EVIDENCE PAPER: RURAL HOUSING
DECEMBER 2014

COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

EVIDENCE PAPER –RURAL HOUSING

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

TOPIC PAPER – RURAL HOUSING

1. Context

1.1 The emerging Local Plan Development Strategy proposes 17 sustainable settlements[1] where sufficient sites have been identified to deliver the District's objectively assessed housing needs to 2031. Cotswold District, however, is a large, primarily rural area, and another 140 or so villages ('smaller settlements') lie beyond the 17 main service centres. Collectively, these smaller settlements and other rural areas house about 40% of the District's population.

1.2 Many of the smaller settlements lack services and facilities, and are relatively 'remote' from other centres. However, a significant number of respondents to the Preferred Development Strategy have suggested that the Plan should include policies to facilitate more development in rural settlements to help sustain those communities. While many such representations were submitted by residents from the main service centres, some came from the rural areas themselves.

1.3 A policy was proposed in the Local Plan Preferred Development Strategy (May 2014), which was aimed at facilitating development in settlements beyond the main service centres (see Appendix A).

1.4 The current Local Plan essentially precludes new-build open market housing beyond the development boundaries drawn around Cirencester and the nine Principal Settlements (i.e. smaller settlements and rural areas). However, Policy 19 does state that such housing could be acceptable if it would help to meet the needs of those living in rural areas. The accompanying text clarifies that this provision is intended to offer a degree of flexibility for meeting needs rather than demands in rural areas, and that the numbers involved are likely to be very small. Besides affordable housing (Policy 21), the current Local Plan allows for the following housing in smaller settlements and rural areas:

- the replacement or sub-division of existing dwellings;
- housing resulting from conversions of rural buildings; and
- new dwellings specifically tied to agricultural, forestry, equestrian, or other occupational uses..

2. National Planning Policy

2.1 Facilitating acceptable housing development in rural communities is, to some extent, supported by national planning policy, as follows:

2.2 NPPF Para 17:

*"Planning should…not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives…take account of the different roles and character of different areas … recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and **supporting thriving rural communities** within it…actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and **focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable**."*

2.3 NPPF Para 28:

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[1] Siddington was discounted prior to preparation of the December 2014 consultation due to a lack of completions since 2011, very few planning permissions, and no preferred sites for allocation. This reduced the number of sustainable settlements from 18 to 17. Appendix B refers to 18 settlements, which was correct at the time the Smaller Settlements workshop took place.

*"Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a **positive approach to sustainable new development...** promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship."*

2.4   NPPF Para 34:

*"Plans and decisions should ensure **developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised** and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. However this needs to take account of policies set out elsewhere in this Framework, **particularly in rural areas**."*

2.5   NPPF Para 49:

*"**Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development...**"*

2.6   NPPF Para 54:

*"In rural areas, exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing **some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs**."*

2.7   NPPF Para 55:

*"To promote **sustainable development** in rural areas, housing should be located where it will **enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities**. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, **development in one village may support services in a village nearby**".*

2.8   NPPG Paragraph: 001Reference ID: 50-001-20140306.

*"**It is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements**. This is clearly set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, in the core planning principles, the section on supporting a prosperous rural economy and the section on housing.*

*A thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. **Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.***

*Assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or neighbourhood plan process. **However, all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas - and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence.***

The National Planning Policy Framework also recognises that different sustainable transport policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas."

3.   Selected Appeal Decisions

3.1 *"Notwithstanding the current status of the emerging* [local plan]*, the approach of seeking to **allocate most new housing to locations where there is good access to local services and a choice of transport modes is a well-established means of working towards achieving sustainable development.** It accords with current guidance in the Framework…"* (para. 9)

3.2 *"The Council's statement explains that…villages were scored according to the number of key services within approximately 800m walking distance, and that secondary services and access to public transport were also taken into consideration. Even so, having regard to the Framework, it seems to me that **access to public transport and the location of each settlement in relation to others are factors of particular importance in assessing the sustainability or otherwise** of the appeal proposal."* (para. 10)

3.3 *"Moreover, paragraph 55 of the Framework advises that, to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The appeal proposal would accord with this policy guidance, given that **occupiers of the proposed bungalows could help to support services and facilities** in Norton and in nearby Harvington. This would be a benefit of the proposal, as would boosting the supply of housing (including **two affordable housing units). These are benefits which weigh heavily in favour of the proposal***." (para. 13)

APP/F1610/A/12/2173097 (9 January 2013) – 50 dwellings at Kemble Top Farm

3.4 *".. **it would be wrong to exaggerate the advantages of additional housing for the existing village facilities including the shop, the school and the pub.** There is no evidence that any are under threat for want of a local 'customer base' and all are ultimately susceptible to issues of management quality in terms of their ongoing survival, including parental choice in the case of the school and customer choice in respect of commercial service providers. It is to be expected in that context that additional families and spending power would be welcomed by those responsible for running such facilities, but **there is no guarantee that such an increment would, of itself, increase their usage**…Nevertheless, the fact of their existence is an advantage in sustainability terms by comparison with locations where there are no such facilities and hence no opportunity to satisfy everyday needs locally**."* (para. 74)

3.5 *"Notwithstanding the pace of technological change in motor car propulsion techniques, I do not subscribe to the view that numerous short car journeys are necessarily virtuous by comparison with fewer longer journeys. But **it is nevertheless pertinent that Kemble is not remote from Cirencester and its facilities. Use of the car is a fact of life in rural areas**, as the Framework recognises, but Kemble does offer a choice of transport modes, including to Cirencester itself, as well as local facilities that facilitates more sustainable choices for those who opt to make them. **I therefore consider Kemble to be an inherently sustainable location, certainly by comparison with more remote rural settlements**…"* (para.84)

3.6 *"It is a core planning principle of the Framework to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and **focus development in locations which are or can be made sustainable**… bearing in mind the rural nature of much of the Cotswold District in any event, I do not consider that the proposed development, in locational terms, would fundamentally compromise that principle. On the contrary, in the Cotswold context, where settlements are dispersed*

and significant travel is characteristic, I consider it would accord with it relatively well." *(para. 85)*

APP/F1610/A/13/2208701 (25 February 2014) – 1 dwelling at Withington

3.7 *"…the village of Withington is within a reasonable distance of the appeal site, and its facilities are accessible by foot and bicycle. However **the village has only a limited range of facilities** [primary school and pub, but no shop or post office] **and the public transport timetable is very limited.** That being the case it is likely that any future residents would be largely dependant on private transport to access larger towns such as Cheltenham for employment and for their day to day requirements."* (para. 8)

3.8 *"…My conclusion on this point is also strengthened by the emerging Local Plan...**it does not…consider that the village of Withington is a sustainable location** for new open market housing."* *(para. 9)*

APP/F1610/A/14/2221427 (17 September 2014) – 1 dwelling on the edge of Cowley village

3.9 *"The building of a single dwelling would generate some temporary economic / financial benefits during the construction phase and the occupants of the dwelling would provide support, albeit limited, for businesses in local towns and villages. **The Framework advocates … the provision of housing to meet the needs of present and future generations and the creation of a high quality built environment with accessible local services.** The provision of a single life time home would provide some benefit although the overall social gain would be very limited."* (para. 10)

3.10 *"Under the heading of 'Environmental Role' the appellant argued, amongst other things, that the site comprises a sustainable location. **There are few facilities in the small village, and although there is a hotel, public house and church, the majority of services, including shops, banks, and medical services would require travelling to Cirencester and Cheltenham.** There is a bus stop on the A345, some 1.5km from the site, however, due to the distance, the return uphill climb and the unlit nature of the narrow road **it is not unreasonable to assume that, faced with such a journey, people would likely travel by car. I conclude that the site, remote from services and facilities, is not in a sustainable location**."* (para. 11)

3.11 *"To conclude, the Framework states that to promote sustainable development, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. **To approve schemes in locations such as this has the potential to seriously undermine planning policies designed to create sustainable patterns of development.** On the basis of the information before me the construction of this single dwelling … remote from facilities and services would not satisfy the Framework's definition of sustainable development. The benefits arising from the proposal would be limited and would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse impacts of this development ..."* (para. 18)

4. Smaller Settlements Engagement

4.1 A community engagement event was held on 28th May 2014, which included participants from 16 parish councils and several district ward councillors. The purpose of the event was to explore further, with community representatives, options for a rural housing policy in smaller settlements. The event was run independently by Jeff Bishop (Place Studio), supported by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

4.2 Some of the main conclusions to arise from the events were:

- A policy would increase prospects for some development (e.g. to address local need) while also preventing likelihood of inappropriate proposals coming forward.
- Having a procedure in place will help to avert inappropriate proposals at an early stage. This would save applicants and communities time and resources.
- A rigorous and detailed set of pro-forma questions, combined with a requirement for all evidence to be validated by parish councils/ meetings, would ensure applications would be assessed against the most accurate information.
- Contributions towards infrastructure were recognised as extremely important, though difficulties of delivery were recognised.
- Working together in 'clusters' can help to pool resources,

4.3 The full output from the event is included at Appendix B.

5. Conclusions

5.1 There is no evidence to suggest that small-scale residential development saves facilities or encourages new ones to open. Conversely, there is evidence of shops and schools closing, in sizable villages (e.g. Kempsford, Avening), and where significant housing had been allowed (e.g. Coates, Weston-sub-Edge). That said, there is a desire in rural areas to have a more flexible approach towards residential development in smaller settlements to help sustain rural communities.

5.2 The NPPF does not leave an 'open door' to unsustainable residential development in villages, particularly if it would generate significant transport movements and increase the need to travel.

5.3 It is clear that sustainability remains the overarching principle for all rural housing developments and that rural housing should be located in those settlements where it would enhance/maintain the vitality of rural communities. This is what the emerging Local Plan is seeking to achieve by concentrating development on the 17 most sustainable settlements in the District. The SHLAA indicates there is sufficient land identified in those settlements to deliver the District's objectively assessed housing needs. The Wychavon appeal inspector (see 3 above) acknowledged that allocating most new housing in locations where there is good access to local services and a choice of transport modes is a sustainable approach.

5.4 However, the third paragraph of the NPPG guidance (see section 2 above) clarifies that, potentially, any settlement could play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas and, therefore, Local Plan policies should only restrict housing development in rural settlements where there is robust evidence to support this.

5.5 NPPF para 54 clarifies that local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs." This indicates that the driver for facilitating further housing in rural areas is the need for, and provision of, affordable housing. [N.B. Although the Wychavon appeal inspector clearly deviated from this by allowing just 2 affordable units in a scheme of 8 dwellings, the appeal was allowed in the context of a significant housing supply shortfall, which overrode other considerations].

5.6 The same inspector reasoned that access to public transport and the location of a settlement in relation to others are factors of particular importance in assessing the sustainability or otherwise of rural settlements. The Kemble appeal inspector agreed on the second part of this statement ("…*it is nevertheless pertinent that Kemble is not remote from Cirencester and its facilities"*). However, the public transport argument was somewhat dismissed by the conclusion that *"… Use of the car is a fact of life in rural areas".*

5.7 The Kemble inspector recognised that local services and facilities are important attributes to sustainability (para. 74 of decision). Other inspectors concluded that Withington's facilities (school and pub, limited public transport, but no shop/ P.O.) and those at Cowley (hotel, pub, church, limited public transport, but no shop/ P.O. or school) were insufficient to be considered sustainable. Both inspectors also concluded that access to local service centres by good public transport services was an important facet of social sustainability.

5.8 Because the more sustainable towns and villages are identified in the Development Strategy, it is logical that only smaller-scale residential development would be appropriate in settlements that are less sustainable. The amount of housing that would be acceptable will vary greatly from one settlement to another and from one site to another. In the absence of development boundaries and site allocations in such settlements, an appropriate scale could be defined in a criteria-based policy. Given the big variations in size and character of rural settlements, a percentage of the existing housing stock is more likely to provide a flexible guide to an acceptable scale of development than would an absolute, fixed number[2].

5.9 However, the high quality landscape and heritage that characterises the District makes it important that any policy on open market rural housing takes into account the cumulative impact of development. While a percentage figure is a potentially pragmatic and flexible approach, it could be perceived by some applicants as a 'minimum target' regardless of the particular circumstances of a locality. The sensitive environment of certain villages may render them unsuitable for any real enlargement; whereas others could, potentially, accommodate more than a notional 10%. The policy, therefore, should require cumulative impacts of housing developments to be considered in the context of the character and constraints of settlements.

5.10 In terms of housing supply, any such development would be additional to the land allocated in the 17 most sustainable settlements. In the case of the latter, evidence indicates that sufficient land exists to deliver the District's objectively assessed housing needs over the plan period.

5.11 6.4% of houses in Cotswold District are second homes[3]. There is a risk that providing opportunities for the development of market housing in attractive, smaller villages could simply fuel the demand for second homes. This would do little to help sustain facilities in these settlements because second homes are usually vacant for significant periods. Housing that meets local needs (affordable and market) is more likely to sustain rural settlements.

6. Proposed Rural Housing Policy

1. Proposals for new-build open market housing will be considered for planning permission within or immediately adjacent to villages[4] that are not identified in

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[2] A figure of up to 10% over 10 years was considered to be an acceptable scale in the "Localism Bill: neighbourhood plans and community right to build Impact assessment"[2]. The relevant paragraph reads as follows: *"On receipt of a Community Right to Build Order, local planning authorities will need to confirm that the application is valid, including that it is … within acceptable development thresholds (i.e. not exceeding 10 per cent over 10 years)…"* http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-010AY.pdf (p.27)

[3] Local Authorities of Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment update (March 2014), paragraph 4.5.

[4] A self-contained collection of dwellings forming a community that is larger than a hamlet, is situated in a rural area, but is not isolated from everyday services and facilities.

the Development Strategy provided there is good public transport access[5] to community services and facilities; it has been demonstrated (if more than one open market dwelling is proposed) that a proven affordable housing need exists in that locality; and the development would:

(a) *demonstrably support or enhance the vitality of the local community;*

(b) *for development that would result in an extension to an existing settlement, it should exhibit the appearance of a natural, organic enlargement of the existing built-up area by being proportionate in size and scale to the village and have regard to neighbouring development in terms of materials, design and positioning;*

(c) *contribute positively to the Local Plan's Strategic Objectives; and*

(d) *in instances where more than one open market dwelling is proposed, include a mix of house types and tenures to meet the needs of the whole community, including affordable dwellings.*

2. Planning applications for rural housing will only be permitted if it is shown that there are clear social, economic or environmental benefits resulting from the development; and it has been demonstrated that there would be no material adverse impacts on one or more of the following criteria:

(a) *the character or appearance of the landscape or the setting of the settlement;*

(b) *the setting, character or appearance of designated or non-designated heritage assets;*

(c) *arboriculture;*

(d) *biodiversity and protected species;*

(e) *best and most versatile agricultural land;*

(f) *highway safety, or would have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the highway network due to a material increase in car-borne commuting;*

(g) *flooding or drainage, either to the application site or the surrounding area; and*

(h) *the amenity of nearby residents, or would result in an unacceptable level of amenity for residents of the proposed development.*

3. Prospective applicants will be expected to complete the pro-forma included at XX and submit this with the planning application.

7. Proposed explanatory text for Rural Housing Policy

7.1 The Local Plan Development Strategy envisages that the majority of new housing development, over the period up to 2031, will take place in the District's 17 most sustainable settlements. Cotswold District, however, is a large, rural area, with 140 or so 'smaller settlements' lying beyond the 17 main service centres. About 40% of the District's population lives in these smaller settlements – mostly villages - and surrounding rural areas.

7.2 Policy XXX potentially applies to any village that is not specifically mentioned in the Development Strategy.

7.3 The majority of these smaller settlements lack services and facilities such as shops and schools, and many are relatively 'remote' from other centres that are better-served. The NPPF (paragraph 54) allows for some open market housing in such settlements to facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs. However, a need has emerged for a policy, which facilitates

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[5] A return daily bus service would be the minimum to constitute good public transport access.

appropriate residential development that would help sustain rural communities. Any resulting residential development would be additional to housing allocated in the most sustainable villages.

7.4   Policy XXX sets out criteria, which proposals would need to satisfy in order for open market housing in villages to meet the principles of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF.

7.5   A proposal would need to respond in a positive way to meeting proven need for housing in the locality.   This might include providing a significant proportion of affordable housing as part of a scheme, or, for a small scheme, a financial contribution towards affordable housing might be more appropriate. The locality might include a cluster of two or more villages within close proximity to one another.

7.6   Evidence will need to be provided in terms of meeting local housing need and how the development responds to the village's distinctiveness.   The latter includes demonstrating the appropriateness of the site itself.   Such evidence will need to be generated through appropriate engagement with the local community via the parish council or parish meeting.   This will enable a consistent and transparent approach to the presentation and evaluation of such schemes. A pro-forma (appendix XX) is the method by which prospective applicants will be required to demonstrate accordance with policy XXX. A wide range of information will be required in order to be able address the challenge of demonstrating appropriateness. However, the work involved will be lessened by spending time engaging with local people. The submission of a completed pro-forma will be required with any planning application.

7.7   Any village that lacks community facilities, especially a shop or limited public transport services, and does not have good public transport access to a local service centre, is unlikely to be a suitable location for new housing.

7.8   Evidence which demonstrates that a proposed development would deliver new, or maintain existing, community facilities – thereby supporting its vitality – would be a material consideration in determining planning applications. This might include a contribution towards the provision, or upkeep, of a village facility.

7.9   Most Cotswold villages have considerable architectural and historic interest, set within fine landscapes. They are particularly sensitive to change. Not all open spaces are suitable infill opportunities; for example, where they make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or setting of the village. Any proposal must be proportionate in scale and designed to blend in with its surroundings. The cumulative effects of more than one development allowed in the same village under this policy will be a material consideration

7.10   Heritage assets may include non-designated buildings.

APPENDIX A - PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: STRATEGY POLICY 23

1.   Subject to local support being demonstrated, development will be considered in sustainable rural communities provided the settlement has been designated for development in conjunction with the community, Parish Council and District Council. Where a need has been identified, development of an appropriate scale will be permitted within, adjoining, or closely related to, the built-up areas of local service centres and villages, taking account of Parish Housing Surveys and Parish Plans, and provided that the development:

   o   contributes to community well-being and to the sustainable social and economic growth of settlements;

   o   helps to protect and/ or enhance existing community facilities, provides new local services, improves local employment opportunities, and/or meets a housing need;

   o   is in scale and in keeping with the site and its setting;

   o   complements local character and protects the natural environment and biodiversity;

   o   is focused in rural settlements;

   o   in the case of market housing, makes sufficient contribution to improving local sustainability through a suitable mix of housing that caters for local needs and delivers community benefits in the form of contributions both to affordable housing for local people and to identified requirements for facilities, services and infrastructure.

2.   The priorities for community benefits will be identified in partnership with the community.

APPENDIX B – REPORT OF WORKSHOP 28th MAY 2014

Report to Cotswold District Council: Smaller Settlements workshop

Westwoods Centre, Northleach

28 May 2014 6.30-9pm

Prepared and run for Cotswold District Council (CDC) by:

Place Studio: *Jeff Bishop and Katie Lea*

with **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council** (GRCC): Marilyn Cox

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INTRODUCTION

As the Cotswold District Local Plan is approaching its final stages, so planning officers have extended their focus beyond the main settlements and allocations to try to include a Smaller Settlements Policy. As a key part of this process, and at the very start, representatives from 32 Parish Councils and Parish Meetings were invited to attend and contribute to this innovative approach (see Appendix 1 for details of attendees). Four CDC Ward Councillors, three planning officers, three external planning experts, a representative of the AONB and one CDC community engagement officer also participated. 25 people attended representing 18 parishes, and another three parishes asked to be kept informed as they could not make the date.

All text in italics, as here, is introduction and commentary by the workshop managers. Everything in plain text is as recorded from participants. There are occasional boxes, as below, with reflective comments from Place Studio and GRCC. The core material – the draft proforma and guidance - will be sent electronically to attendees along with this report.

__Commentary from Place Studio__

There may well still be no development in the smaller settlements, but this policy would create scope for some development (for example to address local need) while also preventing inappropriate development.

COMMUNITY VITALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Workshop Programme

1.   Group work: a) discussion re community vitality and local needs, followed by b) consideration of the social, economic and environmental aspects and the ways in which development could act positively, or in a negative fashion on sustainability of smaller settlements.

2.   Feedback from groups, and initial results from advance task. Further discussion.

3.   Introduction to the overall approach – policy, procedure and initial proforma.

4.   Group work: a) evaluation of the suggested process and the workability of the initial, draft proforma produced to share with settlements. b) Each parish received a plan of their settlement, were asked to imagine a possible site, and then consider how the proforma might work in context.

5.   Feedback on evaluation

In advance of the workshop, Place Studio and GRCC undertook initial research, and this, in discussion with CDC planning officers, guided the materials presented and the tasks prepared. The Community Vitality task was distributed to attendees to identify elements common to smaller settlements (see Appendix 2 for sheet). At the start of the session, this enabled discussion around the nature of provision of services to meet needs, and the way in which that might work differently in smaller settlements.

Once the workshop was underway, small groups comprising representatives from different parishes were asked to consider all three aspects of sustainability – social, environmental and economic – and suggest how any development might affect the sustainability of smaller settlements. This might be positive or negative.

Feedback from Task 1

1a. Community Vitality: summary from advance task

- *Most settlements have their own village hall - Avening has 2!*
- *Some have all of primary school, pub, pre-school provision and a play area; many have some of them.*
- *All but the play areas are used by people from other settlements.*
- *Very few have a Post Office, but where they do that is well used by others.*
- *Typical places to go to for facilities are Cirencester, Northleach, Cheltenham and Andoversford.*
- *Distances to these vary between 1 and 7 miles, averaging around 2-3 miles.*
- *Most villages have other groups/facilities such as a football or social club.*

- *Some have other attractions/facilities eg. farm shop.*
- *There are usually a number of local community groups, which may or may not provide services, eg. WI.*

1b. How development might affect sustainability of smaller settlements

The diagrams below give the collated responses. Where points have +1 or +4 alongside, this shows how many people made the same or very similar comment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS of sustainability

Positive	Negative
- Good/appropriate landscaping +2 - New houses more energy efficient +2 - Appropriate/local building materials +2 - Make interesting +1 - Size and context +1 - Good design +1 - Sustainable construction +1 - Could help biodiversity (of water parks Organic growth - Respect character - Parking - Enhance environment - In keeping - Diverse styles - Mix of house sizes - Re-use of existing buildings - Use of renewables - Clustering for environmental schemes - Village Design Statement - Encourage public transport - Home-working - Sustainable drainage - Impact on infrastructure - Can manage traffic (walk to school)	- Too many car movements +4 - Increased flood risk +2 - No public transport +1 - Disproportionate scale +1 - Lack of suitable space for new housing - Loss of green space - Loss of views - Poor design - Incongruous - Domestication of landscape - Housing estates - Houses too big in footprint/height - More traffic on narrow roads (verges destroyed) - Despoliation of rural buildings (conversions) - Repetitiveness - Light pollution - Impact on existing infrastructure - Visual impact of renewables

SOCIAL ASPECTS of sustainability

Positive	Negative
- Sustaining the school and shops - Could sustain services eg. school +1 - Contribution to the village - Viability of public transport, school, pub, shop - Identify local need and build for it - Change demographics – younger people coming into the village +1 - Affordable homes for younger people - Achieving social mix – for older people, single occupancy, mix in size +2 - Small cottages and bungalows - Include mix: rental, shared ownership,	- Disbenefit if mismanaged/under occupied - No second homes +1 - Sufficient public services - Over-subscribing small schools - Services at capacity - Poor response times, extra demand from emergency services - Cost of living often requires working away - Current broadband speed - Nimbys "Them and us"

affordable housing • Different bedroom numbers • Offer rental properties • Varied age structure • Self-build +1 • Enhance cohesiveness • Maintain the community • Working from home • Attached workspace to house	

ECONOMIC ASPECTS of sustainability

Positive	**Negative**
• Existing village facilities (eg. shop, school, pub) +1 • Provision of more services • Local crafts, foods, services • Local businesses more viable • Increases the labour pool • Working from home +3 • Job opportunities +1 • Employment for local builders on local schemes +1 • Broadband and mobile • Re-use of existing buildings +2 • Correct balance of affordability • Self-build • Additional council tax and parish precept • Use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)? Section106?	• Cost of housing • Cost of living • Pressure on services +2 • Incorrect balance of affordability • Conversion of commercial premises to residential • No direct financial profit for the residents • Out-commuting encouraged • Travel for services eg. GPs, Banks etc • Impact on environment • Impact on infrastructure

SMALLER RURAL SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT PROFORMA

Introduction to the Procedure

Attendees were given two documents: the Proforma, and the "Introduction, Procedure and Guidance" (attachments sent separately). These explained Cotswold District Council's proposed housing strategy, that the majority of new development through the Local Plan period to 2031 will take place in the 18 key most sustainable settlements. Outside those locations, development proposals would need to demonstrate that they meet the principles of sustainable development as in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Groups discussed these and some made notes (see later).

Following the group work, there was a plenary feedback and discussion session. Notes were taken as bullet points, but some important issues may have been missed because the discussion moved quickly and moved from topic to topic. As a result, the notes below are not produced verbatim but have been used to produce the following text.

Before seeking specific feedback and comments, Jeff sought confirmation of three basic aspects of the proposed approach:

*A. **Key criteria**: any scheme should:*

- *address local need*
- *be on a suitable site*
- *ensure good, locally distinctive design*
- *contribute to community vitality*

*This was generally **agreed**.*

*B. **The community should validate the evidence on the above**.*

*This was generally **agreed**.*

*C. **The community should always contribute.***

*This was **queried**, comments below:*

- *The bottom line must be that the development is one that the community wants.*
- *There are real limits on what any smaller community can contribute. Participants from Blockley quoted 157 person hours needed on the earlier site assessment work.*
- *An applicant can - should? - offer to do all the work but there are real concerns about an applicant/developer producing their own information.*

Comments from Place Studio

It is our view that, with a rigorous and detailed set of proforma questions, and the requirement for all evidence to be validated by a Parish Council/Meeting, there is very little chance of results being distorted.

There is clearly much to add within A and B, and about how to deliver on them.

A point was made about the 'pedigree' of the applicant and generally about needing to know more about them. Jeff pointed out that most of the likely developers for such small schemes will be local, not the big nationals. Local ones are more likely, and more able, to wish to work closely with local people, in part because they value their local reputation.

Discussion: Specific comments on the Procedure

> ***Comments from Place Studio***
>
> - *Having the procedure in place will serve to warn off inappropriate proposals really early, saving applicants – and communities – time and resources.*
> - *Contributing to infrastructure was recognised as extremely important but also difficult to define and then deliver on.*
> - *Traffic and transport are the most important and most difficult within this.*
> - *Clarification is needed on the role of Parish Councils/Meetings.*

Clustering

Several people appreciated the suggestion about considering a group of parishes as a 'cluster', especially in terms of use of facilities. Deciding on groupings, size, dependencies etc. was not thought to be easy, however. Clustering encourages parishes to work together and share information.

> ***Comment from Place Studio***
>
> *Working together can help to find resources to make a contribution with information collection.*
>
> ***Comment from GRCC***
>
> *In the case of parishes of 3000 and under residents, the Rural Housing Enabler at GRCC would be able to carry out a Housing Needs Survey (HNS) with the support of the Parish Council(s): costs of printing/postage would not be required. For settlements over 3000, GRCC could also carry out a Housing Needs Survey, but a charge would apply. If a developer asked GRCC to carry out a HNS it would be at a charge, and GRCC would start it by approaching the Parish Council.*

Issues for 'Now'

There was agreement that, right now, there are developers looking for potential sites. There was shared concern about how this can be dealt with before the Local Plan and the smaller settlements procedure is in place. CDC planners commented that there are already strong policies in place overall and for smaller projects – there is now a 5 year housing supply.

Discussion: specific comments on the Proforma

*There were only a few comments on this during the discussion; it appeared to be generally **supported.** Some detailed points were made by participants in personal notes as follows:*

- Local need is crucial, other aspects are additional information
- Add in broadband and fibre optics
- Roadside parking can sometimes make a good access poor
- No mention of new builds affecting views of existing buildings
- Under character add smaller areas of open ground
- Add not in area that floods
- Under settlement add long distance footpaths and cycleways
- Add canals.
- Add greenbelt
- Add carbon footprint
- Quality of spoil to be removed

Appendix 1 Attendees

Parish Council/ Meeting	Attendees
Avening Parish Council	John Catterall
Avening Parish Council	Cllor Tony Slater
Bibury Parish Council	Cllor Ann Haigh
Bledington Parish Council	Cllor Mick Newton
Bledington Parish Council	Heather Pearson
Blockley Parish Council	Cllor Christine Moor
Colesbourne Parish Meeting	Sir Henry Elwes
Compton Abdale Parish Meeting	Mr Brian Smith (Chairman)
Compton Abdale Parish Meeting	Ms Lesley Stone (Secretary)
Ebrington Parish Council	Cllor Hugh Elson
Ebrington Parish Council	Mr Chris Tombs (Clerk) (Also Weston subEdge)
Meysey Hampton Parish Council	Cllor Roger Case
Quenington Parish Council	Cllor Mike Sayer
Sevenhampton Parish Council	Cllor Harry Boyd
Sherborne Parish Council	Cllor Julian May
Shipton Oliffe Parish Council	Cllor Hugh Thurbon
Somerford Keynes Parish Council	Cllor Sarah Powell
Somerford Keynes Parish Council	John Sweet
Swell Parish Council	John Champion
Swell Parish Council	John Reynolds
Swell Parish Council	Cllor Diane Cresswell
Withington Parish Council	Cllr Bruno Brenninkmeijer
Withington Parish Council	Cllor Nicky Lowe
Withington Parish Council	Mavis, Lady Dunrossil
Yanworth Parish Meeting	Mr Richard Bradford
CDC ward councillor	David Broad (also Chedworth Parish Council)
CDC ward councillor	Carole Topple
CDC ward councillor	Margaret Rickman
CDC ward councillor	Nick Parsons
Mark Connelly	Cotswold AONB
Leonora Rozee	Consultant
Trevor Cherrett	Consultant
Sam Harper	Smiths Gore
Joseph Walker	Cotswold District Council
Jo Billingham	Cotswold District Council
Philippa Lowe	Cotswold District Council
Chris Vickery	Cotswold District Council
Jeff Bishop	Place Studio
Katie Lea	Place Studio
Marilyn Cox	GRCC

Appendix 2 ADVANCE EXERCISE: Community assets: Facilities, Services, Groups   **Your Settlement name:**

Please check through the following and complete (just the basic information for now).

- *If that facility/service (eg. A primary school) also serves other nearby communities, name them in column 3.*
- *In the final spaces please note any other existing facilities and local organisations providing services.*

1. Facility/Service	2. Number?	3. Others who use it?	4. If no service/facility, where do people go?	5. How far is that?	Any additional details
Village hall					
Shop					
Post Office					
Primary School					
Public House					
Pre-school or nursery					
Church					

Doctor					
Play area					
Recreation/playing field					
Public transport					
Community transport					
Other facilities/services?					
Local organisations providing services					

APPENDIX C - RURAL SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT PRO-FORMA

RURAL SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT PROFORMA

Site Name:

Site Address:

Name and address of applicant:

All sections to be completed by the applicant, supported by additional information if necessary (eg. for Stage 1 below).

Information included for Stages 2 and 3 in particular can be valuably backed up with annotated plans and photographs.

STAGE 1: LOCAL NEED

1a: Housing Needs Study

- This to be completed in line with the associated guidance.

1b: Demographic Balance

- This to be completed in line with the associated guidance.

The results of these assessments should be appended to the completed proforma.

Only continue if some level of local need has been shown and information on demographic balance is supportive of the proposals.

STAGE 2: THE SITE

2a: CORE INFORMATION

If the site has been considered by the Council through the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) process, they will have this information and it can simply be added in here and in 2b. If not, they can help with calculating site size and provide any previous planning history information. Otherwise, please complete. Comments must be sought from the Highways Authority and from the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team, perhaps also Natural England. Please check this list with the District Council, who will also supply contact details.

Settlement Name		Site Reference (Yours or SHLAA)	
Gross area (Hectares)			
Current/recent uses			
Site Planning History			

2b: DESIGNATIONS AND KNOWN CONSTRAINTS

Some of this information may be known at local level but all should be available from the Council. Simply tick in the right hand box where a designation or constraint applies. Where appropriate, more detailed information can be valuable through more detailed comments in the boxes to the right, eg. if part of a site not in a flood zone is known by you or local people to flood regularly.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) / Special Landscape Area (SLA)	
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Key Wildlife Site (KWS) Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	

Landscape Character Type (from LCA)	
Regionally important Geological Site	
Archaeological constraints, eg. ridge and furrow	
Conservation Area	
Listed Buildings	
Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) / Historic Battleground / Regionally Important Geological Site	
Public Rights of Way Access Land Named routes (eg. Cotswold Way)	
Flood Risk/Drainage/Sewage Springs	
Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) / Ancient Woodland	
Registered Parks & Gardens National Trust Asset Registered Common/Village Green	
Agricultural Best and Most Versatile Land (give classification)	
Other Known / Recorded Constraints Comments	

2c: SITE CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS

This is strictly local information. It can be assessed in part with local knowledge as a 'desk work' but is best undertaken on the ground, especially to confirm distances and specific access circumstances.

Walking to Local Facilities (ie. within the village)

Add in Distances, tick/ring Quality and add Comments if appropriate. If none, add N/A.

Facility	Distance (metres)	Route Quality	Comments and observations on safety and quality of route
Shop		Good Fair Poor	
School		Good Fair Poor	
Public Open Space		Good Fair Poor	*(This is about the nearest publicly accessible space)*
Bus Stop		Good Fair Poor	
Places of Employment		Good Fair Poor	*(This is the nearest, though you may wish to note more than one.)*
Any other facility **(eg. village hall)**		Good Fair Poor	*Other facility name:*

Site Access

Type and Quality of Access	
How many road access points to site?	
How many pedestrian access points?	
Any other access points?	
Comments on the nature and quality of the above:	

Broadband/Fibre Optics

Available?	Quality	Comments

2d: SITE ENVIRONMENT

*This is about **the site itself** (aspects of the site's surroundings are covered in the subsequent section) and is strictly local information. It requires some desk work but certainly some on the ground survey work. Decide which of the following are relevant and then either just ring/tick words that best apply or, in addition, make some comments. Annotated plans and photos are particularly valuable.*

Site Characteristics

Landform: *Flat   Gently Undulating   Strongly Undulating   Steep Valley   Valley Floor Plateau   Aspect (to north, south etc.)*
Comments:

Land use: *Arable farmland   Grassland   Grazing   Mixed Forestry Industrial   Brownfield Orchards   Horticultural   Quarrying   Recreational   Other*
Observations:
Views Out: *Wide   Channelled   Long   Short   Glimpsed*
Quality and Value of Views:
Natural Features: (Age/Condition/Value):   *Boundary Hedgerow   Trees   Freestanding Shrubs   Grass   Other*
Observations:
Ecology: (Known/Observed and Value):   *Birds   Lizards/Frogs   Mammals   Important Plants*   *Wildlife Corridors   Water Habitats*
Observations:
Buildings, structures on the Site: *Walls (what materials)   Sheds   Freestanding buildings/structures   Wellheads   Troughs Gateposts   Stiles etc.   How much of the site do they cover?*
Observations:

Only continue if the results of this show that the suggested site is appropriate.

If it is appropriate, move to the Summary below

2e: SITE SUMMARY

Note in the box below the aspects or features of the site that must be addressed to achieve an acceptable development, eg. improve pavements to the village centre, retain a hedgerow, create a safe vehicle entrance.

STAGE 3: CHARACTER OF THE SITE CONTEXT

If there is a Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Assessment, Landscape Assessment or other design guidance/assessment material (eg. in any Parish Plan), that can be used (if not out of date) to supply the following site-specific information. If that is the case, reference needs to be made to that assessment. Comments can be annotated on a plan, ideally with some photos.

3a: LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Many sites will be on the edge of a settlement and will have a landscape context (ignore this section if not). The main assessment below covers the area of landscape visible from different parts of the site. It requires some desk work but certainly some on the ground survey work. Decide which of the following are relevant and then either just ring/tick words that best apply or, in addition, make some comments. Annotated plans and photos are particularly valuable.

1. DESCRIPTION

A. Land Form: *Flat   Gently undulating   Strongly undulating   Steep valley* *Valley side/floor   Plateau   Other*

B. Land Cover: *Open farmland   Farmland with trees/woods   Woodland   Parkland*
Wetland   Other

C. Land Use: *Arable farmland   Grassland   Grazing   Mixed   Forestry   Industrial*
Brownfield   Orchards   Other

D. Field Boundaries: *Tall   Clipped   Intermittent   Hedgerow*

With/without trees   Fences   Walls(what materials?)   Other

E. Field Sizes and Patterns: *Small   Medium   Large   Regular   Angular   Linear*
Irregular   Ridge and Furrow   Other

F. Routeways: *Few roads   Dense road network   Tracks   Straight/Winding /Narrow*
Footpaths   Bridleways   Other

G. Buildings and Structures: *What manmade elements are in the landscape? Village(s)/Town*
Isolated Farms   Barns   Groups of dwellings   Pylons   Other

Masts   Wires. How do they 'sit' and what natural features influence that?

H. Water and Drainage: *Stream   River   Reservoir   Wet ditches   Ponds   Lake*
Other

I. Landmarks: *Buildings   Structures   Natural features   History   Archaeology*

Smaller Features   Other

2. VIEWS

A. Nearby Views: *Sweeping   Channeled   Long   Short   Glimpsed*

Across/to a place or landmark.

B. Distant Views: *The site may be visible from a long way off, well beyond its immediate context. Do a check on this and note where those views are from and what they show of the site.*

3b: SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

No site will be entirely isolated, so all will have a built settlement context. It is important not to just look at those buildings and spaces surrounding the site but at the wider area of the village in which the site sits (which may or may not be all of the settlement). Note that wider area on a map. This requires some desk work but certainly some on the ground survey work. Decide which of the following are relevant and then either just ring/tick words that best apply or, in addition, make some comments. Annotated plans and photos are particularly valuable.

1. PATTERN

A. Topography: *Flat   Hilly   Steep   Shallow   Plateau   Valley*

Linear valley   Several valleys   Other

B. Location: *Valley Bottom   Valley Side   Hill Terrace   Hill Top   Other*

C: Layout: *Linear   Grid-like   Winding   Regular   Irregular   Ribbon   Dispersed   Radial*

Buildings close to the road   Buildings well set back   Front gardens

Back gardens   Long plots   Thin plots   Short plots   Wide plots   Burgage Plots

Clear centre   No obvious centre   Other

D: Spaces: *Gaps between buildings   Green spaces   Hard space*

Places where local events take place   Well used   Not well used   Other

E: Green and Natural Features: *Trees   Bushes   Hedges*

Green backcloth to buildings   Areas of intense greenery

Areas without greenery   Other

F: Wildlife and Ecology: *Area used/inhabited by wildlife (eg. foxes, bats)*

Area used for wildlife to pass through   What wildlife?   Important plants?

G: Roads, Streets and other Movement Routes: *Pavements   Kerbs   Grass verges   Drainage ditches   Wide roads   Narrow roads   Straight roads   Curving roads   Cul-de-sacs   Through roads   Footpaths/alleyways   On-plot parking   On-street parking   Parking courts   Street lighting   Other*

H. Landmarks: *Are there key landmarks visible from a distance (church tower), community landmarks (pub) or special but smaller features (old milestone)?*

I: Views Out: *Are there places (often, occasional) where one can see out to other areas or to the landscape?*

2. BUILDINGS AND DETAILS

A: Predominant Building Shape and Heights: *Wide frontages   Narrow frontages   Terraced Semi-detached   Detached   1 storey/2 storeys/3 storeys   Common shapes   Varied shapes*

B: Roofs: *Flat roofs   Pitched roofs   Steep pitch   Shallow pitch*

Varied pitch   Lean-tos   Parapet fronts (hidden roofs

C. Predominant Materials: *Some common   Nothing common*

Walls (brick, stone, render, hung tile, ashlar, rubble)?   Roofs (tile, slate, thatch, other)?

Boundaries (drystone walls, hedges, fences)?   Ground (tarmac, concrete, setts, paving stones)?

D: Details: *What details contribute to character: porches, dormers, window shapes, roof decorations,quoins, chimneys, benches, letterboxes, signs, flags?*

3c: SITE CONTEXT SUMMARY

Note in the box below the aspects or features of the site context that must be addressed to achieve an acceptable development, eg. building heights, use of front gardens, views out.

STAGE 4: COMMUNITY VITALITY

This is notoriously difficult to pin down. What follows covers, and asks for comments on, some well-known and more objective factors (eg. somewhere to meet) but it also offers an opportunity to say something in more subjective terms about the village and its community, local identity, distinctiveness etc.

This can be done as desk work. It is extremely important to include information on (a) facilities not in the village but in nearby villages and used by the village community, and (b) facilities in the village used by other nearby communities. This and the next section can be informed by the Cotswold Conversation 'Community Assets' survey results (available electronically).

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- *Does your village have any of the following? If so:*
- *Place a tick in column 2.*
- *If that facility (eg. a primary school) also serves other nearby communities, name them in column 3.*
- *If you do not have that facility, where if at all – and how far - do people go to use one? Note that in column 4.*
- *Blank spaces are left for others not listed.*

1. Facility/Service	2. Have one?	3. Others who use it?	4. Where do people go to?
Village hall			
Shop			
Post Office			
Primary School			
Public House			
Pre-school or nursery			
Church			
Doctor			

Recreation area			
Playing field			
Playground			
Bus Service			

Please add below any comments on any of the above (eg. 'really well used hall', 'struggling village shop', 'rather outdated playground' etc.).

COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

Outline in the box below something about the character of the village community, for example:

- *The number of voluntary/community groups.*
- *Self-help services such as car-sharing or community transport.*
- *Village events and activities (eg. annual fair).*
- *People helping each other.*
- *Something available for all ages and needs.*
- *Neighbourhood Watch or other schemes.*
- *High levels of engagement in consultation events.*
- *Good public attendance at Parish Council meetings.*

5. VALIDATION

Process and Results of Parish Council Involvement

This should take the form of short notes in the chart below about meetings with the Parish Council – stages, purposes etc. Meeting notes should be appended. Tick in the final column if notes/minutes are appended

Date	Purpose	Attendees	Minutes?

Process and Results of Wider Community Involvement

This should take the form of a short note about the community involvement undertaken and its main outcomes. Reports of events should be appended.

Validation Statement

*This should be a short statement from the Parish Council summarising their conclusions about the acceptability of the process and its results and about the proposed development **in principle**. The acceptability of the application as a whole will depend on the extent to which the scheme content and design respond to what is in the Proforma and to general Cotswold standards. Parish Councils will have an opportunity to comment on this through the usual statutory consultation procedures.*