

## PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP (PIWG)

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

**Recommendation:** That the Executive Committee notes the report

**Report by:** John Mills, Planning and Landscape Lead

### MEMBERS OF THE GROUP

- Liz Hodges (Chair), Parish Council Board Member
- Graham Hopkins, Secretary of State (SoS) Board Member
- Cate Le Grice Mack, SoS Board Member
- John Swanton, SoS Board Member
- Steve Bucknell, Local Authority Board Member (Wiltshire Council)
- Caroline Mumford, Cotswolds Voluntary Warden
- Officers:
  - John Mills, Planning and Landscape Lead
  - Simon Joyce, Planning Officer
  - Mandy Pressland, Office Manager (providing admin support)

### PIWG MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The most recent meeting (at the time of writing this report) took place on 16 May 2022. Key points of discussion:
  - the Board's planning-related KPI for 2022/23;
  - the Board's planning-related performance in 2021/22;
  - the timescales for reviewing and updating the Board's Renewable Energy and Neighbourhood Planning Position Statements (N.B. These are currently scheduled for adoption by the Board in October 2022 and February 2023, respectively).
2. There was also a PIWG meeting on 18 January 2022. Key points of discussion:
  - the Board's draft Climate Change Strategy;
  - planning-related consultation thresholds;
  - the consultation on the Government's response to the Landscapes Review.

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI) DATA

3. In Q4, we provided a substantive response to 94% (15 out of 16) of pro-active planning application consultations, above our consultation thresholds, by the original deadline. This is a 23% increase from Q3 (71% 17 out of 24) and well above our target range of 50-74% (which was set well before we recruited a new Planning Officer). The average for 2021/22 as a whole was 70% (60 out of 86).

4. In Q4, we provided a ‘bespoke’ (as opposed to ‘standard’) response<sup>1</sup> to 63% (10 out of 16) of pro-active planning application consultations, above our consultation thresholds, by the original deadline. This is a 21% increase from Q3 (42% - 10 out of 24) and above our target range of 40-59%. The average for the year was 28% (24 out of 86).

#### OTHER PLANNING-RELATED QUARTERLY / YEAR-END DATA

5. In Q4 we commented on:
- 21 ‘major’ planning applications (bringing the total for 2021/22 to 98);
  - 18 ‘minor’ planning applications (bringing the total for 2021/22 to 93).
6. In Q4, decisions were made on two planning applications that we had objected to.<sup>2</sup> Both were refused planning permission. In other words, 100% of the decisions were in line with the Board’s recommendations. For 2021/22 as a whole, this figure is 67%. We be reviewing these planning decisions to identify potential lessons learned.

#### OTHER PLANNING-RELATED ACTIVITY

7. Other planning-related activity since the last PIWG report for the Executive Committee meeting on 25 January 2022, some of which has involved PIWG, includes:
- **A417 Missing Link Development Consent application:** see Item 12.
  - **Oakley Farm planning appeal inquiry (250 dwellings):** John Mills continued to represent the Board as a main party in this inquiry which commenced in September 2021. In January / February 2022 this included being cross-examined by the appellant’s QC - and cross-examining the appellant’s expert witnesses - on the topics of transport and planning, as well as writing and presenting the Board’s closing statement. The inquiry concluded in February. The inspector has not yet published their decision.
  - **Local Plan consultation responses:**
    - Cotswold District Local Plan – Issues and Options consultation.
    - South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Phase 2 consultation.
      - Key issues = renewable energy (particularly with regards to the identification of ‘suitable areas’ for wind and solar energy); strategic green infrastructure / nature recovery / biodiversity net gain; the spatial strategy for housing; housing need / requirement / affordability; landscape policies.
  - **NAAONB Renewable Energy Guidance:** John Mills is on a group of AONB officers that will be developing guidance on renewable energy for the

<sup>1</sup> Our substantive responses are made up of bespoke responses and standard responses.

<sup>2</sup> 20/04673/FUL (Cotswold District Council) – truck stop; 20/03836/FL (West Oxfordshire District Council) – tennis court floodlights.

National Association of AONBs (NAAONB) over the next few months (N.B. This will run in parallel with John's work on reviewing and updating our Renewable Energy Position Statement).

- **Consultation on the Government's response to the Landscapes Review Final Report:** John participated in a meeting, organised by Defra, to consider the role that AONB teams can play in the plan-making process to achieve better outcomes.
- **Airspace Change Projects at Bristol and Cardiff Airports:** John has participated in meetings to discuss the proposed airspace change projects at Bristol and Cardiff Airports. The main consultation will be later this year.
- **Development management consultation responses - objections (led by Simon):**
  - APP/D3125/W/22/3293656 (West Oxfordshire District Council / Planning Inspectorate): Appeal against the District Council's refusal of an outline application for up to 141 assisted extra care residential units and up to 32 affordable homes on an unallocated greenfield site within the CNL at Land East of Barns Lane, Burford. The Board has made further detailed representations to the Planning Inspectorate in support of the Council's refusal of this application and to complement the Board's original objection.
  - S.21/2579/OUT (Stroud District Council): Hybrid application for employment development for B8 (Storage or Distribution) uses at Javelin Park, Haresfield. This application seeks permission for up to 1.1 million sq. ft. of warehousing on land adjacent to the Javelin Park incinerator in the setting of the CNL. The Board, along with Natural England and other consultees, submitted an objection to Stroud District Council.
  - 21/0085/CWS73M (Gloucestershire County Council): The Board has objected to this application seeks to vary current planning consents to enable the importation of up to 50,000 tonnes per annum of waste materials to Farmington Quarry for crushing to then export as aggregate.
  - 21/02750/FUL (Cheltenham Borough Council): 30 dwellings and associated infrastructure at land adjoining Leckhampton Farm, Leckhampton. The Board has objected to this application on an unallocated greenfield site located immediately adjacent to the CNL boundary.
  - 21/01286/OUT (Tewkesbury Borough Council): 57 dwellings and associated infrastructure, south of Badgeworth Lane, Shurdington. The Board has objected to an outline application on an unallocated green field Green Belt site adjacent to the CNL boundary.

## DECISIONS REQUIRED

8. No decisions required.

**NEXT STEPS**

9. The next PIWG meeting is likely to take place @ July 2022, with the main focus being to review the initial draft of the updated Renewable Energy Position Statement.

**SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- No supporting papers.

MAY 2022