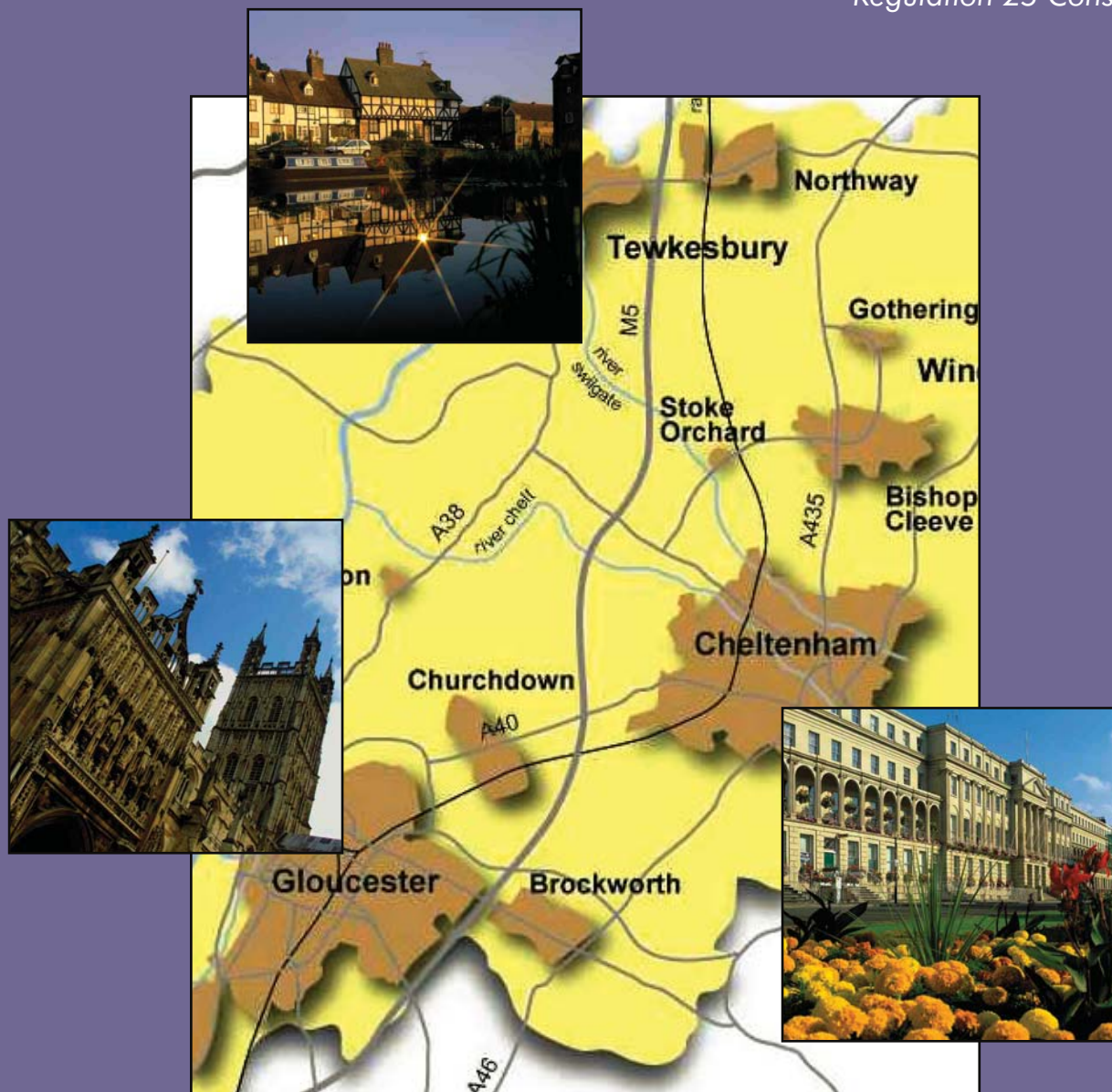


GLOUCESTER, CHELTENHAM, TEWKESBURY JOINT CORE STRATEGY PART 1

June 2010 - August 2010

Regulation 25 Consultation



GLOUCESTER
CITY COUNCIL



CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Tewkesbury
Borough Council

Joint Core Strategy - Part 1

1 Spatial Portrait

1.1 The Joint Core Strategy area lies within the county of Gloucester in the south west region, at the foothills of the Cotswold Hills with the M5 corridor to the west, stretching east to the Severn Vale. The area is dominated by Gloucester city and Cheltenham town, as well as being influenced by the market town of Tewkesbury. The three main settlements compliment with each other as centres for housing, employment and culture, retail, entertainment and tourism activities, while supporting the needs of smaller towns and rural villages. Although these urban centres are the focus for services and facilities they have areas in need of regeneration, which is being targeted through schemes and initiatives such as Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company, Civic Pride and Tewkesbury Masterplan.

1.2 Surrounding the urban areas is the wider rural area of Tewkesbury; a focus for agriculture and tourism, with services and facilities provided by vibrant market towns. The rural settlements look to the market towns, Gloucester and Cheltenham for employment, shopping and leisure, but also look beyond the Joint Core Strategy area, in particular looking north to Evesham.

1.3 The area is home to 311,900 residents, with Gloucester City projected to remain the area with the highest population up to 2026. However, due to anticipated development, Tewkesbury Borough is projected to experience the largest population increase of 31%^[1], with Cheltenham Borough experiencing very little population growth.

1.4 Tewkesbury Borough is the only district within Gloucestershire predicted to experience an increase in the number of children and young people between 2007 and 2026. The Joint Core Strategy area will see a significant increase in the number of older people. This is particularly pertinent given that only Gloucester and Tewkesbury Borough will also see an increase in working age population.

1.5 The area contains many important historical assets, including the rich array of below and above ground remains in Gloucester with the Cathedral and Docks standing out, the famous Georgian architecture of Cheltenham and its spa origins and the more vernacular variety of Tewkesbury with its medieval abbey and its association with the infamous battlefield.

1.6 These historic areas are set within a rural landscape, which includes the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, several SSSI sites and numerous nature and landscape conservation areas. Outside the built areas there are areas of woodland and good quality agricultural land. Flood zones along the River Severn and its tributaries influence much of the sub region and long term planning will need to consider the effects of climate change, particularly following the significant floods in July 2007 which segregated communities and infrastructure.

1.7 There is a considerable identified need for homes across the whole Joint Core Strategy area, particularly affordable homes. The attractiveness of the area has influenced house prices and although there is significant variation in house prices across the area, they are approximately 8 times the average salary. Although the

population is slowly increasing, the number of households is increasing at a faster rate. The number of one person households is expected to increase over the next couple of decades to exceed the number of married couple households across the County. Detailed analysis reveals that by 2026 about half of all one-person households will comprise a lone-pensioner.

1.8 There are differences in earnings, skills and qualifications across the area and there are pockets of significant deprivation within the urban areas. Employment opportunities are dominated by public administration, education and health, distribution, hotels and restaurants, banking, finance and insurance sectors and manufacturing. Provision on employment land remains an issue across the whole Joint Core Strategy area.

1.9 The area has 61% of the population at working age and the percentage of working population that is economically active is above national average. Long term unemployment figures are high for Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City's educational attainment is significantly below national average. Income levels and levels of welfare dependency distribution indicate that the area has more affluent rural neighbourhoods. Despite this, urban neighbourhoods currently have better access to services with people living in rural neighbourhoods have to travel much further to reach key services. A significant minority of people in rural areas rely on public transport and many have no effective public transport access to a GP surgery with the majority relying on private car use.

1.10 The two main urban centres have areas that, according to the index of multiple deprivation, are within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally. In Gloucester these areas are affected by income; employment; health and disability; education skills and training; barriers to housing and services; crime and disorder; living environment. In Cheltenham these areas are affected by income; education skills and training; crime and disorder; living environment. Tewkesbury Borough has a number of areas that are affected by barriers to housing and services. Cheltenham has a higher number of victims of burglary, Gloucester has more victims of violence, while Tewkesbury Borough experiences less victims of crime. While benefit claims and lower crime levels show that socio-economic deprivation is not as prevalent in rural neighbourhoods as in urban areas the problems of accessibility adds another dimension to the deprivation across rural neighbourhoods.

1.11 The area is well served with rail, motorway and strategic road connections, acting as a gateway to the Forest of Dean, South Wales and the South West. The Gloucestershire Airport provides unique and increasing services to the area. The majority of residents travel within the area for work and services, as well as to areas such as Bristol, Worcester or Evesham. The vast majority of commuters use private cars (66%), with little reliance on public transport, walking or cycling. The major urban centres are compact and have potential for improvements to public realm and pedestrian linkages. The area is congested and suffers from the associated negative impacts this has on the economy, local air quality, climate change, quality of life and health. Consideration needs to be given to the strategic road network including the M5, which can be used as a ring road to bypass the congested urban areas.

Do you agree with the Spatial Portrait?

Do you feel there are any areas/data sources missing?

[1] Gloucestershire Story 2009. Produced by the Research Team Chief Executive Support Unit, Gloucestershire County Council 2009.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The characteristics outlined in the spatial portrait, the evidence base and community engagement work have identified issues that need to be addressed in the Joint Core Strategy.

A. Risk of lack of self-reliance and complementarity between settlements

2.2 Larger urban areas of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, together with Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve, offer a wide range of services, facilities and opportunities, while more rural communities can feel isolated with few or no services on hand. By developing complimentary relationships settlements can work together to serve the community, become more self-reliant and reduce the need to travel. There is a need for the area to be more competitive together.

B. Regeneration of urban areas

2.3 The urban centres have areas in need of regeneration and revitalisation. These areas contribute to loss of economic activity, businesses relocating outside the area and reduced retail activity. Urban centres need to be regenerated to increase the area's attractiveness to investors, visitors and residents, to bring centres back into use and to make the area robust and competitive for today's economy and that of the future. Developed needs to compliment the historic environment, where new and old need to work together.

C. Declining retail offer

2.4 Urban centres and rural areas are seeing the closure of retail outlets. The area also loses custom to larger centres such as Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham and Swindon, which are all easily accessible alternatives. Cheltenham in particular has experienced a reduction in its national appeal to retail customers.

D. Increasing demand for housing and particularly affordable housing

2.5 A key challenge facing the area is to provide the level of housing required within the existing urban areas. The area faces a variety of housing needs and in particular affordable housing, lifetime homes, accommodation for the elderly and all age groups, gypsy and traveller accommodation, family homes as well as an increasing numbers of single households. The Joint Core Strategy must set out a long-term strategy for accommodating the housing, together with employment, retail and leisure requirements, together with the infrastructure required to support this growth.

E. Low skills and poor education attainment

2.6 There are disparities in education attainment across the Joint Core Strategy area, with Gloucester having far fewer residents achieving NVQ Level 4 and above. However, residents within Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester achieve higher GCSE results than those in Cheltenham. The opportunity for education and skills training needs to be accessible for all residents with the Joint Core Strategy area. The need for re-training opportunities may become greater with changing economies and business opportunities. The area must readdress the current loss of school, college and university leavers to attract business and commerce with a strong local workforce.

F. Job provision, lack of employment and economy

2.7 Gloucester city has a lower level of business stock than the rest of the area. A key challenge facing the Joint Core Strategy is to ensure that employment land and jobs are delivered to enhance the economy in sustainable locations to minimise the need to travel. This is particularly pertinent in urban areas where the availability of land is low. The Core Strategy faces challenges in delivering these requirements with an aging population, enhancing the need to attract and retain skilled working age people to this beautiful part of the south west region. The economy across the area, and particularly the rural area, suffers from a lack of infrastructure and high speed broadband, particularly in the rural areas. The area currently accommodates industrial businesses which are important to the economy, it is vital these are retained and their needs supported.

G. Deprivation

2.8 The whole JCS area supports an increasing number of households claiming housing benefit with Gloucester having the highest amount of areas within the top 10% most deprived nationally. Residents within Gloucester and Cheltenham are more likely to face fuel poverty than those living in Tewkesbury Borough. These figures reflect the more affluent nature of rural locations. However, those living in rural areas face difficulties accessing services and facilities. The data highlights the areas' distribution of pockets of deprivation within otherwise affluent areas. It is important to address the levels of crime and the fear of crime across the area, and particularly in the urban areas, together is an adequate supply of community infrastructure.

H. Poor access to services and healthcare

2.9 The rural nature of the JCS area means that many residents have to travel to reach services, with some areas suffering from inaccessibility. Access to public transport across the area increases dependency on private car usage and is an issue that needs to be addressed through the Joint Core Strategy. Evidence indicates that at a local level the number of residents dying early as a result of key illnesses is notably higher in Gloucester. The Joint Core Strategy can play a key role in promoting healthy lifestyles and exercise through the provision of open space, green infrastructure and sports facilities, as well as creating green linkages fostering health improvements through walking and cycling.

I. Public transport and congestion

2.10 Use of the private car is high and the area suffers from congestion and poor air quality. Communities across the Joint Core Strategy area have to travel for services. There is a need to reduce travel, creating balanced communities with an adequate provision of facilities. There is a need to reduce and manage car use and promote and encourage more sustainable means of travel, such as walking, cycling, public transport, with appropriate, accessible and sustainable transport provision.

J. Flood risk

2.11 The River Severn and River Avon, their tributaries and surface water and water movement have an impact on the area. Gloucestershire has been adversely affected by flood events in the past; residents and infrastructure are in need of protection from the segregation caused by such events.

K. Risk to natural environmental assets

2.12 Included within the area are internationally and nationally important habitats, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, areas of landscape and biodiversity importance and locally important wildlife sites. Also within the Joint Core Strategy area are Special Areas of Conservation, including the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site. Most habitats and species are subject to ongoing pressures and are in need of protection and enhancement. Additional and improved greenspace is needed within urban areas and on the urban fringes. There is a need to enhance the protection of areas and species through maintaining openness, preventing isolation and areas becoming cut-off. The openness of the views to and from the Cotswold escarpment, Robinswood Hill and Cleeve Hill are important. The agricultural land across the area is important for rural economy, food production, tourism and recreation.

L. Climate change

2.13 Greenhouse gasses are contributing to climate change, which will affect the weather and flood events in the future. Residents in the area are high users of the private car, there are few renewable energy installations, and many rural residents have to travel for services, all of which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Development can contribute to climate change and the use of energy, as well as increasing waste. Evidence highlights that the amount of waste produced across the area is a key issue. The Joint Core Strategy has a key role to play in promoting sustainable design and construction, making better use of resources, minimising waste and carbon emissions.

M. Provision and protection of cultural, leisure and tourism offers

2.14 The area plays host to many important historic assets that are great tourist attractions, including the Gloucester docks and cathedral, Cheltenham's regency

architecture and grandeur, Tewkesbury Abbey and Tudor buildings and picturesque market towns and villages, all set within attractive Cotswold and Severn Vale landscapes. The area needs to improve the opportunities that these assets present to reduce the 'gateway' effect and return the area to a 'destination' on the border of the South West, West Midlands and South Wales. A need for sufficient hotel provision has been highlighted through the evidence base, this will support the areas' numerous festivals and events.

N. Providing for inclusive communities

2.15 The Joint Core Strategy area is home to a wide range of communities from a variety of backgrounds. These communities have differing housing, cultural and living requirements. The Joint Core Strategy shall play a role in providing all residents with a safe place to life that provides equal opportunities, meets their requirements and enhances their community.

Are the Key Issues the right ones for the Joint Core Strategy to tackle?

Do you think there are any issues missing? If so, please indicate an evidence source to support the issue.

3 Vision

3.1 The vision has been informed by:

- Sustainable Community Strategies for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury
- Sustainability Appraisal
- The Spatial Portrait
- Consultation feedback

3.2 By 2026 the regenerated urban areas of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury town will be the key centres for services in the area, acting as sub-regional hubs supporting a network of rural settlements and increase the competitiveness of the area in the South West and West Midlands context. Within the conserved unique historic settings they will offer improved housing for all needs, employment, retail and leisure facilities, healthcare services and a variety of further and higher education opportunities. All settlements will be inclusive places with robust and safe communities, providing residents with an improved quality of life, health and well-being and reduced need to travel. The Joint Core Strategy will create strong and complementary communities that retain local distinctiveness through a co-ordinated planning strategy. Strengthening the roles of Tewkesbury, Bishops Cleeve and Winchcombe as local centres.

3.3 Sufficient sustainable housing will be delivered within and adjacent to the urban areas, as well as rural communities to meet the area's need and demand for homes, particularly affordable homes. The provision will be in the context of creating less carbon emissions, producing less waste, recycling more and is protected from flood events.

3.4 The area will support a dynamic range of employment opportunities with well balanced and diversified, higher value businesses and an adaptable and skilled workforce. Workplace and resident incomes will compare favourably with the regional average and educational development will be promoted which will bolster and support local resources and strengths. Economic stimulus and growth will be enhanced through improved transport and provision of high-speed broadband throughout the rural locations. Businesses will be attracted to the area by its protected and unique historic and natural environment and the high quality of life on offer.

3.5 Travel and congestion will be improved through initiatives that will see improved linkages between Gloucester rail station and the city centre, reduced through traffic in Cheltenham centre and a network of on and off road cycle facilities and walking routes through urban and rural areas. In rural areas opportunities for linked trips to settlements with a mix of services and facilities, market towns and larger urban areas will be maximised.

3.6 Development within Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough will be accommodated in ways to ensure that the environment is sufficiently robust to adapt to the wider impacts of climate change, including minimising pollution and ensuring availability of water resources. Residents and visitors will have access to a network of

green infrastructure in an area that is community focused and well served by public transport. The area's natural beauty and quality landscape, biodiversity, built development and cultural heritage will be enhanced.

Do you agree with the Vision for the Joint Core Strategy area?

Are there any areas missing?

4 Strategic Objectives

4.1 Meeting this vision will necessitate the Councils setting the following strategic objectives in key areas and delivering this change through the identification of suitable opportunities for change and the partnerships and organisations that will help to deliver this change.

1. Regeneration

4.2 To socially, economically and physically regenerate Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury through GHURC and Civic pride and Tewkesbury Masterplan along with other initiatives. To tackle inequality to reduce social exclusion, unemployment and improve access to services and provision across the whole area and especially within the most deprived wards of Westgate, Barton and Tredworth (Gloucester), St Paul's, Hester's Way (Cheltenham) and Prior's Park (Tewkesbury Borough), through the participation of all in the development of the Local Development Framework. To conserve and enhance local character and distinctiveness, ensuring all development is of excellent design with high quality materials to enhance the historic, built and natural environment.

Key Issues: B, C, G, N, H

2. Jobs and economy

4.3 To provide for business growth and development to strengthen the economic base of the sub-region. By securing high-quality economic development, including office provision in Gloucester city centre, creative industries in Cheltenham, diversifying employment types in Tewkesbury and providing for rural employment needs through the provision of sustainable sites and infrastructure, such as high speed broadband. To create a quality commercial sector while protecting existing employment sites and delivering key infrastructure. To improve and develop a complementary retail offer to more effectively compete with larger centres, by a positive and proactive "city/town centre first" approach. By redeveloping Kings Quarter area and Gloucester Quays, expanding Cheltenham town centre and through a vibrant Tewkesbury town centre, as well as retaining local centres across the JCS area.

Key Issues: A, B, C, E, F, G, I, N

3. Housing

4.4 Provide enough housing on suitable deliverable sites of the right size, type and tenure in sustainable locations that protect the quality environment of the Joint Core Strategy area. The housing will comprise high quality, locally distinctive, sustainable developments. To meet the needs of all age groups and communities, including provision for gypsy, traveller and showmens guild sites.

Key Issues: B, D, G, I, K, L

4. Skills and Education

4.5 To encourage further education and training for all ages, agreements to secure employment and training opportunities for local people, particularly the long term unemployed, through co-ordination of Gloucestershire College and Gloucestershire University with the business community. To improve schools and create new ones and provide an enriching environment for learning and developing.

Key Issues: E, F, G, N

5. Access to services and healthcare

4.6 To complement the priorities of our partners by providing greenspace within urban areas and urban fringes and improving access to the countryside through the retention and development of a comprehensive green infrastructure network. To improve physical and mental well-being, to improve access to services in rural and urban areas through improved transport links and complementary of settlements. To ensure access to local services through the provision of community facilities. To reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime and reduce deprivation by designing out crime, partnership working and funding for infrastructure and services. To ensure elderly residents have access to the services, support and information they need.

Key Issues: A, G, H, I N

6. Transport

4.7 To provide innovative transport solutions accommodated through planning and urban design to increase use of public transport, walking, cycling, powered two-wheelers. To reduce private car usage, tackle congestion and increase safety for all users and contribute to people's quality of life by ensuring sufficient infrastructure is provided. To also improve green infrastructure opportunities with urban and rural areas to provide movement corridors and improved permeability.

Key Issues: B, H, I, K

7. Flooding

4.8 To reduce the risk of flooding on residents and infrastructure by ensuring the design and location of developments meets the sequential test and prioritise areas of lowest flood risk. Working with partners to reduce flood risk through effective surface water management and water course management, especially River Severn, River Avon, Horsbere Brook, River Chelt, as well as managing greenfield run off and incorporating the work of SWMP, SFRA levels 1 and 2 and water cycle strategies. Development will not deteriorate the quality of surface and groundwater and will contribute to meeting the WFD objective of good status in water bodies. A holistic SUDS solution will be applied to all developments to ensure runoff is appropriately

attenuated, treated and used within the development site to enhance its amenity and biodiversity value.

Key Issues: H, I, J, K, L

8. Natural Environment

4.9 To work with partners to protect, manage and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment including SSSIs, AONB, areas of landscape and biodiversity importance and locally important wildlife sites. To make full and efficient use of previously developed land in recognition of the physical constraints to development posed by flood zones and the need to protect landscape and wildlife areas. To be achieved through a co-ordinated approach to the management of all green infrastructure, to increase access and enhance activity for all.

Key Issues: H, I, J, K, L, N

9. Climate Change

4.10 To mitigate contributions to climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable and low carbon energy production, to also assist with reducing fuel poverty. To manage waste in a sustainable way by reducing waste and increasing recycling. This will also be achieved through ambitious targets for sustainable building, renewable energy, sustainable transport, as well as promoting and protecting local food produce and agricultural land where possible, protecting allotments and open space.

Key Issues: H, I, J, K, L, N

10. Culture, leisure and tourism

4.11 To develop the Joint Core Strategy area's role as a destination within the South West by enhancing the culture, leisure and tourism offer, capitalising on the area's important heritage and open countryside. To enhance the area through completion of redevelopment of Gloucester Docks; Blackfriars; public realm improvements through GHURC, Civic Pride and Tewkesbury Masterplan; a thriving events, festival and theatre programme across the Joint Core Strategy area. Supported by sufficient hotel provision, high quality venues, thriving museums, galleries and sports facilities. To provide equal opportunities for activities and events for all, including disabled, vulnerable, young and older persons.

Key Issues: B, C, F, K, I, M

Do you consider that these are the right Strategic Objectives for the Joint Core Strategy?

Do you feel that there are any issues that have not been adequately addressed?

5 General Comments

Please add any general comments under this part.

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