

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Special Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>30 June 2016</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Joint Core Strategy: Inspector's Interim Report</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>Appendix A: Report to JCS Councils</b>		
	<b>Appendix 1: Inspectors Interim Report</b>		
	<b>Appendix 2: Agenda for JCS Hearings on 6 and 7 July 2016</b>		
	<b>Appendix 3: Draft Plan Indicating Inspectors Recommendations for Strategic Allocations/ Reserve Sites/ Green Belt changes</b>		
	<b>Appendix 3a: Inspector's Review of the Green Belt at North Cheltenham</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the strategic planning document being prepared jointly by Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury Borough Councils to provide a framework for meeting the development needs of the area over the plan period from 2011 to 2031.
- 1.2 This report summarises the Inspector's Interim Report, received on 31st May 2016, following the extensive examination of the JCS that has taken place since its submission to the Secretary of State in November 2014. The Interim Report makes recommendations on main modifications to the JCS on issues that had not been resolved during the examination to date. In general it does not cover proposed main modifications that have already been discussed and proposed through the hearing sessions.
- 1.3 The report sets out the proposed response to enable further discussion on the implications of the Interim Report. This will allow JCS officers to set out the specific consequences and key points arising from the Inspector's recommendations. The report therefore seeks Council approval to accept this proposed response and present these to the Inspector at further hearing sessions to take place on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 As set out at Paragraph 4.3 of Appendix A to this report, the Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (1) Note the Interim Report of the Inspector;
- (2) Agree that the JCS officers attend the July hearings to discuss the Interim Report and the recommended way forward with the Inspector, identifying specific consequences and key points arising from the findings to the Inspector as detailed (within Appendix A) and expressed through the June 2016 Council meetings on this report;
- (3) Agree that a summary of comments made by Members at the Council meetings held by the JCS Authorities be passed to the JCS Inspector for consideration.

## **3.0 Background**

3.1 The document included at Appendix A to this report, has been developed jointly by officers of each of the JCS authorities. It provides a background to the JCS examination process to date, including a summary of the Inspector's previously published Preliminary Findings. The report also presents a detailed summary of the Inspector's recently published Interim Report (received on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016), highlighting the key findings and recommendations. In response to these recommendations JCS officers have proposed an approach to be taken in discussing these with the Inspector through further hearing sessions to take place on the 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> July 2016. It is proposed to identify to the Inspector the specific consequences and key points arising from the Interim Report findings. This will enable officers to develop a way forward for the JCS as it moves towards a Main Modifications version of the plan. Finally, the report sets out the anticipated timetable for the remainder of the examination leading towards adoption.

## **4.0 Consultation**

4.1 Public consultation on the JCS has been extensive throughout its development, with the key consultation stages including:

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

4.2 The Pre-Submission (June 2014) version of the plan was consulted upon during summer 2014 and the Submission JCS (November 2014), with amendments which the JCS team considered to be minor) was submitted to the Secretary of State for its examination in public. The representations to the Pre-Submission (June 2014) JCS were referred to the Inspector for consideration as part of the examination process and it is the Pre-Submission (June 2014) version which the Inspector has been examining.

- 4.3 The examination has been publicly held and those who responded to the Pre-Submission consultation have, amongst others, been able to submit evidence to the examination and appear at hearing sessions.
- 4.4 The main modifications to the JCS, which will be discussed further at the examination, will be subject to consultation later in 2016. This will be subject to a final Main Modifications JCS being approved by each Council for consultation.
- 4.5 Subject to Council approval, the proposed response and modifications to the JCS presented in this report will be discussed further at the additional examination hearing sessions in July 2016. Following this, the additional outcomes from the examination will be reported back to Councils along with a final Main Modifications JCS. Council approval will be sought on the Main Modifications plan for it to undergo a formal public consultation period expected to take place October/November 2016.

## **5.0 Relevant Government Policies**

- 5.1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  
Localism Act 2011  
Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012  
Housing and Planning Act 2016  
National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

## **6.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations**

- 6.1 The JCS is a strategic planning document. The principles of ABCD will be incorporated at the appropriate stage in the planning process.

## **7.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 7.1 There is no reasonable alternative to noting the findings and considering our response at this stage of the Plan making process.

## **8.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 8.1 To agree the proposed response to the outstanding issues raised during the JCS Examination and Inspector's Interim Report to enable the Council and its partner authorities to present the specific consequences and key points of the Inspector's recommendations and discuss the way forward for the Examination. This would form an important step in progressing the JCS towards the formal Main Modifications consultation stage.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 See Section 7 of Appendix A.

*Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.*

## **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 See Section 6 of Appendix A.

*One Legal has been consulted in the preparation of this report.*

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 Delay to the progress of the Joint Core Strategy examination and adoption of the plan, means that the Council will not have an up to date local plan for the area. The absence of the Joint Core Strategy could further 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 through the JCS and other major applications pending that are being hindered by delays in progressing the plan. It is therefore critical that the Examination is advanced as quickly as possible.

## **12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

12.1 The plan making process is open to all parties of the formal consultation processes.

## **13.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Sustainability

13.1 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Planning decisions are required to be made in accordance with an adopted Development Plan. The Plan-led approach to development will help ensure that new development is supported by the necessary facilities and infrastructure to make it sustainable in the long term.

### Staffing & Trade Union

13.2 The examination process and progressing towards main modifications stage will involve a significant amount of officer time and therefore has human resource implications for the Council. This includes attending and giving evidence at hearing sessions and additional work on the plan and its evidence base as the examination progresses.

### Environmental

13.3 Delay to the progress of the Joint Core Strategy could further result in an uncoordinated approach to development. It is important that future growth is planned to ensure that wider combined impacts on the environment and the infrastructure needs of the wider area are taken into account. The comprehensive approach to environmental impacts cannot be fully assessed through incremental and piecemeal growth. 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 JCS 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.

**Supporting documents: Refer to Appendices**