

## **COTSWOLD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN**

### **PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION: DECEMBER 2025**

#### **Introduction**

Cotswold District Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation, which is due to end on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 is based upon a main Preferred Options Consultation with a number of supporting documents covering areas such as the methodology followed.

Current proposals include significant growth to both Fairford and Lechlade which will impact upon the infrastructure of those communities directly but will also impact upon the life of the residents of Kempford Parish as they also provide their local services.

For the parish of Kempford, the main issues arising from the proposals are:

- The impact upon the community infrastructure (doctors, library, shops, etc) of the proposed growth in the Principal Strategic Settlements of Fairford and Lechlade which are used by Kempford Parish residents;
- The need to retain the current level of community infrastructure, including the school, pub, village halls, etc., within Kempford Parish;
- The restriction on the growth of Kempford given its designation as an unsustainable Rural Settlement that lies outside of any designated development area;
- The size, location and timing of any development within Kempford Parish that is of sufficient size to contribute toward retaining the current level of community infrastructure within Kempford Parish.

#### **Background**

Over the last 50 years or so the Parish of Kempford has grown in the number houses and individuals living in the Parish. However, during that period, the infrastructure that contributes to the sustainability of the community has diminished. One of the two pubs has closed as has the shop/post office. Despite attempts to continue a shop in some form, the current position is that there is a “pop-up” Post Office once a week in Kempford Village Hall and no shop.

Nevertheless, Kempford has retained a number of important community facilities including:

- An active church based upon the historic church in Kempford and the smaller chapel in Whelford;
- A burial Ground – although it should be noted that this is close to reaching its capacity;
- A vibrant Public House (The George) in Kempford;
- A Village Hall in each of Kempford and Whelford;
- A CofE Primary School in Kempford; and,
- The recently added full size Junior Football Pitch, MUGA and play area in Kempford

#### **Outcome**

Kempford Parish is one of the larger settlements that it is intended to designate as a Rural Settlement under the preferred Option. As a larger Rural Settlement it includes a number of community facilities and includes a number of rural employment opportunities within and close to

the Parish. Amongst those community facilities is the Primary School which relies upon an intake based on younger families being resident. Other facilities rely upon a steady inflow of new residents willing to help to keep them going. Whilst not suitable for a large development, the parish should be able to grow and accept development that is focussed upon meeting local housing needs, including a mix of social, affordable and market housing, strengthening current facilities, and adding to those facilities to the benefit of all.

## **Responses to Specific Questions:**

Question 1 – Which of the above scenarios has your preference? Why do you prefer this option?

Kempston Parish Council have no specific preference but would tend to prefer option 2 or Option 5.

The important factor is that the adopted approach is modified to ensure that where the benefit of some carefully thought through development to the settlement outweighs the harm caused by deviating from the current proposal by both adding to the future sustainability of community facilities and by enhancing the “offer” with additional facilities available to all.

The second factor, also not adequately addressed by any single Option is the misrepresentation of the facilities offered by Fairford. For example, it is described as having two supermarkets. From the perspective of many of the residents of Kempston Parish, the nearest Supermarkets are in either Cirencester or Swindon with many others choosing to order online for delivery.

Question 2 – Should the Council consider locating development in locations it considers unsustainable to meet the government housing target? Please explain.

The Parish Council considers it neither acceptable nor necessary for CDC to propose allocating land in unsustainable locations. However, should suitable land be available next to a Rural Settlement and its development meet the needs of that community for further mixed housing whilst also improving community sustainability, it should be accepted as a matter of policy that such a case can be made by the local community.

Question 3 – To what extent would you support increasing housing density in developments (such as smaller houses and gardens, more flats or higher buildings) to help meet the full housing target? Please also explain why.

Should any development occur within the Parish, Kempston Parish Council would not support increasing housing density. The very nature of its settlements is rural rather than urban. Higher housing is unlikely to be allowed because of the proximity of RAF Fairford within the Parish. Denser housing would begin a process of urbanisation which is not needed to meet local Housing Needs and which would impact adversely upon the character of the community.

A significant part of Kempston falls within a Conservation Area. There should be an assumption against any development in that area that might increase housing density to the detriment of the character of the Conservation Area.

Question 4 – Do you think the proposed level of development up to 2043 – the end of the Local Plan period – and beyond 2043 is sustainable? If not, what provisions would need to be added to the

settlement(s) to make them a sustainable location for the proposed level of development? These could be new services, facilities or the provision of infrastructure. Please clearly state which settlement(s) your comment relates to.

Kempford Parish Council believes that there is a danger that larger Rural Settlements such as Kempford will see their sustainability eroded unless there is a policy that allows them to grow at a rate that, whilst not imposed, allows for existing community facilities to be maintained, organically grown and added to for the benefit of the whole of the community.

Question 5 – Are there any other matters beyond conventional housing that have not been listed here that you think should be considered in the Development Strategy for the updated Local Plan?

Kempford exists as a larger Rural Settlement between Fairford and Lechlade. In considering many other matters, including education provision, local employment, leisure, health, wellbeing, access to the countryside, etc there is a need for a holistic plan developed by the three communities working together. Any development strategy produced now should seek to promote such Town/Parish cluster groups to work together on such issues.

Question 6 – Do you agree with the vision and objectives? Or is there anything else that should be covered in the vision and objectives? Please explain.

The Vision statement is overly long at six paragraphs rather than 2-3 sentences at most. The aspirational statements would be better incorporated in the more detailed objectives. Without a more detailed discussion with the authors, it is not clear whether the aspirations included as part of the vision statement are consistent and achievable with those listed as objectives.