

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>25 October 2018</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy – Issues and Options</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cllr Colin Organ – Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Document</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from Council for publication and consultation of the Joint Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' document.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:

- (1) Approve the JCS Review Issues and Options consultation document (Appendix 1), for public consultation under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (2) Delegate authority to the Head of Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, to make minor amendments to the text of the document and appropriate changes to the design prior to its publication for consultation.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The JCS was adopted in December 2017 with the requirement to conduct a focused review for the following issues:

Policy SD2 – Retail and City / Town Centres:

*'Following adoption of the JCS, this policy will be subject to an immediate review. The single issue review will take approximately two years to complete. It will cover strategic planning matters relating to the three JCS authorities including issues such as a revised assessment of retail needs, market share between different designated centres, city / town centre boundaries, site allocations, primary and secondary shopping frontages and locally defined impact thresholds.'*

Policy REV1: Gloucester and Tewkesbury Housing Supply Review:

*'A partial review of the housing supply for Gloucester and Tewkesbury will commence immediately upon adoption of the JCS. On adoption, the authorities will publish a Local Development Scheme to set out the timescales for completion. The review will cover the allocation of sites to help meet any shortfall in housing supply against the JCS housing requirements for the respective authorities.'*

3.2 It is clear that the JCS authorities are required to undertake a partial review. However, since the adoption of the JCS significant changes in circumstance have occurred.

3.3 Firstly, in July 2018 the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published. Paragraph 22 of the NPPF now requires strategic policies to look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption. In addition, paragraph 33 says:

*'Policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Reviews should be completed no later than five years from the adoption date of a plan, and should take into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.'*

3.4 The adopted JCS plan period is 2011-2031 and a focused review would maintain this. Assuming this review was completed and adopted in 2020 it would only be looking ahead 11 years, rather than the 15 which is now a requirement of the NPPF. So the review would conflict with the NPPF as soon as it was adopted. The current JCS also now needs to be reviewed by 2022. It would be inefficient and confusing to have the focused review and a wider review running at the same time but as separate processes.

3.5 Secondly, delivery at some of the JCS strategic allocations is not happening as quickly as was anticipated when the JCS was adopted. The result is that Cheltenham can no longer demonstrate a five year land supply which has serious implications on determining planning applications. This shortfall in the number of dwellings is a strategic issue and can only be remedied at the JCS level.

3.6 Thirdly, by planning for a longer period it will be possible to leverage more investment into vital infrastructure. Significant highways works are needed to support future growth and by planning for housing need over a longer period of time, it will be possible to secure more money from development. In addition, progressing the JCS review helps to support bids to the Government for external funding to support major infrastructure proposals.

3.7 Fourthly, delivering enough sustainable development to meet needs requires cross border working with authorities outside of the JCS. Stroud and Wychavon in particular will require close cooperation on strategic issues including large scale developments. These authorities are already in the process of reviewing their plans with periods up to 2040. It would therefore be advantageous to align with these plans as closely as possible to ensure complimentary development.

3.8 Finally, the revised NPPF has also made changes to numerous sections outside of those mentioned above. Those changes became a material consideration in

planning decisions with immediate effect. It is therefore necessary and useful to use this review process to look again at all of the JCS policies to make sure they are fully consistent with the revised NPPF.

- 3.9 When all these factors are weighed together it is reasonable and necessary to undertake a full review of the existing JCS policies and not just the focused review required in the existing JCS.

#### Issues and options

- 3.10 The 'Issues and Options' stage of plan making seeks to review and generate feedback on the key issues that are affecting the area and consider some of the options that are available to address them.

- 3.11 The consultation document, provided at Appendix 1, is structured around key themes. It identifies and asks key questions including the following:

- **Scope:** Given the changes to the NPPF and local circumstances in the JCS area, what should the scope of the review be?
- **Timescale:** Over what timeframe should the review plan for?
- **Policies:** What are the strategic policy areas the JCS review plan for?
- **Vision, aims, objectives and issues:** Using the adopted JCS as a starting point, are these still relevant? Are there any new issues the JCS review should consider?
- **Spatial strategy:** On the basis of the different options presented, how can the JCS authorities' best deliver for our future development needs?
- **Homes:** There will be a need to plan for new homes and the starting point is the Government's standard housing calculation methodology. Is there justification for moving away from these figures?
- **Economic development:** The JCS authorities are committed to economic growth. How can the JCS area best provide for the needs of different business sectors and a growing economy?
- **Retail and city / town centres:** Retail and city / town centres are going through a period of significant change – how can the JCS review best plan for its centres so that they remain vital and viable in the future?
- **Sites:** The consultation includes a 'call for sites' and developers, landowners and the community are invited to submit sites that they think could have potential for development. The document also discusses the possibility of known opportunities, for example Ashchurch and West / North West Cheltenham.
- **Infrastructure:** The provision of sufficient infrastructure is essential to support both existing and new communities and key to a successful local economy. What infrastructure needs does the JCS review need to consider?

#### Consultation

- 3.12 The consultation will take place in November and December 2018 for a period of eight weeks. This will be undertaken in accordance with the Statements of Community Involvement of all three authorities and the relevant planning regulations. It is envisaged that consultation events will take place in each authority to help raise awareness of the consultation and to seek feedback. Press releases,

social media channels and council websites will also be used. All relevant consultation bodies will be notified.

- 3.13 Due to recent changes to data protection legislation we will not use any previous database of contacts. This does provide the opportunity to start afresh.
- 3.14 The JCS Review will be subject to future consultation events as the plan progresses, prior to submission to the Secretary of State

#### District plans

- 3.15 Whilst it is necessary for the JCS Review to be progressed, it is important that each of the JCS authorities continue to take forward and adopt their district plans. For Gloucester this is the City Plan and officers are working hard to publish the plan for the Pre-Submission consultation (Regulation 19) in spring 2019, followed by submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

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

- 4.1 The evolution of the JCS Review will be informed by significant community and stakeholder engagement. The general approach the authorities will take is set out in their respective Statements of Community Involvement.

### **5.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1 See Section 6 below.

### **6.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 6.1 As a minimum, the JCS authorities must commence the housing supply review for Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough, and a retail / town centre review for all three authorities. This is a commitment of the adopted JCS and without it the Inspector would have found the JCS to be unsound.
- 6.2 However, for the reasons set out at paragraphs 3.3 – 3.9 above, it is considered necessary to commence a full review. Failure to do so would prejudice, amongst other things, five year housing land supply as well as the ability to make successful bids for external infrastructure funding.

### **7.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

- 7.1 Consultation responses from the Issues and Options consultation will be reviewed and fed into the next stage of the process, likely to be a 'Draft Plan'.
- 7.2 After this, there will be the publication of the Pre-Submission plan (Regulation 19), followed by submission to the Secretary of State.
- 7.3 A revised Local Development Scheme, the document setting out what Development Plan Documents the authority is preparing including the timetable for their completion will be put to the Council for agreement in due course.

## 8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 At present each JCS authority commits £60,000 a year towards a central pot that is used to commission expertise and support the plan-making process. In addition, the JCS authorities have been successful in securing £470,000 of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support joint working.
- 8.2 Resourcing needs are reviewed regularly and fed into each authority's financial plan as necessary.

## 9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Regulation 10A, which was brought into force on 6 April 2018, of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 provides that local planning authorities must complete a review of their local plan development plan documents within five years of the date of the document's adoption and therefore a full review of the JCS needs to be completed by December 2022.
- 9.2 Further, the 2018 NPPF issued on 24 July 2018, provides that plans may need to be revised to reflect policy changes with it has made and that this should be progressed as quickly as possible, either through a partial revision or by preparing a new plan.
- 9.2 In preparing a local plan (or its review), under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012, a local planning authority must notify:
- Specified consultation bodies that may have an interest in the subject of the proposed local plan; and
  - Such residents and other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area which it considers appropriate to invite representations of the subject matter of the local plan which it proposes to prepare and invite them to make representations about what a local plan with that subject ought to contain.
- 9.3 There is no minimum period for consultation at this stage of the plan making process, as opposed to the Pre-Submission stage which requires a minimum of 6 weeks.

## 10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 A risk register has been completed and identifies the following key potential risks;

<b>Pre-Mitigation Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Mitigating Measures</b>
Failure to take forward the JCS Review	High	Med	Partnership working between the JCS authorities.
Lack of financial and officer resources to take forward the JCS Review.	High	Low	Resources committed from the JCS authorities. MHCLG funding to support joint working.

10.2 Furthermore, as set out at Section 5 of this report, failing to take forward the JCS Review would prejudice, amongst other things, five year housing land supplies and the ability to make successful bids for external infrastructure funding.

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

11.1 A PIA 'Screening' has been undertaken and shows that the JCS Issues and Option consultation would not affect a particular group any differently to any other. A full PIA is not therefore required.

### **12.0 Other Corporate Implications**

#### Community Safety

12.1 Not applicable.

#### Sustainability

12.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; meeting economic, social and environmental objectives. These objectives should be delivered through the preparation of local plans.

12.3 It is important the JCS considers and balances these different needs as the plan progresses and crystallises prior to submission. This will be achieved through an ongoing and iterative 'Sustainability Appraisal' (SA) process.

#### Staffing & Trade Union

12.4 Not applicable.

**Background Documents:** None