

Cotswold District Council Local Plan/National Trust Masterplan briefing

18 March, 4:30pm-5:45pm: Sherborne Village Hall

Representation from:

Cotswold District Council (CDC)

National Trust (NT)

Sherborne, Farmington, Windrush, Aldsworth and Clapton Parish Councils

Sherborne TANT

Sherborne Brook Support Group

Sherborne House/Stables

Cotswold District Council Local Plan update presentation

James Brain, CDC Head of Planning (see attached slides for reference)

1. Explained the legal obligation of local authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Plan. The current CDC Local Plan contains circa 70 active policies, and this consultation process is concerned with proposed updates to it.
2. The major focus of the CDC local plan is a need to accommodate approx. 7,000 new homes between now and 2041. The council is currently consulting on options on how to distribute growth across district, which includes a proposal for strategic scale growth at Moreton.
3. Policy 'EN18 Sherborne Estate' is a new policy to be (proposed) included in the updated Local Plan.
4. Background to the policy comes from a lack of accessible green spaces in the Cotswolds. The size (circa 4,000 acres) and the location of Sherborne Estate makes it a good fit for CDC's Green Infrastructure Strategy¹ ambitions, and other CDC strategic objectives.
5. The purpose of policy EN18 is to define the things that a future NT Estate Masterplan for Sherborne Park Estate should take account of and include. CDC has listed a number of criteria (for public comment as part of the Local Plan consultation) which are included within the attached slide deck.
6. The community is encouraged to comment on these criteria and identify any additional needs, or those currently listed, but needing enhancement. The preferred feedback route is online via CDC's website (your.cotswold.gov.uk). Written feedback (email/post) is also welcome but would naturally take longer to process and incorporate.
7. Early-stage nature of policy EN18 was emphasised and its relatively low status in the planning process. There is no Masterplan so far, the policy merely sets the framework criteria against which the Masterplan should be developed.
8. CDC will provide an update on the consultation feedback received as soon as possible after the 7 April deadline.
9. Timeline: Local Plan update consultation – deadline for feedback Sunday April 7th, Pre-submission draft of the Plan (early 2025), Examination in Public (June 2025 to May 2026), Adoption (Summer 2026).
10. CDC propose an EN18 working group to actively follow, and contribute to, the development of the Policy. Today's meeting attendees (c.25 people) could be included. CDC will confirm. CDC suggested a frequency of quarterly.

Questions from the floor:

What is a Country Park / can you give a comparable for Sherborne?

CDC: A country park is a broad term for an open landscape that is available to the public. At the meeting, CDC and NT didn't provide a comparable Country Park elsewhere (owing to the relatively unique nature of the CDC/NT proposal), as to what Sherborne Park Estate could become. Both agreed to see if an example could be highlighted.

¹ <https://cotswold.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=dac1a6973d4e4e2caa6cb1f47b013171>

How will success be measured during implementation?

CDC: Monitoring and evaluation criteria can be built into the Masterplan. The working group can conduct a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)” analysis to help define conditions for success.

How can policy EN18 be endorsed by CDC when the Masterplan is blank?

CDC: CDC endorse the “big nature, better access” concept in principle, but at this stage, it is the Policy which defines key aspects of the Masterplan, so it is perfectly OK for a Masterplan not to be already in place.

National Trust Sherborne Big Nature Better Access update presentation

Andrew Danson, NT Project Manager (see attached slides for reference)

1. Explained that this information (the slides) builds on the 2022 concept paper (available at sherborneparish.org).
2. Potential for Sherborne to make a transformative difference to green space access in the Cotswolds. Described a vision for a wilder Sherborne, with more trees and natural grazing – see presentation illustration.
3. Updates on plans for Sherborne Farm, Lodge Park, Old Park, and Stones Farm.
4. Described Lodge Park as an obvious location for a “countryside park” destination. Plan to increase opening to 12-15 weekends this year.
5. Access and visitor infrastructure studies have started, but there is not yet any data available to share (e.g., road access, visitor facilities etc). Visitor centres will be considered for Lodge Park, Ewe Pen Barn, and Northfield Barn.
6. The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) will inform future management decisions for Sherborne Estate. Expectation to complete and publish during Spring 2024.
7. The Masterplan will take guidance from CMP and is anticipated to take two years to complete – only starting once the CMP is completed.
8. Similar to CDC’s proposal for formal community consultation, NT propose a working group with varied stakeholders to help guide the development of a Masterplan.
9. Terms of reference for the working group to be developed by NT and shared for comment.

Questions from the floor:

Are the documents seen previously still relevant?

NT: Black lines on the Access map are no longer valid, though they are indicative of thoughts so far. Nature map is current. Big Nature, Better Access concepts document stands (available at sherborneparish.org).

Is the combination of increased access and enhanced nature not contradictory?

NT: Sherborne is 1,600 hectares, and its size means it can have both. Described potential for various levels of accessibility throughout the Estate. E.g., Ewe Pen Barn potential visitor hub, but routes from North Park Barn might be more limited. The field to the East of Sherborne School was mentioned as a site for potential alternative use. No further details were shared.

Visitor volume at Lodge Park?

NT: Used to attract 15,000 visitors per year before Covid. Need much higher visitor numbers to make opening it more regularly viable. Infrastructure conversations on this subject are ongoing with CDC.

Are the cultural and historic aspects of Sherborne being properly considered?

NT: CMP will inform the management of these elements. NT is keen to manage change with cultural and heritage significance in mind.

The presentation doesn't talk about the people of Sherborne.

NT: Mentioned opportunity for local business. Estate is bigger than just the village. Agreed to review how future presentations/briefings would include the community, and recognise its significance, more overtly.

Location and purpose of affordable housing?

NT: Options and detail still to be considered.

Follow up actions:

Task/owner	Due by
Community: Submit comments on proposed Policy EN18 See sherborneparish.org for guidance.	April 7 th 2024
CDC: Confirm date for first Policy EN18 working group meeting.	TBC by CDC
CDC: Feedback on consolidated EN18 consultation feedback received.	TBC by CDC
NT: Circulate terms of reference for NT Masterplan community consultation to NT working group.	TBC by NT
NT: Confirm date for first NT Masterplan working group meeting.	TBC by NT
NT: Share Conservation Management Plan as soon as possible	TBC by NT