

PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP

Summary: To review the progress of the Planning and Infrastructure Working Group and planning-related activity.

Recommendation: That the Executive Committee notes the report.

Report by: Simon Joyce, Planning Officer

PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP (PIWG) MEMBERS

- Nigel Adcock, Local Authority Board Member
- David Broad, Parish Council Board Member
- Jon Grantham, SoS Board Member
- Liz Hodges, Parish Council Board Member
- Graham Hopkins, Co-opted Board Member (Chair)
- Cate Le Grice Mack, SoS Board Member
- Caroline Mumford, Cotswold Voluntary Warden
- Ray Sanderson, Parish Council Board Member
- Officers: Simon Joyce, Planning Officer

PIWG MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- The last PIWG meeting was on 12 January 2026. A meeting was scheduled for April 2026, however given the departure of John Mills (Planning Lead) on 31 March 2026, it was decided that this meeting should be cancelled.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI) DATA

- In Q1 (April - June 2026) we provided a substantive response to 92% (12/13) of pro-active consultation on planning applications and appeals, above our primary consultation thresholds, by the original deadline. Our target range is 70-94%.
- By comparison, Q1 2026-2027 saw slightly fewer pro-active consultations above primary consultation thresholds and a similar response rate to Q1 2025-2026 and the full year 2025-2026:
 - Q1 2026-2027 (April – June 2026): 92% (12/13)
 - Q1 2025-2026 (April-June 2025): 94% (17/18)
 - Q1-4 2025/2026 (April 2025 – March 2026): 93% (75/81)

MANAGEMENT PLAN LOCAL MONITORING INDICATORS¹

- **Outcome 1 – Climate Action / Policy CC1 – Climate change mitigation**
 - **Local_10** (Total predicted output from new renewable energy schemes permitted in the Cotswolds National Landscape each year)
 - Q1: 0 MWh per annum
 - For reference the figure for the period Q1 2025/2026 was 3,147MWh and for the period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 7,527.16 MWh.

¹ As set out in Appendix 6 of the [Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030](#). This paper just shows the local, planning-related indicators.

- **Outcome 2 - Working Together / Policy CC3 – Compliance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**
 - **Local_11** (% of decisions that are made in line with the CNL Board recommendations, where the Board has objected):
 - Q1: 0% (0 out of 1).
 - For reference, the average for the period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 71% and for Q1-4 2024/2025 was 83%.
 - **Local_12** (% of decisions, for development management proposals that we have commented on, that explicitly refer to the 'seek to further' duty):
 - Q1: 52% (15 out of 29)
 - For reference, the figure for the period Q1-4 2025-2026 was 30% and for Q1-4 2024/2025 was 19%.
 - **Local_13** (% of decisions (for development management proposals that we have commented on) that, in the CNL's opinion, adequately address the 'seek to further' duty):
 - Q1: 45% (13 out of 29)
 - For reference, the figure for the period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 28% and for Q1-4 2024/2025 was 11%.
- **Outcome 11 – Development and Infrastructure / CE13 – Development and transport principles**
 - **Local_16** (Number of adopted Local Plans with policy-level reference to the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan):
 - 10 out of 15 (i.e. 76%) (No change).
- **Outcome 11 – Development and Infrastructure / CE14 – Major development**
 - **Local_17** (Number of development proposals that the CNL has commented on, which have been permitted, that the Board considers to be major development²):
 - Q1: Two³
 - 2025/26: Three⁴
 - 2024/25: Three⁵

² 'Major development', in this context, is as defined in paragraph N4 and footnote 59 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (i.e. taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the statutory purposes for which the area has been designated or defined).

³ 45 dwellings at Sherston, discharge of condition 22 relating to the permission for Oakley Farm development, Cheltenham

⁴ 125m tall wind turbine, Dyrham, construction of Cable Sealing End Compound at Postlip and discharge of condition at Oakley Farm, Cheltenham.

⁵ 27 dwellings at Tetbury, s.73 application at Oathill Quarry and redevelopment of Avonpark Village care village at Winsley near Bath.

- **Outcome 11 – Development and Infrastructure / CE15 – Development priorities and evidence of need**
 - **Local_18** (Number of new housing units (i.e. dwellings) permitted within the CNL through planning applications that the CNL Board has commented on):
 - Q1: 55
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 116 and Q1-4 2024/2025 was 153.
- **Outcome 11 – Development and infrastructure / CE16 – Waste management and circular economy**
 - **Local_19** (Number of landfill and strategic waste management sites permitted):
 - Q1: 0
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 0 and Q1-4 2024/2025 was 0.

OTHER PLANNING-RELATED DATA

- In Q1, we commented on 16 ‘major’⁶ planning applications.
 - Q1: 16
 - For reference, the figure for the period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 101, Q1-4 2024/2025 was 82 and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 89.
- In Q4, we commented on 28 ‘minor’ planning applications.
 - Q1: 28
 - For reference, the figure for the period Q1-4 2025/2026 was 94, Q1-4 2024/2025 was 96 and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 100.

OTHER PLANNING-RELATED ACTIVITY

- Other planning-related activity since the last PIWG report for the Executive Committee meeting on 19 May 2026 includes:
 - **Local Plan consultations:**
 - **Stroud District Local Plan:** The Board responded to the Council’s Early Scoping Consultation on its new Local Plan in August 2026. In our response we stressed the importance of addressing the ecological and climate emergencies and made recommendations regarding the overall housing requirement for the Local Plan and how the Council should deal with the issue of unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities.
 - **South Warwickshire Local Plan:** Stratford-on-Avon DC and Warwick DC consulted on the Submission Draft of the South Warwickshire Local Plan between July and September. The Board supported most policies within the Submission Draft, in particular Policy DS.14 Protecting the CNL which is substantially based on our model Local Plan policy. We did raise objections however to policies allocating further land at Long Marston Airfield and relating to large-scale renewable energy. We have requested to appear at the examination on these and other matters.

⁶ ‘Major’ development, in this context, is as defined in Part 1, [Article 2](#), of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (i.e. 10+ dwellings, etc.).

- **Wiltshire Local Plan:** The Board responded to the Council's Scoping Consultation on its new Local Plan in September 2026. In the same vein as for Stroud District's consultation, we stressed the importance of addressing the climate and ecological emergencies and health and societal challenges, made suggestions for a number of policies relating to CNL matters (as well as proposing our own model policy) and highlighted our Management Plan policies and associated guidance.
- Further consultations are currently underway on the:
 - Cotswold District Local Plan (Regulation 19 Submission Draft);
 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan (Regulation 19 Submission Draft);
 - Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan (Regulation 19 Submission Draft); and
 - South Worcestershire Local Plan (Scoping Consultation Document).
- **Significant planning-related decisions (since the last Executive Committee meeting):**
 - Retrospective change of use from agriculture to concrete batching facility, Sherington (Cherwell DC ref. 26/01177/F): This application sought retrospective permission for a large concrete batching facility located on the Escarpment between Sherington and Edgehill. The Board expressed concerns regarding landscape and visual impact and impact on tranquillity and dark skies and raised a holding objection asking for further assessment of these matters. The Council refused the application in September 2026, one of the reasons for refusal being that the operation does not conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the CNL.
 - Outline planning application for up to 73 dwellings, Land north of Taits Hill Road, Stinchcombe (Stroud District, appeal ref. 6002408): The Board supported the Council's refusal of this application and provided written evidence to the public inquiry. In dismissing the appeal, the Inspector agreed with the Council and the Board's view that the development would give rise to unacceptable harm to the setting of the CNL, including views to and from the Escarpment, one of the CNL's special qualities.
 - Delivery of student accommodation, Eastern Sports Field, University of Bath (BANES Council ref. 25/03757/EFUL). This site is allocated for purpose-built student accommodation in the BANES Core Strategy, however the Board raised a holding objection on the basis that the development by virtue of its scale, design and massing (larger than that specified in the Core Strategy) gave rise to detrimental effects on the CNL over and above the allocated development. As such it had not been demonstrated the exceptional circumstances for major development within the CNL required by NPPF paragraph 190. We made recommendations to moderate these detrimental effects to an extent to which they would have been acceptable. The Council disagreed with this view and considered that there were no *significant* detrimental effects and that the scheme was acceptable and they had sought to further the purpose of NL designation. The application was approved by BANES Planning Committee.
 - 114 dwellings and replacement sports pitches, Milestone Ground, Broadway (Wychavon DC ref. W/25/00107/FUL): Though the site is allocated in the South Worcestershire Development Plan, this application sought to increase the quantum of housing significantly above the

allocation. The Board objected to the application as this increase led to parts of the site being developed where views to the Escarpment would be blocked and views from the Escarpment would be further impacted. The Council disagreed and considered that the incremental harm would not be so significant as to outweigh the benefits of the proposal, particularly in the context of a lack of five-year housing land supply. Accordingly, the application was approved by Wychavon Planning Committee.

- **Significant planning applications that we have objected to (since the last Executive Committee meeting):**
 - **S.26/0451/OUT: Erection of 30 dwellings, Land south of Cirencester Road, Minchinhampton (Stroud District Council):** The Board objected to this application, considering that the proposal comprised major development within the CNL for the purposes of paragraph 190 of the NPPF. We considered that it had not been demonstrated that the required exceptional circumstances exist and the development would not be in the public interest.
 - **26/01238/EOUT: Up to 200 dwellings, Parcel 4234, Combe Hay, Bath (Bath and North East Somerset Council):** Although this proposal reduces the number of dwellings proposed for this allocated site from that included in the dismissed appeal from 2025, we nonetheless raised a holding objection requesting further information or clarification from the Applicant in order that the landscape and visual impact of the proposal can be adequately assessed.
 - **26/00613/OUT: 50 dwellings, Land to the East of Nostle Road, Northleach (Cotswold DC):** The Board raised a holding objection to this application, considering that the proposal comprised major development within the CNL for the purposes of paragraph 190 of the NPPF. We considered that it had not yet been demonstrated that the required exceptional circumstances exist and the development would not be in the public interest. We outlined that whilst we consider that the site is suitable in principle for development, the scale and extent of the proposal should be reduced in order to achieve the aims outlined within the Council's SHELAA Site Assessment's proposed site design brief and would welcome the opportunity to comment on a revised scheme were one to be submitted.
- **Miscellaneous:**
 - **Lime Down Solar Park Development Consent Order Examination:** Simon has spent significant time on this examination, participating at Issue Specific Hearing on 15 September, submitting representations on behalf of the Board in May and June and is currently preparing further representations and inputting into a Statement of Common Ground with the applicant for submission at the end of September. Whilst the applicant has removed panels from more areas in response to our comments, the Board's objection to the scheme remains, principally due to the incompatibility of routing the large numbers of construction vehicles through the CNL with its tranquillity. The examination ends in mid-October.
 - **Recruitment of Head of Strategic Planning:** The recruitment process for the Head of Strategic Planning is ongoing. A round of recruitment

culminated in three candidates being interviewed for the role, however none were successful.

- **Southern Protected Landscapes Planning Officers Group (SPLPOG):** Simon attended the SPLPOG meeting on 22 April.
- **National Landscapes Association Planning Working Group:** Simon attended the NLA PWG meetings on 27 May, 24 June and 29 July.
- **RTPI Strategic Planning in Gloucestershire:** Simon attended and contributed to the workshop session on 2 June.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- No decisions required.

NEXT STEPS

- Key work areas over the next few months will include:
 - Recruiting and onboarding a Head of Strategic Planning;
 - Responding to Local Plan consultations including:
 - Bath & North East Somerset Draft Local Plan;
 - Cotswold District Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation;
 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation.
 - Concluding work for the Lime Down Solar Park Development Consent Order examination.
 - Responding to initial consultations from the Applicant on an emerging proposal for a large solar farm, part of which may impact the setting of the CNL and which would be examined under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project regime.
- Next PIWG meeting – meeting to be held during November/December, date to be confirmed.

NO SUPPORTING PAPERS

SEPTEMBER 2026