

CONSISTENCY WITH CIRENCESTER CONCEPT STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Prepared by: NEIL TILEY ARTPI

Pegasus Group

Pegasus House | Querns Business Centre | Whitworth Road | Cirencester | Gloucestershire | GL7 1RT
T 01285 641717 | **F** 01285 642348 | **W** www.pegasuspg.co.uk

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cirencester Town Council has instructed Pegasus Group to analyse the consistency of the proposed allocation at Chesterton with the objectives of Cirencester Town Council's Concept Statement. This analysis is presented in tabular form in the following pages.
- 1.2 The consistency of the proposed allocation with the majority of the objectives will be dependent upon the precise details of the anticipated planning application. Further work will be required to assess how the application responds to these objectives.

Objective of Cirencester Concept Statement	Consistency of Proposed Allocation	Summary
Key Theme 1: Growth Must Complement the Town		
<p>1 Development must reinforce the strong local identity of Cirencester and not erode the unique qualities and character of the town.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation will support Cirencester's role as the principal settlement within Cotswold District, by providing jobs, homes, infrastructure and a new population that will support local services (including retail).</p> <p>However, development of this scale is likely to affect the local identity of the town. This is expected to be partially mitigated through sensitive design, such that the proposed allocation feels like a natural extension to the town.</p> <p>The local identity and unique qualities of the town are difficult to measure and the precise effects will be uncertain (even with mitigation).</p>	<p>The proposed allocation is likely to affect the local identity and unique qualities of Cirencester, although the extent of these effects are unknown.</p>
<p>2 Development must benefit and add value to the physical, social and cultural assets and strengthen the local economy.</p>	<p>Policy SP6 of the emerging Local Plan requires that the strategic allocation provides a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet local needs; 9.1ha of employment land; a neighbourhood centre; provision of or contributions towards education, community services and social infrastructure; transport measures; public open space; SuDS; and an extension to the existing cemetery all of which will benefit the physical, social and cultural assets and strengthen the local economy.</p> <p>The emerging masterplan similarly proposes a mix of housing sizes, types</p>	<p>The proposed allocation is likely to meet this objective.</p>

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	<p>and tenures to respond to local needs including accommodation for students and older people; employment land; a mixed-use neighbourhood centre; a primary school; sports pitches; a multi-purpose community hall; a GP surgery and nursery; a farm shop; a sports hall and health and fitness centre; allotments; transport measures; public open space; and SuDS. These facilities will benefit the physical, social, cultural and economic assets of the town.</p> <p>The provision of a single large allocation enables the infrastructure to be co-ordinated, as well as providing a critical mass to fund this provision. The provision of significant levels of housing at Cirencester will also support the retention of existing and development of new facilities, by accommodating a greater population.</p>	
<p>3 Development must be sustainable and integrate with existing infrastructure, providing amenities, jobs and housing for local people – improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community.</p>	<p>The emerging masterplan provides infrastructure (as identified above) which will be available to existing residents as well as new residents, thereby enhancing provision across the town.</p> <p>The additional population are also likely to support the existing facilities within the town through additional disposable income and footfall.</p> <p>The emerging masterplan also provides for environmental enhancements by providing for managed areas of open space, areas for sports and</p>	<p>The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective. However, the environmental impacts will need to be considered following the</p>

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	<p>recreation, and connections between the heritage assets. However, the development of a large greenfield site will obviously have some negative impacts on the environment. These will need to be satisfactorily mitigated as part of the anticipated planning application.</p> <p>New development is likely to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community and the provision of a larger site is more likely to ensure that this is well co-ordinated.</p>	<p>submission of a planning application.</p>
Key Theme 2: Quality of Design and of Life		
<p>4 Quality design is to be influenced by the Town Centre Design Code building on the principles of the Market Place Improvement Scheme. The scale of future development is to be in keeping with the integrity and sense of place as an historic market town.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation does not lie in the commercial core to which the Town Centre Design Code relates and as such this is not relevant. However, the emerging Local Plan proposes a Cotswold Design Code which will ensure the proposed allocation respects the distinctive qualities of the District.</p> <p>The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the anticipated application will need to be considered to ensure that the design respects these qualities.</p> <p>The scale of the individual buildings within the proposed allocation will similarly be required to accord with the Cotswold Design Code.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation provides the opportunity for sensitive design although will require a scale of development which will affect the integrity and sense of place of the town.</p>

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	<p>The scale of the overall development (including 2,350 homes) is likely to affect the integrity and sense of place of Cirencester. This will need to be addressed by the anticipated planning application but the effects are likely to be less beneficial than an alternative development strategy consisting of a number of smaller sites.</p>	
<p>5 New development will be assessed by the Town Council and regulatory authority based on local design codes and conservation area statements. Developers are encouraged to engage with key stakeholders on design principles to ensure a complementary mix of contemporary and traditional styles.</p>	<p>Further to the above, emerging Policy EN5 requires that development proposals are informed by the relevant Conservation Area appraisal. The proposed allocation at Chesterton is not within the setting of a Conservation Area and so it will have no impact in this regard.</p> <p>Planning Law requires that developers consult with local communities and stakeholders regarding very large developments such as that proposed. Such consultations have been undertaken by the developers.</p> <p>Therefore, by delivering a very large development outside of the setting of the Conservation Area this objective of the Concept Statement is met.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation meets this objective.</p>
<p>6 Health services and education are fundamental to the future sustainability of the town and development must support the protection and enhancement of these facilities including potential for</p>	<p>The emerging Local Plan identifies that a primary school will be provided on-site and that this is expected to be a 3 form-entry school. However, this is only within supporting text and it would be beneficial if this was contained in policy to ensure delivery with sufficient flexibility to respond to changing needs.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective.</p>

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<p>co-location of improved primary care services.</p>	<p>This primary school is included in the masterplan for the Chesterton allocation although it is unclear who will be responsible for the delivery of this facility and this should be set out within the Local Plan and/or agreed as part of the planning application. Nevertheless, the allocation does provide the opportunity to address the identified primary educational needs providing the delivery is secured.</p> <p>The emerging Local Plan also identifies that financial contributions will be required towards pre-school and secondary education but that the exact level of this provision will be determined during the course of the planning application. However, this does not provide certainty on the infrastructure towards which this funding will be related or the cost of these contributions which may impact upon the viability of other infrastructure items.</p> <p>Emerging Policy INF1 requires that the infrastructure requirements are regularly reviewed to inform any financial contributions. However, the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which assesses these is now 2.5 years old and is not specific as to how any financial contributions will be spent. The effectiveness of these contributions cannot therefore be assessed. Further detail is needed on this matter and this will doubtlessly be provided in support of the planning application.</p>	

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	<p>The IDP does however detail the expected healthcare places that are likely to be required as a result of the housing proposed in the Local Plan Preferred Development Strategy. This identifies that Cirencester would require circa 4.5 GPs, 3.1 Dentists, 10.9 General and Acute Care Hospital Beds as a result of the proposed allocations. However, the number of homes proposed to be allocated in Cirencester has reduced since this time from 2,660 to 2,381. Furthermore, this takes no account of any surpluses or deficits in existing provision, and so the requirements may be higher or lower.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the masterplan for Chesterton includes a GP surgery and thereby provides the opportunity to meet at least some of the healthcare needs of the future population of Cirencester.</p> <p>The healthcare and educational needs should be recalculated within an updated IDP and the delivery mechanisms set out in detail. This should then be used to set out specific policy requirements and/or planning obligations (prior to the introduction of CIL).</p> <p>Despite the lack of detail on the educational and healthcare infrastructure needs, the delivery of a single urban extension to Cirencester will provide</p>	

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	<p>the opportunity to provide for educational and healthcare needs on site in close proximity to the new population. This would not necessarily be the case with a more distributed strategy containing a number of small sites.</p>	
<p>7 Building on the university status of the town to widen the cultural offer and embrace vitality in the evening economy; meeting the needs of young people and connecting informal spaces with reference to the Green Spaces Strategy.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation at Chesterton will accommodate a population who are likely to utilise the existing facilities, thereby providing valuable financial support to these facilities. This patronage may also provide a critical mass which may support additional new facilities. The new population are also likely to attend existing (and potentially set up) societies and clubs adding to the cultural offer of the town.</p> <p>Similarly, the additional population with a significant additional disposable income are likely to support the evening economy of Cirencester, which again could be enhanced with this additional income.</p> <p>The additional population is likely to support the economic growth of Cirencester, and thereby generate jobs for younger people to enter the job market rather than being forced to move out to find employment. The proposed development will also provide housing opportunities enabling young people to find accommodation in the town. It may also support the cultural offer and evening economy of the town which is likely to be attractive the young population.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective.</p>

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	<p>The emerging Local Plan requires a carefully planned network of green infrastructure within the proposed allocation, as well as the provision of allotments and gardens. This is similarly required by emerging Policy INF8.</p> <p>The masterplan for the allocation proposes such a network of green infrastructure connecting and incorporating school playing fields, cycle and pedestrian routes, sports pitches, and allotments as well as a large swathe of green space from Chesterton farmhouse to the south of Cranhams land and a green link between the key historic assets. The consistency between this and the Green Spaces Strategy will be required to be demonstrated in support of the planning application.</p> <p>The critical mass provided by the proposed allocation will provide greater support to the cultural offer, evening economy and the needs of young people, as compared to an alternative distribution with less housing at Cirencester. Providing the allocation is well-designed and provides for appropriate amounts of and connections between green infrastructure items then the allocation provides an appropriate way of meeting this objective of the Concept Statement.</p>	
8 New housing must meet local needs relating to age, family, social connection and affordability.	Emerging Policy H2 requires that a suitable mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure is provided to reflect local housing need and demand.	The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to

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	<p>The masterplan for the Chesterton site identifies that student accommodation and housing specifically for older people will be provided on-site. It also identifies that a broad range of housing types and sizes will be provided and makes specific reference to the provision of family housing. The precise mix will be provided as part of the anticipated planning application.</p> <p>The delivery of a single allocation provides the opportunity for a wider mix of housing to be provided including the accommodation of the needs of specific groups (including students and older people). The provision of this within a single site provides the opportunity to ensure that needs are met and that any duplication is minimised. This is preferable to the delivery of a number of sites without any co-ordination which may not be large enough individually to provide for certain needs and may seek to deliver a housing mix with the best financial return regardless of what is being provided on other sites.</p>	meet this objective.
9 Developing a sport and recreation hub through a cluster partnership for the wider benefit of the community and to meet the specific needs of the Royal Agricultural University,	<p>The emerging Local Plan sets out specific requirements for sports and recreation facilities as part of the proposed allocation.</p> <p>The masterplan proposes sports and recreation facilities including 2 youth football pitches, 3 tennis courts, a sports hall and health and fitness centre</p>	The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective.

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Cirencester College and local secondary/primary schools.	<p>as well as equipped areas for play. These are not fully compliant with the requirements of the emerging Local Plan and there may be a need to provide or contribute to swimming pools, 3G football pitches, adult football pitches, and mini-soccer pitches on-site. Furthermore, any financial contributions to other facilities will be negotiated through the planning application.</p> <p>The delivery of a single large allocation enables the sports and recreation needs to be met on-site, rather than a greater number of small sites which are unlikely to have capacity for sports and recreation facilities (at least to the same extent).</p>	
Key Theme 3: Links, Movement and Accessibility		
10 Accessibility into, out of and around the town must be improved by addressing the severing effect of the ring road and high speed limits and recognising access principles relating to pedestrian/cycle routes e.g. proposed bridge from the Amphitheatre connecting with the town centre.	<p>The Gloucestershire Transport Assessment has not been published and so there is insufficient information to assess the impacts of development on the transport network. Nevertheless, a Transport Assessment will be required in support of the anticipated application. Until this is available, only very generic conclusions can be drawn.</p> <p>The severing effect of the ring road and high speed limits are not addressed within the emerging Local Plan. Furthermore, they unlikely to be addressed by the proposed allocation or any alternative development strategy, unless the Transport Assessment identifies specific measures</p>	Prior to a Transport Assessment it is unclear whether the proposed allocation will address this objective.

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	<p>which can be funded through CIL or directly attributed to developments. If such measures are identified then these will be better provided for with a larger number of houses. However, if no such measures are identified then the greater the number of houses the greater the severing effect.</p> <p>Until such time as a Transport Assessment is available, it is impossible to assess whether the proposed allocation aligns with this objective.</p>	
<p>11 Develop/improve pedestrian links and cycle routes connecting open spaces and heritage areas in the town.</p>	<p>The emerging masterplan identifies a number of pedestrian/cycle links which connect the open spaces within the town, the proposed allocation and the countryside with heritage assets including the Scheduled Ancient Monument within the site and the Amphitheatre, as well as the town centre.</p> <p>The opportunity to provide extensive areas of open space within a larger allocation which includes heritage assets allows greater opportunities for the provision of pedestrian/cycle links between these areas.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective.</p>
<p>12 Where development is likely to have a detrimental impact on local parking, a strategic assessment must be carried out and mitigation measures identified and funded.</p>	<p>The emerging Local Plan identifies that contributions will be sought to mitigate the impact upon town centre parking of the proposed allocation.</p> <p>The Chesterton website identifies that there will be increased parking provision to relieve pressure on the town centre. However, it does not identify where or how this provision will be made.</p>	<p>The proposed allocation is likely to generate a need for additional parking, and the mitigation measures are as yet</p>

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	<p>The greater the number of houses in Cirencester, the greater the impact on parking provision is likely to be, particularly where the development is further from the town centre. However, providing the impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated this does not cause a problem in terms of parking provision. A larger site is likely to be able to provide more in terms of mitigation.</p> <p>The application will need to propose parking spaces (or alternative mitigation) in order to address any negative impacts, and depending on the sufficiency of these, it may be that this is satisfactorily addressed. However, it is likely that if sufficient smaller sites could be identified closer to the town centre, there would not be the same requirement for mitigation which would be preferable.</p>	unknown.
<p>13 Future developments must connect to the infrastructure network and improve accessibility to surrounding settlements, to and from local amenities, and enhance facilities, relating to footpaths, cycling routes and public transport.</p>	<p>The Gloucestershire Transport Assessment has not been published and so there is insufficient information to assess the impacts of development on the transport network. Nevertheless, a Transport Assessment will be required in support of the anticipated application. Until this is available, only very generic conclusions can be drawn.</p> <p>The proposed allocation is on the edge of Cirencester and is likely to be more distant from the town centre than an alternative strategy which</p>	The proposed allocation provides the opportunity to meet this objective.

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	<p>supported a number of smaller sites (notwithstanding that these would not have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of Cirencester or Cotswold District). It is therefore likely to generate a greater number of flows using the car.</p> <p>However, the masterplan proposes a range of facilities including a mixed-use neighbourhood centre including retail, a primary school, sports pitches, a multi-purpose community hall, a GP surgery and nursery, a farm shop, a sports hall and health and fitness centre, allotments and employment. This is likely to limit the number of car journeys to and from the town centre as the needs of residents can be met on-site. It will also provide complementary infrastructure for existing residents. However, the planning application will need to ensure that these facilities do not compromise the viability of existing facilities in the town centre.</p> <p>The masterplan also identifies a number of pedestrian/cycle routes to the countryside and to the town centre which could serve to enhance access to these areas.</p> <p>The proposed allocation provides opportunities to address this objective although the likely effects will be reliant upon the detail which is not yet available.</p>	