

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
- Cate Le Grice Mack, SoS Board Member
- Steve Bucknell, Local Authority Board Member (Wiltshire Council)
- Caroline Mumford, Cotswolds Voluntary Warden
- Sue Crawford, SoS Board Member*
- Garry King, SoS Board Member*
- Officers:
 - John Mills, Planning and Landscape Lead
 - Simon Joyce, Planning Officer
 - Mandy Pressland, Office Manager (providing admin support)

*Joined PIWG at the AGM in June 2022.

N.B. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Graham Hopkins and John Swanton, who stepped down from PIWG at the AGM in June 2022, for their contribution to PIWG over the last couple of years.

PIWG MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The most recent PIWG meeting took place on 16 May 2022, as detailed in the paper for the Executive Committee meeting on 24 May 2022.
2. A joint PIWG and Climate Change Working Group meeting was scheduled for 12 July 2022. Unfortunately, that meeting had to be postponed. A new meeting date has not been scheduled yet (not least because the Planning and Landscape Lead was on sick leave for the month of July).

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI) DATA

3. In Q1 (April-June 2022), we provided a substantive response to 79% (15 out of 19) of pro-active planning application consultations, above our consultation thresholds, by the original deadline. This is well within our target range of 65-89%.

OTHER PLANNING-RELATED QUARTERLY DATA

4. In Q1 we commented on:
 - 21 'major' planning applications;
 - 19 'minor' planning applications.
5. In Q1, decisions were made on six planning applications that we had objected to. All were either refused planning permission or withdrawn prior to a decision being made. In other words, 100% of the outcomes were in line with the Board's recommendations.

OTHER PLANNING-RELATED ACTIVITY

6. Other planning-related activity since the last PIWG report for the Executive Committee meeting on 24 May includes:
 - **Renewable Energy Position Statement:** John Mills is currently drafting an updated version of the Board's Renewable Energy Position Statement, in liaison with our Climate Action Lead. The current timescales for this work are to consult on the draft Position Statement in autumn 2022 and for the Board to adopt it in February 2023.
 - **NAAONB Renewable Energy Guidance:** Alongside his work on the Renewable Energy Position Statement, John is also drafting guidance on renewable energy for the National Association of AONBs (NAAONB). His work to-date has primarily focussed on the importance of identifying 'suitable areas' for wind and solar energy development and how this process should be underpinned by consideration of landscape sensitivity. John has submitted draft text on this topic to the NAAONB for inclusion in their Climate Action Toolkit, which is due to be launched at the NAAONB's Annual Conference later this month.
 - **Southern Protected Landscapes Planning Officers Group:** John has accepted a request to become the Chair of this group, which brings together planning-related staff from AONBs and National Parks across southern England, with the group meeting several times per year.
 - **Presentation to Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Council:** John collaborated with the Malvern Hills AONB team to give a presentation to the planning teams from these two District Councils on 21 June.
 - **Cotswolds AONB Management Plan Review:** John has been closely involved in the Management Plan Review process, including re-writing policies CE10, CE11 and CE12 (taking on board feedback from external stakeholders).
 - **Burford planning appeal inquiry (APP/D3125/W/22/3293656 – 141 assisted extra care residential units and 32 affordable housing units, Land East of Barns Lane, Burford):** Simon Joyce represented the Board as an 'interested

party' at this inquiry, in support of our objection to this proposed development, addressing the inspector during the opening session on 24 June 2022. The inspector's decision was published on 10 August 2022 ([link](#)), with the inspector dismissing the appeal.

- **Oakley Farm planning appeal inquiry (APP/B1605/W/21/3273053: 250 dwellings, Land at Oakley Farm, Cheltenham):** One year on from the start of this inquiry (at which John represented the Board as a 'Rule 6 Party') and nearly seven months since the inquiry finished, we still await the inspector's decision!
- **Significant development management consultation responses - objections (led by Simon Joyce):**
 - 22/02169/EOUT (B&NES Council) - 300 dwellings, Coombe Hay, Bath: This site, within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), is allocated for 'around' 300 dwellings in the Local Plan. However, 171 dwellings have already been granted planning permission. The current proposal would bring the total number of dwellings to 471. We consider this to be 'major development', in the context of paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and do not consider that exceptional circumstances apply to justify the proposed increase in the total quantum of housing.
 - APP/C1625/W/22/3300819 (Stroud District Council) – 35 dwellings, Minchinhampton: The Board supported the District Council's 'reasons for refusal' which included detrimental impacts on the CNL. We also supported the District Council's opinion that the proposed development constituted 'major development, in the context of paragraph 177 of the NPPF, and that exceptional circumstances don't apply.
 - 21/0050/CWS73M (Gloucestershire County Council) – Variation of conditions (including revised restoration scheme and proposal to increase output from 50,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) to 100,000tpa), Oathill Quarry, Temple Guiting: We maintained our objection to the proposed variation of planning conditions due to: (i) the impact of the associated increase in HGV movements on the tranquillity of the area; (ii) the change in focus from the provision of high quality building materials to the provision of low quality agricultural lime); and (iii) the inadequate proposals for the restoration of the quarry.
 - 22/00650/FUL (Tewkesbury Borough Council) – 45 dwellings, Gotherington: We objected to this proposal, which would be located in the setting of the CNL, primarily on the basis of the adverse impacts on views from the CNL.
 - We raised holding objections to the following proposals, which would be located in the setting of the CNL, requesting further information to aid our assessment of the proposals (e.g., impacts on views from the CNL):

- 22/00650/FUL (West Oxfordshire District Council) – 150 dwellings, Long Hanborough;
- 22/00624/OUT (Tewkesbury Borough Council) – 55 dwellings, Alderton;
- 22/00519/FUL (Gloucester City Council) – 190 dwellings, Snow Capel, Matson, Gloucester.

7. There haven't been any formal Local Plan consultation deadlines since the Executive Committee meeting on 24 May 2022, although we have provided informal input into the South Worcestershire Development Plan and the South Warwickshire Local Plan. We are currently being consulted on the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

8. No decisions required.

NEXT STEPS

9. A PIWG meeting will be arranged soon.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

- No supporting papers.

SEPTEMBER 2022