

Draft Concept Statement for the Foxhill MOD site

To be read in conjunction with the B&NES Local Plan, Draft Core Strategy, other relevant planning policies and the evidence base

The redevelopment of Bath's three MoD sites is a rare and challenging opportunity to create a series of new residential neighbourhoods in a unique World Heritage Site. It is an opportunity to boost housing supply within the city and to add to the evolution of Bath as a centre of innovative and progressive urban design.

Whilst the Council is seeking to make the best use of land in the city, it must also ensure that the Outstanding Universal Values of the World Heritage Site are given proper consideration. Working with local communities and the development industry, the Council looks forward to achieving high quality residential areas that make efficient use of land, respond to the unique local context and integrate well with established neighbourhoods and communities.

Introduction

After a long and influential presence in the city, the Ministry of Defence is now leaving Bath. It has already begun to relocate staff to its site at Abbey Wood and will begin the disposal of its Foxhill, Warminster Road and Ensleigh sites in September 2012.

The Council's Draft Core Strategy has identified these sites as being critical to meeting the city's need for additional housing. The Council is committed to ensuring that the housing led redevelopment of these sites is of high quality and responds to the specific design and placemaking challenges that each presents. To help achieve this, the Council has been working in partnership

with the MoD, the Homes and Communities Agency and ATLAS to produce Draft Concept Statements for each site. As part of this the Council has commissioned evidence that has informed our understanding of each site and has highlighted important issues to be considered and addressed by developers.

Purposes of Draft Concept Statements

The purposes of the Draft Concept Statements are to summarise the Council's analysis of the sites, describe the Council's vision for their redevelopment, and to set out the design principles that will need to be met in order to realize that vision. The statements have been prepared now to inform the sale of the sites and shape the formulation of development proposals.

Role and Status

The Draft Concept Statements will be subject to public consultation and once finalised will set out the Council's expectations for each site. Developers will need to respond to these and to the commissioned evidence, and will also be expected to engage with the public and the Planning Service in the formulation of their proposals for development.

The Draft Concept Statements need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance and best practice.

The content of the Draft Concept Statements will be used to inform the Council's forthcoming Placemaking Plan DPD and should be regarded as part of the preparation stage of that document. They will carry due weight as a material consideration in negotiations with developers and in the determination of planning applications.

The Council's vision for Bath and North East Somerset

The Council has recently revised its vision for the kind of place that it wants Bath and North East Somerset to be, putting people first and communities at the heart of everything it does. It sees Bath and North East Somerset as a place:

- **Where everyone fulfils their potential;**
- **With lively, active communities; and with**
- **Unique places with beautiful surroundings.**

The Council has set the following three objectives, which are intended to help fulfil this overall vision. This Draft Concept Statement responds to these objectives.

- **Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;**
- **Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live; and**
- **Building a stronger economy**

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Introduction to the Foxhill site

The site comprises 18.9 ha and occupies a location that is embedded within the residential neighbourhoods of Combe Down and Foxhill 2 km south of the City Centre. The land slopes gently from south to north and is bounded to the north by a tree lined escarpment, which forms part of the Bath skyline and slopes steeply down to the City Centre. To the south the land is bounded by Bradford Road.

At present the site contains nine main buildings and a number of smaller buildings, together with circulation roads, car parking and grassed areas. The principal access is from Bradford Road, but there is also a secondary access from Fox Hill.



Figure 1 – Aerial photograph showing the site and its immediate context.
[red line boundary to be added]

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Site analysis

Achieving the most appropriate design approach will require detailed examination of the site context. Prospective developers will be expected to demonstrate, through character appraisal and a thorough understanding of the evidence base, how their proposed scheme responds to the site.

Figure 2 illustrates the key constraints and opportunities already identified through the Council's analysis of the site. Key issues include:

- The opportunities for integration with neighbouring communities;
- Views to and from the WHS setting - in particular the wooded hillside skyline and its importance to the WHS setting;
- The landscape and ecological value of the wooded edge and its green corridor;
- Opportunities to provide a range of housing, including affordable housing and self build;
- Clusters of significant trees around the edges of the site;
- Opportunities to improve the permeability of the highway network, affording better public transport access; and
- Opportunities to enhance the green infrastructure network.

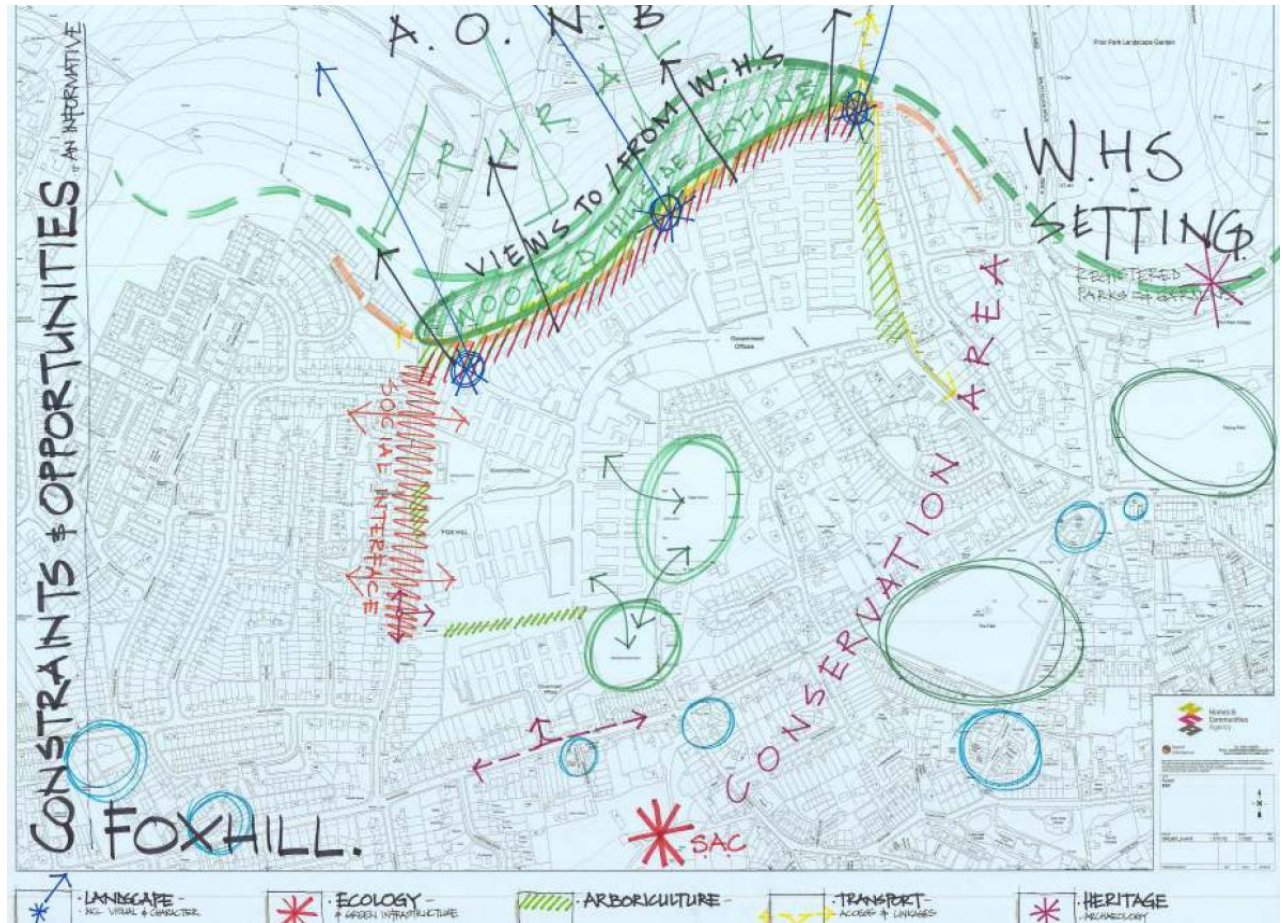


Figure 2 Analysis of key constraints and opportunities [to be redrawn]

The available evidence base which supports this analysis is found at

http://intranet/Teams/customer_services/planning_transport/planningpolicy/notice/Pages/MOD.aspx

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The Council's vision for the site

The Council's vision is for an integrated network of new residential development parcels that will respond to the character of the area, and accommodate new homes of a mix of sizes. The Council's vision is for a fine grained, well connected, mixed use and visually stimulating environment, which will complement the existing character and variety of the Foxhill and Combe Down neighbourhoods.

In order to achieve an appropriate balance between variety and harmony, each development parcel or block should preferably be designed by different architects working to an overall masterplan. This will include the provision of opportunities for self-build housing. An architect should be appointed to oversee the development as a whole and its conformity to the masterplan.

The new development will be expected to be a positive and distinctive addition to Bath, demonstrating innovation in building, construction and infrastructure design to achieve high levels of environmental performance.

Ensuring integration with the existing communities will be a priority for the Council. The developer will be expected to work with the Council in order to secure the provision of additional facilities, services and green infrastructure, which will help strengthen the social and environmental fabric of the area to the benefit of the new and existing communities. This will include a multifunctional new community facility hosting an early years centre and primary school, and a new local health centre.

Figure 3 opposite shows precedents, which help to illustrate the Council's design ambitions for this site. (to be updated)

Figure 3 Example precedents/mood board

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Figure 4 - Concept Plan [to be redrawn]

Key components of the development

The Council expects that the Foxhill development will include the following key components:

- 700 new homes in a range of types and sizes, including 35% affordable housing;
- Up to 2000 sq m of B1 employment floor space;
- A new single form entry primary school and a new Early Years facility (unless suitable alternative provision can be made);
- A site for a new primary care health facility (made available at health care use land value).
 - NB These education and health facilities could be provided in an appropriately designed multifunctional building where the new and existing neighbourhoods meet.
- 2.8 ha of formal open space, 2.8 ha of natural areas, and 0.56 ha of allotments;
- An integrated access and internal circulation network, including a route suitable for use by new/extended bus services;
- A reinstated Ralph Allen's Carriage Drive, proving connections to the Bath Skyline Walk.
- A financial contribution to identified infrastructure.

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Design principles

This part of the Draft Concept Statement sets out the Council's proposed design principles, which are intended to help prospective developers formulate scheme proposals that will realize the vision. These principles have been formulated with a view to securing high quality development. They are not, however, intended to stifle design creativity. If a prospective developer proposes an alternative approach, which would clearly meet or exceed the Council's aspirations for design quality, that approach will be considered on its merits. This qualification is intended to ensure that the design principles set out below do not preclude one-off exceptional design solutions.

These Design Principles need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance and best practice.

Developers will need to:

- Demonstrate how they have responded to the evidence base, and have addressed adopted planning policy.
- Reflect best practice as embodied in 'By Design', and achieve a 'good' standard as a minimum when assessed against 'Building for Life' criteria. All homes should achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 in full as a minimum together with a proportion of CSH level 5 in full/ zero carbon housing. Level 6/zero carbon in full if being delivered after 2016.

Layout

- The layout shall be pedestrian and cycle dominant, with excellent public transport accessibility. A 'shared space' ethos for streets and spaces should prevail throughout the site.

- The development proposals should create a green buffer zone adjacent to the northern site boundary to help strengthen the landscape and ecological value of the woodland edge and to avoid future encroachment. This is to include a walking and cycling route along a reinstated Ralph Allen's Carriage Drive, providing connections to the Bath Skyline Walk.
- The layout shall be designed to minimize the visual impacts of the development on the northern boundary in particular.
- Developers will be expected to prepare a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site setting out the strategy for fully integrating the new neighbourhood into the existing area.
- The masterplanned site is expected to be divided into distinct development parcels, designed and developed by different architect and developer partnerships, and to include self-builders. This is to ensure that the layout responds positively to the surrounding context (characterised by development parcels that have been developed by different architects, developers and builders over time).
- The developer will be expected to provide a street network throughout the site that maximises connections (and the potential for future connections) through to adjoining areas and maximises opportunities to link green infrastructure through adding multifunctional elements such as street trees and private gardens.
- Streets and public spaces within the site must be safe and accessible for all, providing direct, well lit, routes through the site, and should be orientated to maximise public benefit and enjoyment of near and distant views including views through the skyline and to create new views across and through the site.

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Density and mix

- The scheme proposals shall fully optimise opportunities to deliver a significant amount of new residential development on this site.
- The scheme shall include a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and include opportunities for self-build.
- Innovative housing such as self build or zero carbon (code level 5 or 6) should be provided and represent at least 10% of the total housing stock.
- In addition to home working this site also offers opportunities for employment development. Provision of up to 2000sq m gross of B1 employment space will be encouraged.

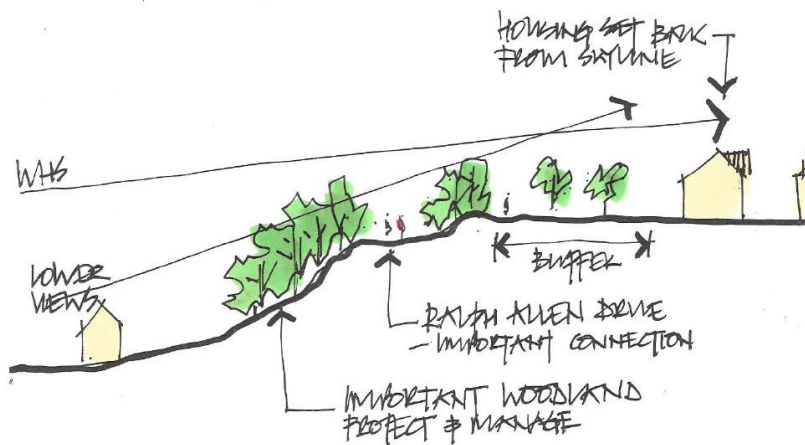


Figure 4 – Relationship of northern boundary of the site with green buffer

Landscape and Ecology

- The scheme will deliver high quality green infrastructure providing good opportunities for people to access, enjoy and utilise natural spaces
- The scheme will be expected to be based upon well integrated and multi-functional Green Infrastructure, providing development that is permeable for both people and wildlife, and which includes appropriate provision of public open space.
 - Formal open space of 2.8 ha;
 - Natural areas of 2.8 ha including structural landscaping;
 - Allotments 0.56 ha.

Note that natural areas in proximity to the site could absorb demand from this development, if this can be demonstrated to properly meet needs and secure long term protection, management and enhancement of these natural areas.

- The site is adjacent to a Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and the development proposals should include mitigation for any adverse impacts on bats and other flora and fauna.
- Development proposals must exploit opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity between the SAC and the woodland edge on the northern boundary of the site.
- The design, layout and specification of proposed schemes must support and extend ecological diversity, with particular reference to bat corridors and habitats.
- Building and landscape design will be expected to include measures, which provide on-site wildlife habitat features.
- Formal, informal and doorstep play opportunities will be expected to **be** provided within distances appropriate for age and independent play. Play areas will be provided for through the provision of an integration of playable landscape and equipment. Playable spaces

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within the public realm shall provide additional opportunities for the local community to engage with the site and each other.

- The developer will be expected to take steps to retain important trees on site and take opportunities to plant appropriate new trees within the site

Scale: height and massing

- The scale of new buildings will need to be carefully considered to avoid adverse visual impacts on the World Heritage Site, particularly closer to the green skyline.
- The three dimensional form of development will respect the nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and neighbouring buildings, as well as protecting and enhancing the settings of adjacent listed buildings.

Appearance: details and materials

- Natural Bath stone ashlar or other appropriate high quality materials must be the dominant materials for the elevations of buildings that front the public realm throughout the development.
- The development should incorporate either dark coloured slate or clay pantiles for roofs - or integrated photovoltaics.
- Natural stone must be used for paving and kerbs throughout the publicly accessible parts of the scheme.

Historic Environment considerations

- Development proposals must demonstrate respect for the contribution that the green, undeveloped skyline makes to the character of the World Heritage Site.

- The development must safeguard the historic value of Pope's Walk and respond to the historic field boundaries associated with the site.

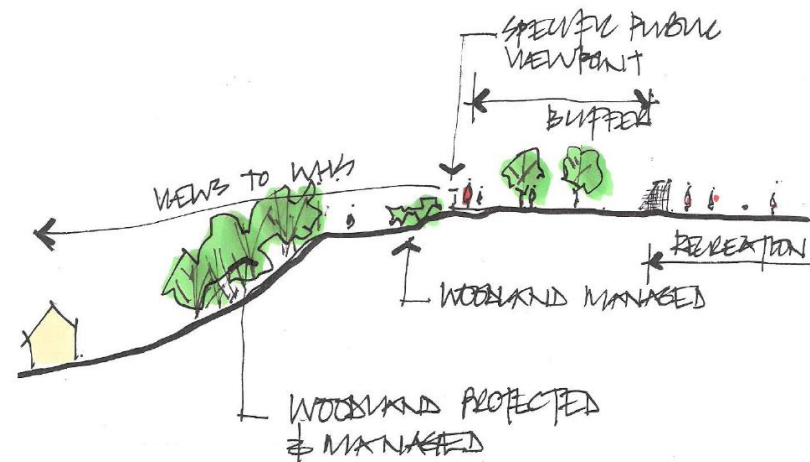


Figure 5 - Views to WHS. [to be revised]

Access and Movement

- Development proposals will be expected to include a comprehensive plan of access and movement solutions for the whole site, taking into account and mitigating impacts on the wider network.
- This comprehensive plan shall make provision for buses to service the site, ensuring that all residents are within 400m walking distance of a bus stop.

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- Development proposals will be expected to maximize opportunities to create new linkages in the existing network of footpaths and cycle routes.
- There shall be a primary access onto Bradford Road and at least one vehicular access onto Foxhill.
- The development proposals shall include provisions to calm traffic and facilitate safer pedestrian movement across Bradford Road.
- Car parking areas should be designed so as not to be visually dominant, and should be overlooked to ensure safety and security of users.
- The access and internal circulation arrangements shall be designed to maximize connectivity with adjacent developments by walking, cycling and public transport and to facilitate the provision of new or enhanced bus routes, which will benefit the wider neighbourhood.

Supporting facilities and infrastructure

- The emphasis shall be on supporting existing facilities and services in the wider neighbourhood, which are easily accessible from Foxhill. Financial contributions will be sought to undertake environmental improvements to local centres in the vicinity.

Environmental Performance

- The scheme proposals shall include resource minimization strategies for energy and water, together with a waste reduction strategy, with a view to achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and/or 5.
- Consideration shall also be given to delivering a number of truly exemplar sustainable homes (Code Level 5/6) to further raise awareness of environmental issues.
- An energy strategy should be produced that addresses the potential to reduce energy consumption through the use of high specification building fabric, passive and active solar technologies, and ground or air source heat pumps etc.
- The provision of large scale (site wide) low carbon energy infrastructure shall be considered as part of a comprehensive plan for the site.
- The designs of individual homes shall facilitate home working in order to help reduce the need for residents to travel by car to work elsewhere.
- The development proposals shall include on-site space for growing food, in the form of gardens and allotments.
- Development on this site must maximise the opportunities to create and encourage a low carbon environment and lifestyle.
- The designing in of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies is welcome.
- Any commercial buildings on site are to be BREEAM rated and zero carbon by 2019

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Evidence Base

Evidence has been specifically commissioned to inform our understanding of the site and its context. It is not intended to be exhaustive in breadth or depth, but to highlight some of the important considerations relevant to informing the evolution of design proposals for the site.

The Evidence Base should be seen as complementary to adopted local and national planning policy, and other material considerations such as national guidance and best practice. It must also be recognised that there are inevitable tensions between the different studies that have been commissioned. It is the role of the developer team to be responsive to the issues that have been identified, and to demonstrate a reasoned and iterative response. In highlighting important issues, the evidence base should not be misinterpreted as precluding development; rather they are highlighted to enable a design response to be made.

To enable realistic site values to be established and to ensure that appropriate development proposals are generated, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of this Evidence Base and the planning policy framework against which schemes will be judged.

The Evidence Base, interpreted as a whole also provides the context for the commissioning of further detailed studies that will support proposed development. These will be identified following early engagement with the Council's Planning Service. The Council's preliminary view is that an EIA will be required for this site.

The Evidence Base covers the following key issues. This will be supplemented by other evidence as and when it is produced.

- Landscape and Visual, including
 - Ecology and
 - Arboricultural considerations:
- Bats
- Energy and Sustainability Standards
- Transport Issues
- Historic Environment

A summary document is also available.

They are all accessible via the Council's website, see http://intranet/Teams/customer_services/planning_transport/planningpolicy/notice/Pages/MOD.aspx

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The Process

This section of the Draft Concept Statement summarises the process the Council expects applicants to engage in during the preparation of proposals and during the planning process. It outlines the resources it offers to applicants to enable the delivery of a managed planning process.

The Planning Services offer to Applicants

As part of its commitment to enabling the delivery of a smooth planning process, Bath and North East Somerset Council's Planning Service offers a comprehensive end to end range of services to applicants. This includes:

- Pre-application 'Development Team' advice review
- Enabling access to the South West Design Review Panel
- Offering Planning Performance Agreements to applicants
- Providing advice on how to step up to the requirements of The Localism Act and to engage effectively with local communities by using the B&NES Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

The Planning Service will agree a framework of pre-application and application services with the applicant that is bespoke to the needs of the proposed development.

The Council's Expectation of Applicants

The Council will advise applicants to engage with the Planning Service from the outset. To help provide a quality of service:

- It expects applicants to conduct proposals through an agreed structured and accountable design development and planning process.
- It expects applicants to engage with local communities in shaping their proposals and demonstrate how its input has influenced proposals

For more information about the process of securing planning permission, and the Council's expectations of developer's engagement with local communities, visit [www.....](http://www.bath-north-east-somerset.gov.uk)

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Planning obligations

This part of the Draft Concept Statement sets out the potential planning obligations which the Council will expect prospective developers to enter into in order to secure the necessary supporting infrastructure.

- 35% affordable housing, and/or make a contribution for the retrofitting/upgrade of existing poor quality affordable housing provision in Foxhill.
- Provision of a new single form entry primary school on site (unless suitable alternative provision can be made).
- Provide an on-site Early Years facility.
- A site for a new primary care health facility (made available at health care use land value).
 - NB These education and health facilities could be provided in an appropriately designed multifunctional building where the new and existing neighbourhoods meet.
- Provision of circa 2.8 ha of formal open space (and management and maintenance contribution).
- Provision of circa 2.8 ha of natural areas including structural landscaping.
- Provision of circa 0.56 ha of allotments.
- Financial contribution towards new/extended bus services.
- Financial contribution towards other infrastructure.
- Financial contribution toward Play Services
- Financial contribution to off-site Youth Services provision
- Current forecasts indicate that Secondary and Post 16 provision is projected to be sufficient, however pupil numbers will continue to be monitored and if there is projected to be a shortfall in available places in the future, a contribution to off-site Secondary and/or Post 16 provision will be required.

Further sources of information

(DETR and CABE 2000) *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice*.

(DETR and CABE 2001) *By Design - Better Places to Live by Design*.

(CABE 2006) *Design and access statements - How to write, read and use them*.

(CABE 2006) *The principles of inclusive design*.

(English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation 2007) *Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2*.

(DfT and DCLG 2007) *Manual for streets*.

(English Partnerships and Design for Homes 2006) *Car parking - What works where*.

Link to Council's Local Plan, Draft Core Strategy and evidence base:

http://intranet/Teams/customer_services/planning_transport/planningpolicy/notice/Pages/MOD.aspx

Resources Contacts and Links

To be added