

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
- Jon Grantham, SoS Board Member
- Liz Hodges, Parish Council Board Member
- Graham Hopkins, Secretary of State (SoS) 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
(Planning Lead role is currently vacant following John Mills' departure from the CNL at the end of March 2026)

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 Q4 (January - March 2026) we provided a substantive response to 96% (23/24) of pro-active consultation on planning applications and appeals, above our primary consultation thresholds, by the original deadline. Our target range is 70-94%.
- Q4 saw the largest number of pro-active consultations on applications above our primary consultation thresholds for the year:
 - Q1 (April – June 2025): 94% (17/18)
 - Q2 (July – September 2025): 89% (16/18)
 - Q3 (October – December 2025): 90% (19/21)
 - **Q4 (January – March 2026): 96% (23/24)**
- By comparison, Q4 2026 saw a similar number of pro-active consultations above primary consultation thresholds and a slightly higher response rate than Q4 2025:
 - Q4 2025 (January-March 2025): 88% (23/26)

- Overall, for April 2025 - March 2026 we provided a substantive response to 93% (75/81) of pro-active consultations on planning applications and appeals, above our primary consultation thresholds, by the original deadline:
 - **Q1-4 2025/2026 (April 2025 – March 2026): 93% (75/81)**
- By comparison this is a slightly higher response rate compared to the two previous years:
 - Q1-4 2024/2025 (April 2024 - March 2025): 89% (80/90)
 - Q1-4 2023/2024 (April 2023 – March 2024): 86% (86/100)

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: 3,147 MWh per annum
 - Q2: 0
 - Q3: 4,380 MWh per annum²
 - **Q4: 0.16 MWh per annum**
 - **Q1-4 total: 7,527.16 MWh per annum**
 - For reference the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 0.
- **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: 66% (2 out of 3).
 - Q2: 100% (5 out of 5)
 - Q3: 50% (3 out of 6)
 - **Q4: - (0 out of 0)**
 - **Q1-4: 71% (10 out of 14)**
 - For reference, the average for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 83% and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 56%.
 - **Local_12** (% of decisions, for development management proposals that we have commented on, that explicitly refer to the 'seek to further' duty):
 - Q1: 19% (6 out of 31)
 - Q2: 31% (8 out of 26)
 - Q3: 33% (12 out of 36)
 - **Q4: 36% (8 out of 22)**
 - **Q1-4: 30% (34 out of 115)**
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 19% and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 10%.

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.

² This figure relates to planning permission granted for a 2MW wind turbine at Dyrham (SGC ref. P25/00901/F). No estimated annual figure was stated within the application, but assuming a 25% capacity factor, such a turbine would produce somewhere in the region of 4,380 MWh per annum.

- **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: 19% (6 out of 31)
 - Q2: 27% (7 out of 26)
 - Q3: 33% (12 out of 36)
 - **Q4: 32% (7 out of 22)**
 - **Q1-4: 28% (32 out of 115)**
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 11% and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 6%.

- **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%) (This is the same as for 2024/25 because one new Local Plan was adopted 2025/26, the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review, but the previous version already made policy-level reference to the Management Plan).

- **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 development³):
 - 2025/26: Three⁴
 - 2024/25: Three⁵

- **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: 0
 - Q2: 1
 - Q3: 52
 - **Q4: 63**
 - **Q1-4: 116**
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 153 and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 16.

- **Outcome 11 – Development and infrastructure / CE16 – Waste management and circular economy**
 - **Local_19** (Number of landfill and strategic waste management sites permitted):
 - 2025/26: 0 (For reference, 2024/25 = 0)

³ 'Major development', in this context, is as defined in paragraph 190 and footnote 67 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 purposes for which the area has been designated or defined).

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.

OTHER PLANNING-RELATED DATA

- In Q4, we commented on 31 'major'⁶ planning applications.
 - Q1: 22
 - Q2: 20
 - Q3: 28
 - **Q4: 31**
 - **Q1-4 101**
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period Q1-4 2024/2025 was 82 and for Q1-4 2023/2024 was 89.

- In Q4, we commented on 22 'minor' planning applications.
 - Q1: 24
 - Q2: 25
 - Q3: 23
 - **Q4: 22**
 - **Q1-4: 94**
 - For reference, the figure for the equivalent period 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 20 January 2026 includes:
 - **Local Plan consultations:**
 - **Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan:** The Board provided a comprehensive response to the Topic Papers Consultation for the emerging joint Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan highlighting a number of concerns regarding the scale and location of growth proposed and its potential significant impacts on the natural beauty of the CNL. It is considered that this adverse impact provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area, in line with paragraph 11b(i) of the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular, the Board recommended that Site Opportunity 17 (Land north of Bishops Cleeve) should be removed and that Site Opportunities 6 (South Cheltenham) and 14 (Tewkesbury Garden Communities) should be reduced in scale and extent. Site Opportunity 4 (Land at Whaddon) is also considered to be potentially unsound due to both the impacts on the CNL and the uncertainty regarding whether it will be included in the Stroud District Local Plan and development at Shurdington should be moderated.
 - **Cotswold District Local Plan:** The Strategic Planning Policy Manager at Cotswold DC asked for the Board's comments on proposed site allocations. Whilst the Board's Officers considered some of the draft allocations to be potentially acceptable, subject to appropriate landscape mitigation, there are several allocations that the Board has raised concerns about, including major development (in the context of

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.).

paragraph 190 of the NPPF) at Andoversford and Chipping Campden and the scale of development proposed at Blockley, Cirencester, Kemble, Mickleton, Moreton-in-Marsh and Willersey.

- **South Gloucestershire Local Plan:** The Board has agreed a Statement of Common Ground with South Gloucestershire Council and the Badminton Estate regarding the draft allocations of sites on the Estate's land ahead of the Local Plan examination between May and July 2026.
- **Significant planning-related decisions (since the last Executive Committee meeting):** None
- **Significant planning applications that we have objected to (since the last Executive Committee meeting):**
 - **25/04010/OUT: Erection of 170 dwellings, Land north of Broadway Road, Mickleton (Cotswold District Council):** The Board considered that the proposal would give rise to significant adverse landscape, and in particular, visual effects on the CNL and its setting as well as adverse impacts upon its special qualities. The proposal would not conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the CNL and its setting and the development has not been sensitively located and designed to avoid and minimise adverse impacts on the CNL. Furthermore, the application would bring about a disproportionate increase in the size of the village, and the Board shares the concerns of the local community regarding the impact of this development on local facilities and services.
 - **6002408: Outline application for up to 73 dwellings, Land North of Taits Hill Road, Stinchcombe (Stroud DC):** In submissions made to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the applicant's appeal, the Board supported the Council's refusal of this application as due to the quantum and location of development proposed, the proposal would not conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the CNL and would conflict with the requirement of paragraph 189 of the NPPF that development within the setting of the National Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid and minimise adverse impacts.
 - **25/04068/FUL: Erection of 33 residential dwellings, Land Parcel South Of The Sheppey, George Lane, Chipping Campden (Cotswold DC):** The Board considers that the proposal comprises major development within the CNL for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 190 and therefore permission should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest. For the reasons outlined below we consider that the major development 'tests' outlined at paragraph 190 have not been passed to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances exist and that the development would be in the public interest.
- **Miscellaneous:**
 - **Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation:** The Board submitted detailed comments on the Government's consultation of a draft revised National Planning Policy Framework in early March. The pre-eminent issue cited was the 'standard method' for determining housing need, but we also provided detailed comments on all matters relating to Protected Landscapes, supporting some of the proposed changes but strongly objecting to others. John Mills also provided commentary upon and input into the consultation response submitted by the National Landscapes Association. A new NPPF is anticipated later this year.

- **Reforms to the Statutory Consultee System consultation:** The Board responded to this Government consultation in January, having liaised with the Chilterns Conservation Board. The response recommended that the CNL Board and the Chilterns Conservation Board should be made statutory consultees, under the Town and Country Planning Act 2000 regime, in relation to proposals that are likely to affect the respective National Landscapes. We also recommended that the Gardens Trust and Historic England should retain their current statutory consultee status and remit.
- **Meeting with Board’s local authority appointees and parish council appointees to discuss issues relating to housing:** This meeting was held on 16 March where John Mills provided a detailed presentation regarding housing development pressures in the CNL. John provided the slides and a link to the recording of the meeting for circulation at parish level and to relevant local authority members.
- **Southern Protected Landscapes Planning Officers Group (SPLPOG):** John chaired the SPLPOG meeting on 21 January.
- **NGED West Midlands Undergrounding Steering Group:** John attended the meeting of the steering group on 7 January.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

- No decisions required.

NEXT STEPS

- Key work areas over the next few months will include:
 - Recruiting and onboarding a new Planning Lead to replace John Mills;
 - Responding to Local Plan consultations including:
 - South Warwickshire Local Plan publication draft;
 - Bath & North East Somerset Draft Local Plan;
 - Cotswold District Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation;
 - West Oxfordshire Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation.
 - Participating in the Lime Down Solar Park Development Consent Order examination.
- Next PIWG meeting - date to be confirmed.

NO SUPPORTING PAPERS

APRIL 2026