious, visible distinction between rental and privately owned properties and this gives a cohesive look to the area. This would not be the case if the proposed materials were used on the eight Cheltenham Borough Council properties. I would also like to mention that the recommendations provided in the application are based upon improvements made to Victorian buildings when in fact these houses were constructed after this period.

Cheltenham Civic Society

9th June 2026 - Comments of the Cheltenham Civic Society on 26/00763/FUL

Proposed external wall insulation with a rendered finish to properties at Nos. 24, 25, 33, 37, 41, 48, 53, and 54 Alstone Avenue.

Numbers 10 -55 Alstone Avenue were built in 1904-1905 as model housing to re-house some of the people displaced by GWR's construction of the Honeybourne Line. The rest of the street was built at a similar time, creating a charming tree-lined street of Edwardian bay-fronted brick houses. Even new infill developments like 55a follow this pattern. This gives an attractive uniformity to the appearance of the street, which is clearly important to its residents. This is demonstrated by the number of objections by neighbours to this application.

The external cladding to several of the houses would significantly spoil the coherence of the street as a whole, creating a patchwork of ill-assorted frontages. As well as losing the detail of the brickwork, the carved stone lintels and sills will be lost.

While we commend Cheltenham Borough Council's aims to improve the thermal properties and energy efficiency of its housing stock, we do not believe that external insulation is the best way to go about it. The thick insulation will not be straightforward to install around the bay windows, downpipes, guttering and sills. And where it joins the neighbouring property, there will be a significant step back.

Not only would the proposed cladding detract from the appearance of the individual houses and the street as a whole, but external cladding has not a good success rate. 98% of houses which had external cladding installed as part of a government scheme have needed repairs, often due to problems with damp. In terraced houses, there is a high likelihood of damp creeping in from the neighbouring brickwork.

We recommend that other methods to improve the energy efficiency of these properties are considered. We also recommend the council seeks the advice of its conservation officers.

Adrian Phillips
Chair CCS Planning Forum
9 June 2026

We should like this to be posted as an Objection to the proposed development

Cheltenham Civic Society

25th June 2026 - We are very pleased to see the revised drawings for this scheme. They represent a good compromise which will still improve insulation of the houses in Alstone Avenue but at the same time will retain the key features of the heritage quality of the properties themselves and the character of the whole street. Congratulations to those who helped to bring about this change in the plans.