

PLANNING FORUM MEETING : MINUTES

Date: 11 June 2026 at 5:00pm

Venue: Westhall

Present: Adrian Phillips (Chair), Tess Beck (Secretary), Andrew Booton, John Clarke, Sue Jenkins, Cathy Presland, Cecil Sanderson, Diggory Seacome, Steve Bryson. Guest: Chris Gomm from CBC.

Apologies: Andrew Kitching, Robert Maitland

Distribution: Those present + Trustees
Section 4 only to Planning Comments Box
dccomments@cheltenham.gov.uk

Next Meeting: 16 July 2026

REF	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Minutes of meeting 14 May – and updates on schemes previously considered.	
1.1	Minutes approved. • 86-90 Winchcombe St -latest iteration not yet decided (still concerns about potential flooding, and design has reverted to “contemporary”) • Badgeworth Road no decision • The Paddocks no decision • 35 Gratton Road application withdrawn.	
2.	Declarations of interest	
	None	
3.	Discussion with Chris Gomm	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
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Green Belt. *This arose out of pre-app advice given in respect of the Paddocks development off Swindon Lane but given added urgency by the request for a Screening Opinion that we will be commenting on just before the meeting for “Land north of Swindon Lane”. Also arose in relation to Badgeworth Lane development. We need to understand how hard CBC will fight to protect the GB*

The key issue is that Cheltenham does not have a 5 year housing supply, so it is likely that some green belt will have to be relinquished. But the rule remains that new housing development is not permitted in the green belt other than under special circumstances. The concept of Grey Belt was introduced in the NPPF 18 months ago, which allowed some sites to be recategorized (CG gave the example of former petrol stations in the GB). However, the government’s categorisation is very broad, and the planning inspectorate’s decisions have tended to support a broad definition. Planning permission is not automatic even in grey belt designated areas – any development still needs to meet certain criteria/ policy tests.

Larger sites are unlikely to be recategorized as grey belt. Smaller sites are more vulnerable, as based on case law, planning inspectorate decisions don’t consider the cumulative effect.

The SLP will define grey belt once published, meanwhile we rely on definition in the NPPF. AB suggested that CBC create a guidance note for clarity as an interim measure. CG agreed to consider this suggestion, though this would not carry the same weight as the SLP.

REF	ITEM	ACTION
	Section 72 duty. Recent cases that concerned us include the Prinbox development and development in the Park. How do CBC interpret their legal duty to “pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area?” What more can we do to encourage them to use this power, especially to use it creatively? AB does not think it is seen by the planners as a duty: it is quoted but, in AB’s opinion, is not applied. CG: The duty has statutory weight, and this should be spelled out in full. AB the duty applies to everyone, not just the planning authority – also highways, developers and homeowners. The planning officers should spell out this duty to applicants. AB cites Bath as an example of good practice. CG: It comes down to the conservation officer’s decision whether it is harm or less than substantial harm, but there inevitably some subjectivity. CP: How are the team assessing these decisions? CG: the key thing to look at is how it affects its immediate surroundings, and the character of the area, and it can be difficult to articulate this. CP: Often our comments are ‘Could do better’ – how can officers encourage applicants to do better – as a dialogue rather than approve or refuse. AP suggests the conservation area review should be used to reinforce respect for the s 72 duty. He also has concerns about members’ understanding of the duty. AB points out how existing CA assessments/policies have been disregarded or not applied uniformly (e.g. front gardens). AP and AB to put together a quick note for CG about examples where, in the view of the CCS, the s.72 duty has not been met. Validation: despite promising a stronger line on this and new internal guidance, we still seem to encounter applications that look as if they should not have been validated – poor quality drawings, absence of D and A statements etc. AP & AB met with CG about the validation process a year ago. CG: it is now better than it was, as CG has updated the checklist. But it is still a work in process. CBC was unusual in not having a validation team so it is done by case officers as part of their general workload. They did recruit a validation officer, who was since seconded into maternity cover.	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
4	Applications considered	
4.1	26/00880/FUL Two storey extension and partial garage conversion. I 51 Buckles Close Charlton Kings Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL53 8QT https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TFXVG2ELKU400&activeTab=summary Subject to the views of the neighbour, no comments.	
4.2	26/00883/FUL Garage conversion and alterations. I 215A Hewlett Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 6UF https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFXVHMEKUA00 Support and commend the sustainability checklist.	
4.3	26/00882/FUL Single storey rear and side extension with demolition of existing conservatory and garage. I 37 Pittville Crescent Lane Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 2RA https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFXVGZELKU800 No objection submitted	
4.4	26/00887/AMEND Non-material amendment of granted permission 25/01608/FUL - Demolition of existing side staircase block and construction of new two storey stair block with raised roof height. 58 - 60 Hewlett Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL52 6AH https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFXYZZEL0M300 We are concerned that there is only one staircase/ exit and no fire escape for the many people who will be living in the HMO and the flats. The bin and cycle storage under the staircase increases the risk of fire, especially if electric bicycles are stored there. Having an entrance to the street is an improvement on the previous entrance to the delivery yard. The delivery yard is already a tight squeeze for the truck used, and the application appears to slightly increase the width of the staircase.	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
4.5	26/00833/SCREEN Request for a screening opinion under the EIA Regulations (development of around 750 dwellings) I Land North Of Swindon Lane Cheltenham Gloucestershire https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFDS94EL08300 Comment already submitted and determination made. AB to draft a short comms item.	
4.6	26/00825/FUL Erection of two self-build dwellings and associated works to landscape, access and parking, including the introduction of a new vehicular access. Land Opposite Fordon House Timbercombe Lane Charlton Kings Cheltenham Gloucestershire https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=neighbourComments&keyVal=TFDI9YELKQG00 0 OBJECT This is the Cotswold National Landscape so development of this kind should not be allowed. If it were to be permitted, it would increase the pressure upon adjoining NLA land nearby on the edge of Cheltenham.	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
4.7	26/00872/LBC Proposed fascia sign and projecting sign I Montpellier Mini Market 101 Montpellier Street Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL50 1RS https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=TFSBKMEKTK00&activeTab=summary & 26/00872/ADV Proposed fascia sign and projecting sign I Montpellier Mini Market 101 Montpellier Street Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL50 1RS https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFSBIVELKTI00 OBJECT This is a listed building in a conservation area. Although the proposed signage is not as garish as the green and yellow sign currently in situ, it is still not compliant with the shop front guide. The proposed signs are still too large, and their design and material are not appropriate for this listed building. If a big company like Tesco is able to comply with guidance for their new store on the Promenade, there is no excuse for smaller companies.	
5.	Reflections on the criteria for selecting planning applications – see email from Adrian and attachment of 9 June. We will always miss some due to the timings of meetings and statutory deadlines. The number of applications (five or six) is guidance rather than a requirement. If it is a quiet month, we can look at fewer. Selectors: please use the guidance.	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
6.	Approaches to the Civic Society about planning matters As CCS has raised its profile locally, we are receiving more public requests to intervene in planning applications/ appeals – 3 in the last week alone. How should we respond to these in general to manage our workload and their expectations? We should reply rather than ignore. We cannot provide advice as to whether someone should make an appeal. Moreover, we can only make comments based on a discussion by the committee. While AB has suggested that anyone contacting the PF should be asked to join the CCS, this could create the impression that we will support their position as a quid pro quo. (a) Charlton Park. If they submit an appeal, the PF can consider it alongside other applications. (b) Alstone Avenue. We will write to the conservation area consultants to recommend Alstone Avenue as an extension to or as an additional conservation area.	AP
7.	Updates and ongoing matters Cavendish House (SB) Met with Max Wilkinson MP. Our scheme was well received but he did not think it would progress. This is despite our economic assessment. Max has written to Canada Life to request a Teams meeting to include CCS. No response so far. The proposal has attracted a lot of attention on social media, most of it very favourable. Disappointingly, Punchline has refused to publish an article on it. CCS trustees are reluctant to put in an outline planning application at this stage, but they are happy to pay for CCS to pay for pre app advice with CBC. This would have to be taken on by planning forum members as the trustees don't have the extra capacity. AP to discuss with AB. No response beyond the generic from Canada Life. Attempts to get a meeting with council officers and members have so far been unsuccessful.	
8.	AOB None	

REF	ITEM	ACTION
9.	Next meeting	
	Thursday 16 July 5:00 pm. Westhall, Lansdown Parade. Selector for next meeting: JC (with support from AP) Selection of application to track: Timbercombe Lane, AP	