**Sherborne Estate Park Masterplan**

a Parish Council briefing note

# Introduction

Cotswold District council (the council) is consulting on a draft Local Plan policy titled, EN18: Sherborne Park Estate Masterplan. This note aims to provide additional information and context to this policy.

The policy is available to read and comment on at <https://your.cotswold.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/lp-policies>. An interactive document is available at the end of page, which you can directly comment on.

A pdf copy of the draft policies is available via the council’s website (Policy EN18 - pdf page 270) <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/soud40ne/14-1-1b-local-plan-reg-18-consultation-draft-policies-tracked-changes-v3.pdf>

# emerging Local Plan policy (Policy EN18)

The council proposes a new draft policy. It states that if the National Trust prepare a masterplan for the Sherborne Park Estate, then it would need to be prepared in consultation with local communities, relevant stakeholders and the council. The policy would also require the National Trust to demonstrate how this can be achieved without compromising the environment and local communities.

The masterplan (if prepared) will act as a framework for determining any relevant planning application(s) that may come forward.

The draft policy **does not** propose a masterplan it simply sets out the terms or criteria that a masterplan will need to be deliver against. It is anticipated that a masterplan would be prepared by the National Trust in consultation with the local community.

The draft policy has very limited status at this stage, and it is the first opportunity to gather your feedback. The council will use this feedback to shape the eventual policy or, if deemed necessary, deleted from the pre-submission draft local plan i.e., the plan the council wishes to adopt, which is subject to an additional round of public consultation and independent examination in public.

The draft policy identifies various criteria that a masterplan will need to include:

1. Comprise a vision and objectives;
2. Describe and assess the landscape, ecological, historic environment, and other significant assets of the Estate;
3. Maximise opportunities for sustainable travel to and through the Estate, ensuring maximum inclusive access to nature and the countryside and to the historic environment;
4. Demonstrate how increased recreational access can be achieved without compromising the environmental characteristics of the Estate and adversely affecting the local community;
5. Set out an interpretation and education framework for the Estate, including potential outreach proposals;
6. Ensure that the character of the parkland setting and the wider AONB are enhanced;
7. Set out proposals for the retention of existing and the creation of new habitats that will deliver strategic scale nature recovery;
8. Explore opportunities for the generation of renewable energy within the Estate;
9. Describe how farming enterprises will benefit from the Masterplan and continue to operate within the Estate;
10. Include a phasing programme for the construction, reuse or demolition of existing redundant buildings, new buildings and infrastructure within the site;
11. Explore opportunities for small scale rural affordable housing or low cost housing to support those employed by the Estate to support the management of the Estate; and
12. Describe how the local community and relevant stakeholders have influenced the masterplan and how they can continue to be involved in shaping the Estate.

The policy further explains that where consistent with the masterplan, the following small-scale development will be supported: nature-based tourism, rural land use based employment, education, access improvements, habitat creation and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

# National Trust’s Concept Plans and emerging ideas

The National Trust has shared several documents with the council to provide useful context and an idea of emerging plans. These are available to download and view via the council’s website evidence webpages (w/c 4March 2024).

<https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/evidence-base-and-monitoring/>

It is important to note that the National Trust’s concept plan has changed slightly since the policy was published. The strap line now states, “Sherborne Big Nature, Better Access”, this change was made to make clear that its about better access not bigger access. The National Trust explain that this is a more accurate representation goals and ambitions.

# SherbornE Parish Council’s Letter.

The letter opens with the premise that no consultation has happened to date. This consultation is an early-stage consultation (i.e., the first stage) and as the letter explains this consultation provides the public with the opportunity to feedback to the council.

The council see the National Trust’s desire to embed a masterplan into a revised local plan as positive outcome. It will help to ensure community engagement and community influence are baked into a future masterplan. It also commits the National Trust and the council to work with local communities and relevant parties to shape the future together.

The letter explains that background detail is limited. This is accepted and information has now been made available. Information is available via the council’s local plan evidence webpages – see link above.

The letter makes mention of “country-style theme park”. This is incorrect and misleading. The policy seeks views on a series of principles that a future masterplan would need to conform to and the council is asking for feedback on these principles. It **does not** propose a theme park.

# The status of the draft policy

Policy EN18 (Annex A) is a draft policy. Regulation 18 draft policies have very limited status at this stage, but they do give an indication of what the council seeks to support and achieve. The purpose of this consultation is very much geared to testing the water and to seek your feedback. Essentially, we want to know what you think.

# Next Steps

* **NOW** – Local Plan Update consultation (regulation 18)
* **Evidence gathering** – 2024/25
* **Consultation** – Pre-submission draft (regulation 19), scheduled in early 2025.
* **Examination in Public** – June 24 to May 25
* **Adopt** – Summer 2025.