

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING:      | Planning, Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel                     |
| MEETING DATE: | 15 May 2012   |
| TITLE:        | Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document: Consultation Draft |
| WARD:         | ALL   |

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

#### List of attachments to this report:

Appendix A: Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document: Consultation Draft (March 2012)

## 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 A Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared and was approved by Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012 for public consultation. This guidance will support the Council's Core Strategy policies on these issues. The guidance within this SPD is aimed at householders and small scale house builders and includes practical advice, tips and information including planning, building control and historic buildings advice. The guidance is particularly important in Bath & North East Somerset in light of the need to achieve climate change objectives in an area with a highly valued historic environment. The document is based around a series of annotated diagrams to make it easy and practical to use. The SPD also seeks to clarify the Council's approach to how particular energy saving measures will be viewed by the Local Planning Authority.

1.2 Whilst the general public consultation closes on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012, comments are invited from the Planning, Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel. These comments will be taken into account alongside public consultation comments.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Planning, Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked:

2.1 for comment on the draft Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document before it is considered by Cabinet

## 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this decision. Existing budgets cover the costs of preparing and consulting on this SPD.

## 4 THE REPORT

### **Background**

- 4.1 The Sustainable Construction and Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared to give additional support to the Core Strategy policies on Retrofitting and Sustainable Construction. However, it is perhaps atypical as a Supplementary Planning Document as it also contains information around permitted development, historic and listed buildings and building regulations – this reflects work with stakeholders and the request for a single point of information on “planning” issues.
- 4.2 Retrofitting Policy CP1 in the Core Strategy states that the Council encourages retrofitting measures to existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency and adaptability to climate change and the support appropriate incorporation of micro-renewables. The policy also states that the Council will seek to encourage and enable the sensitive retrofitting of historic buildings (including listed buildings). This approach gathered support from English Heritage, local residents and interest groups via the Core Strategy process.
- 4.3 Sustainable Construction Policy CP2 sets out sustainability criteria that planning applications should address (such as energy efficiency, water use, minimising waste and recycling in construction etc.) and requires all major development to undertake either a Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH) assessment or a Building Environmental Assessment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) assessment. The SPD aims to offer guidance and tips to improve the environmental performance related to smaller scale development including a single residential new build or home extension introduces key principles included in these national methodologies.

### **The Approach**

- 4.4 The SPD is a practical and technically based “how to” guide. Annotated diagrams feature as the main content of the SPD. Symbols are used to flag up relative costs and carbon savings of each intervention; and show whether planning permission, listed building consent is needed or where building regulations need to be complied with.
- 4.5 In relation to Sustainable Construction the SPD identifies key national and local information sources and introduces nine key principles, explaining each one through annotated diagrams and pictures. These nine principles are:
- Land use and ecology
  - Siting and Orientation
  - Passive Design
  - Thermal Mass
  - Surface Water Run-off
  - Water
  - Energy
  - Materials
  - Waste

- 4.6 In relation to retrofitting existing buildings, section-drawings and hand sketches of 5 prevalent house types in the district have been used to explain how different

buildings are constructed. This understanding is key to appreciating what environmental issues are present e.g. main areas of heat loss. This also demonstrates the major construction differences between traditionally constructed (pre 1919) and modern buildings e.g. traditional buildings are typically solid wall construction with breathable building fabrics, so ventilation and permeable materials need to be considered if you are adding insulation or draft-proofing to prevent problems such as condensation and damp. The five house types are based on existing buildings in B&NES, and are as follows:

- 17<sup>th</sup> Century cottage
- 18<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian townhouse
- Victorian/Edwardian terrace
- Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (1930s semi-detached house)
- Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century (post 1985 semi-detached house)

4.7 A range of passive (energy efficiency) and active (micro-generation and building engineering solutions) measures are then explained in more detail, including details of consents and key issues. These include measures relating to draft proofing, insulation, windows (renovation, secondary and double glazing), ventilation, heating systems and micro-generation technologies.

4.8 The range of measures explained have been informed by the useful and robust work undertaken locally by Bath Preservation Trust and the Centre for Sustainable Energy in *Warmer Bath* (see Background papers). This cutting-edge local project recently received the RTPPI National Planning award for innovation in the “sustainability” category.

4.9 Essentially, the SPD aims to inspire and inform people of ways in which they can improve the energy efficiency of their home, be it historic or modern, and to enable people to find out:

- What retrofit measures are most suitable for their house type
- What planning, building control & listed building permissions you need
- Clarification of how interventions will be viewed through the consent process
- How can you generate your own renewable energy
- Top tips for new build/extensions to make your building have a lower environmental impact

### **Links to Corporate Agendas**

4.10 The SPD links with and supports five key corporate agendas:

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| <b>Climate change commitments</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the Sustainable Community Strategy commitment to a 45% CO2 reduction below 1990 levels by 2026</li> <li>• Supports national renewable energy target of 15% of UKs energy from non-renewables by 2020</li> <li>• Helps delivery policy commitments in the Core Strategy</li> <li>• Tackles a key source of B&amp;NES CO2 emissions (41% B&amp;NES CO2 emissions are from domestic properties)</li> </ul> |
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| <b>Improving the condition of homes</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;NES has a high proportion of “hard to treat” historic properties</li> <li>• Supports public health projects linked to excess winter deaths and fuel poverty</li> <li>• Applies lessons learnt from Housing Services retro-fit pilot of 18 B&amp;NES private homes completed in 2010</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Promoting a low carbon economy</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports environmental services which play a significant role in the local economy – worth £168m</li> <li>• Retrofitting should generate £540m in sales and 3200 jobs per year (2011-2020) across the West of England</li> <li>• It is estimated that the B&amp;NES spend on PV alone £179m over the same period</li> <li>• Supports the green jobs programme and development of Low Carbon Skills Academy to support development of a local workforce for retrofit</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Facilitating the community access to financial incentives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the Council’s project to facilitate a local approach to the “green deal”, a new government-led financial mechanism which supports the uptake of energy efficiency measures and retrofit. Work funded through the green deal will include many of the ideas included in the SPD such as new boilers, insulation and solar panels. The launch of the Green Deal is planned for Autumn 2012. This is likely to trigger significant additional demands for planning and listed building applications, so this SPD should help to pre-empt many of the more basic questions.</li> <li>• Supports access to other financial incentives such as Feed in Tariffs for micro-renewables and the Renewable Heat Incentive (e.g. for biomass heating)</li> <li>• Supports existing grant funds for insulation e.g. Warmer Streets</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting and fostering community activity</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council response to call to action in <i>Warmer Bath</i> publication by Bath Preservation Trust and CSE</li> <li>• SPD has involved collaborative work with local groups with an interest in energy, climate change and the historic environment</li> <li>• SPD complements and strongly links with Bath Homes Fit for the Future events programme – which includes a range of community led activities</li> </ul>  |

## 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and documented. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

6.2 This Equalities Impact Assessment of the Core Strategy assessed the parent policies on Retrofitting (CP1) and Sustainable Construction (CP2), the SPD provides additional information and detail in relation to these policies. These policies were seen to have a positive impact on all equalities groups (in particular

age, religion/belief, race and disability) as the policies help reduce running costs of all buildings and the principles can also be applied to community buildings. Microgeneration can also generate income for local community groups and residents.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 *Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Parish Council; Town Council; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; /Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

### ***Corporate Working Group***

7.2 A corporate officer working group supported the development of the SPD and included officers from Planning Services, Sustainability Team, Building Control, Housing, Property and Development & Major Projects.

### ***Stakeholder Workshop***

7.3 A Stakeholder Workshop Event was held in July 2011. A report of this event is available as a background paper. There was a strong consensus that the presentation and graphic style was a good approach. Detailed comments were also gathered on emerging draft materials which have since been taken on board.

7.4 Ongoing work with key stakeholders has included more detailed discussions with English Heritage.

### ***Consultation Programme***

7.5 At an early stage in the development of the SPD it was considered that given the target audience – home owners and small scale developers – that a different approach to consultation should be taken. The approach is focused around collaborative events and a programme that will have more general interest to the community. Consultation events are mainly held in Bath, although they are designed to attract residents and other interested parties from across B&NES.

7.6 Under the linked project “Bath Homes Fit for the Future” a programme of consultation activities has been put together to support and coincide with the launch of the draft SPD for public consultation. This has been organised collaboratively by a working group consisting of an officer from both the Sustainability Team and Planning Policy, a graduate intern volunteer, together with representatives of Bath Preservation Trust and Transition Bath. A range of other local groups, volunteers and Bath residents have also supported the project and led and helped run some of the events. The programme of events has been widely advertised including a main article in Council’s Connect Magazine (March 2012) and coverage in the local and national media.

7.7 In total 18 consultation events held over 2 months including community led workshops, a business seminar, craft events, coach trip from Bath to Ecobuild conference for community and local businesses and technical talks.

7.8 A major focus of the consultation was the open green homes weekend “Bath Homes fit for the Future” with Building of Bath museum and 12 homes opening to the public over 17-18 March. The weekend was highly successful as demonstrated by the following: An extra 200 people visited the museum, 621

home visits with an average of 52 visits per house, 50 volunteers involved in the project, 2,000 unique hits to the website in the week preceding the event, 300 online bookings and a 400 strong mailing list generated. A full feedback report on the event will also be produced. External funding has also been secured to support the event next year, through the Community Empowerment fund and also through business sponsorship.

7.9 The consultation culminated with the ‘Is Bath fit for the Future?’ Conference held on 26th April as part of the 25th anniversary of the WHS. Focusing on the historic environment and retrofitting it was attended by over 70 delegates including architects, academics, English Heritage, Historic Scotland and other stakeholders.

## 8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 *Customer Focus; Sustainability*

## 9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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| <b>Contact person</b>  | David Trigwell: Divisional Director - Planning and Transport<br>01225 394125  |
| <b>Background papers</b>   | <p><i>Stakeholder Workshop Report (July 2011)</i></p> <p><i>Draft Core Strategy (2011)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20Planning/banes_cs_interactive.pdf">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20Planning/banes_cs_interactive.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Equalities Impact Assessment of the Core Strategy Submission Version (October 2010)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20Planning/Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20Draft%20Core%20Strategy%20Nov%202010.pdf">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Environment%20and%20Planning/Equalities%20Impact%20Assessment%20of%20Draft%20Core%20Strategy%20Nov%202010.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Warmer Bath: A Guide to improving the energy efficiency if traditional homes in the city of Bath (2011) Bath Preservation trust and the Centre for Sustainable Energy</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/warmer_bath_june2011.pdf">http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/warmer_bath_june2011.pdf</a></p> |
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