

Housing & Major Projects Scrutiny Panel November 2012

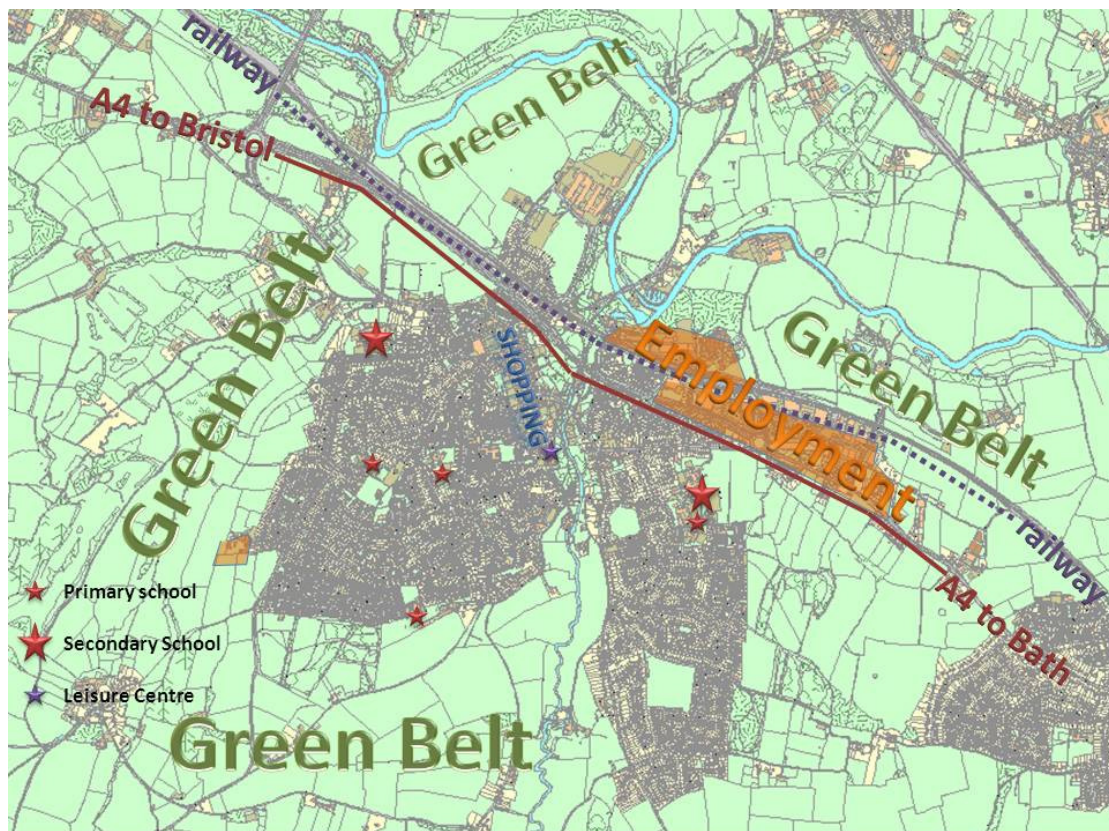
Keynsham Update

Keynsham has a strong sense of independence reflecting its ancient roots. Occupying a strategic location between Bath and Bristol, where the rivers Chew and Avon meet, it has good road and rail links to Bristol and Bath, the South Coast and beyond and is less than 30 min drive to Bristol International Airport. The town's rural setting is protected by Green Belt.

Keynsham was historically important in Roman and Saxon times, a busy market town in the Victorian and Edwardian periods and the site of the influential chocolate manufacturers Frys (which became Cadburys), in the 1920s. The town could be said to have been not achieving its potential since the 1970s.

Today Keynsham benefits from a busy High Street, a well-used public park and other attractions such as the marina and canal. It has a population of over 16,000 making it one of the largest urban areas in the district, although over half of the resident population travel to work elsewhere.

The town's dominant employer is the public sector, with Bath and North East Somerset Council's offices being located there. The town centre is characterised by local independent retailers, some large nationals, and charity shops, and the library and leisure complement the town centre's retail role.



Policy Context

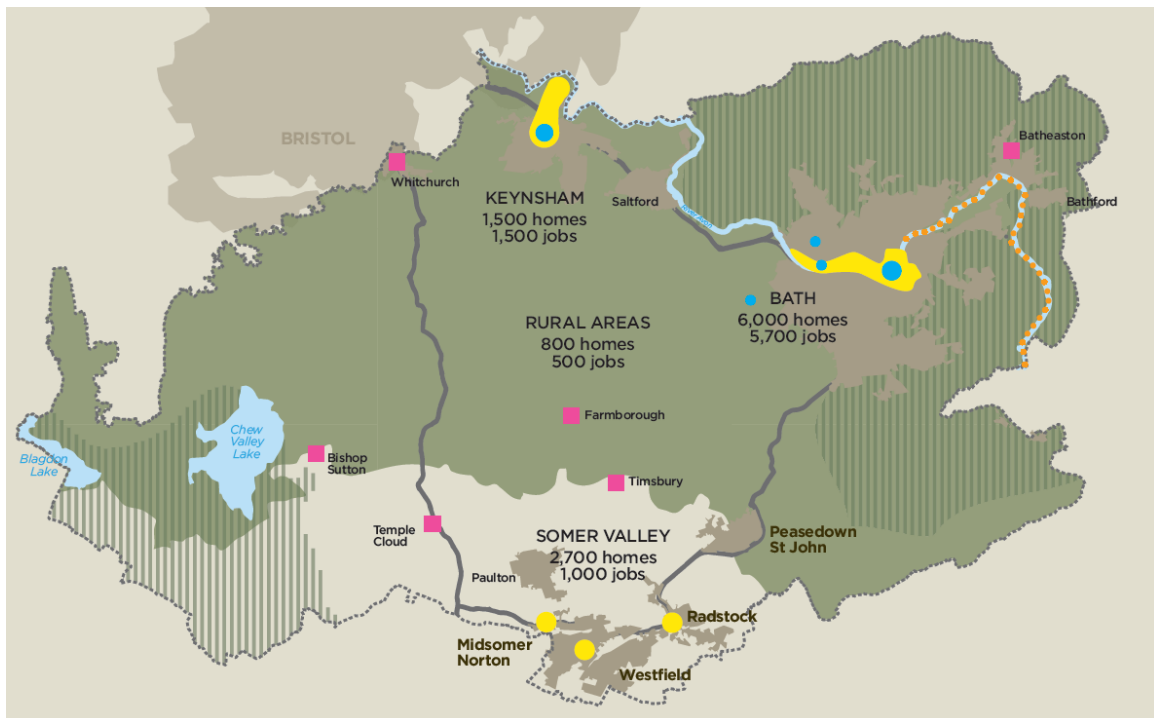
The Draft Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision for Keynsham:

'Keynsham is a historic town that occupies a strategically important location between Bristol and Bath and is therefore well placed to improve and attract investment. It will continue to act as a market town and service centre for the surrounding area. In responding to the loss of a major employer, it will evolve as a more significant business location. Keynsham will retain its independence and its separate identity within an attractive rural setting. It will become a more sustainable, desirable and well-connected place in which to live and work, with an enhanced town centre, inspired by its heritage, cherished rivers, park and green spaces'.

Policy KE1 of the Core Strategy identifies the key opportunities being the Town Centre and Somerdale and sets out placemaking principles to guide future development.

As part of the evidence base to this policy, B&NES consulted on a regeneration strategy for Keynsham in 2010. The overall strategy for the town centre looks to:

- Strengthen the shopping experience
- Create new jobs
- Improve the Park by linking the existing Memorial Park to the Hams.



Draft Core Strategy: District Wide Spatial Strategy

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- 60% out-commuting
- Lack of quality retail space
- Poor quality public realm
- Poor pedestrian connections
- Green belt

Opportunities:

- Town centre regeneration
- Strategically located
- Strengthen retail offer
- Build economic base
- Significant development opportunities
- Industrial and environmental area
- Improved train service

Key Development Sites Progress Update

Keynsham Regeneration Project

1) Keynsham Town Hall site:

The Keynsham Regeneration Project is a major redevelopment of the existing town hall site in Keynsham. The redevelopment aims to revitalise Keynsham and make better use of the town centre, and will ultimately maximise opportunities for retail business and encourage wider private sector investment into the town.

The project will deliver:

- New retail units
- An innovative 'one stop shop' and library for people to access local services together with a multifunctional community space
- New and improved public space
- New Low Carbon office space for Council and Partner staff
- Display space for Keynsham's historic artefacts

Planning consent has been secured and the Council's construction delivery partner Willmott Dixon has started demolition work on the site.

Willmott Dixon are working closely with the Council to maximise the benefit of the project to Keynsham and B&NES district. A couple of examples are listed below:

- A "Meet the Buyer" event is being arranged for the beginning of December where local contractors can learn more about forthcoming tender opportunities.
- Over the two year construction period, Willmott Dixon will provide training and employment opportunities for local people including two work placement opportunities for children leaving care, three apprenticeships and range of training outcomes.
- Developing links with Bath Spa University around a media project to log the progress of the build and changes to Keynsham
- Working with Keynsham Town Council, organise a graffiti youth project on the hoardings that surround the site

2) Riverside

The Council has commenced a study and on the options for the demolition and redevelopment of the Riverside Building. Once determined, the Council will start consulting with the community in the new year before any decision on the future of this site. The ideas being considered indicate that there could be a range of uses for the site and particularly housing, including town houses and retirement living for older people. The May 2012 [Cabinet report](#) obtained in principle agreement to the use of CPO powers to secure the future regeneration of the Riverside site if required.

3) Fire Station

Avon Fire and Rescue Service are considering consolidating their services at Bristol, Brislington and Keynsham and have identified the need to secure a more suitable location for response services. They have identified Keynsham as a potential site for back-office space and for a new fire station. As such they are working with the Council to bring forward their town centre site for redevelopment in line with the regeneration strategy for Keynsham town centre.

4) Leisure Centre

With the potential redevelopment of Riverside, the Council is considering options for the future of leisure provision in the town. Consultation on this will take place with the Riverside and Fire Station proposals.

Somerdale

Discussions continue with Taylor Wimpey, the preferred developer, and Kraft on the consultation process and planning strategy for the site. Taylor Wimpey are preparing to submit an outline planning application for the whole of the site, with Reserved Matters Consent for the first phase of development and the new Fry Club. The development is likely to deliver:

- 650-700 new homes, with 35% affordable housing that is pepper-potted throughout the housing development
- Deliver employment land / premises to create 1000 new jobs
- Create a new primary school and early years facility
- Re-provide the Fry Club and associated sports pitches

Working with the Council's archaeological officer, Taylor Wimpey has commissioned an archaeological evaluation of the whole of the former Cadbury's factory site. This ongoing evaluation has included a complete geophysical survey of the site and initial results have revealed evidence beneath the ground, on land outside the area identified for redevelopment and to the west of the former factory buildings, of what is likely to be part of the Roman town of TRAJECTVS (Trajectus). Once completed, the evaluation work will help to establish the full extent of the archaeology on the site and inform the development proposals planned for Somerdale. English Heritage has been advised and is working closely with Taylor Wimpey and the Council on this important new discovery to ensure the surviving remains are safeguarded for the future.

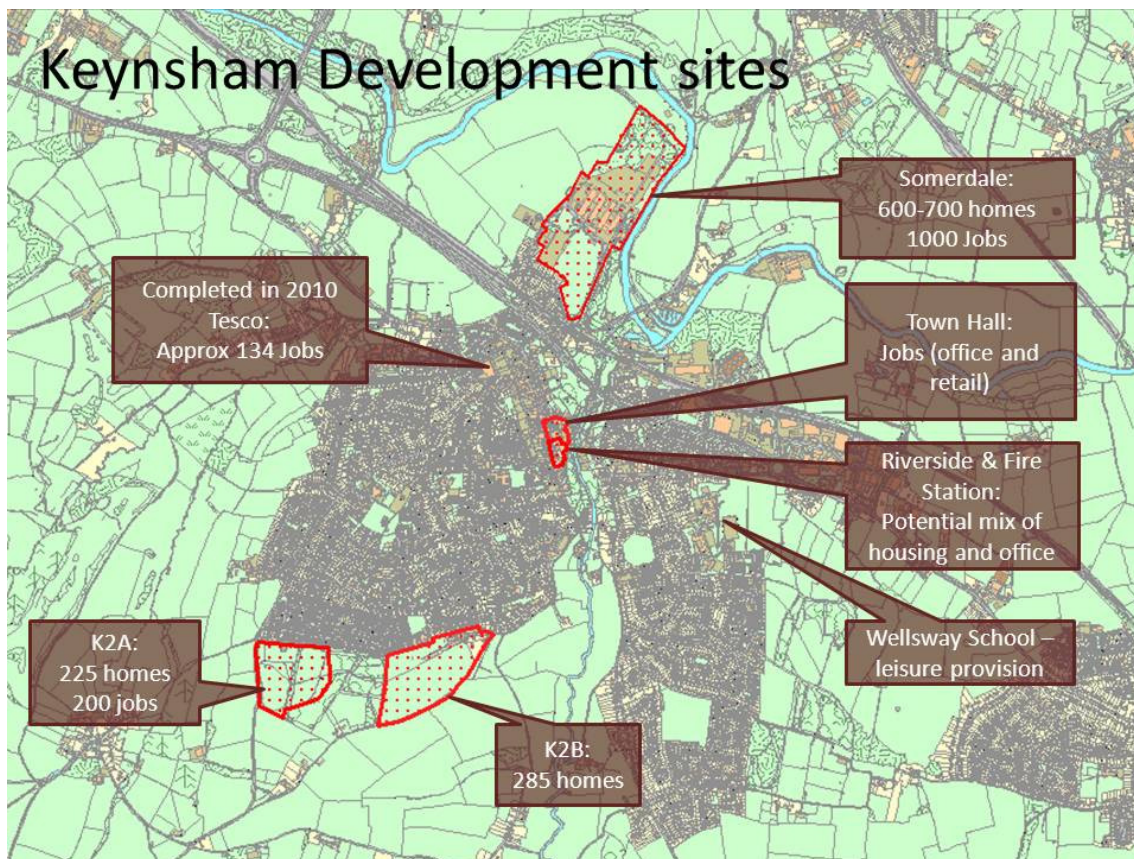
South West Keynsham

K2A

This is a council-owned site which is earmarked in the SHLAA for 235 homes. Marketing of the K2A housing site, through specialist consultants, has resulted in a number of offers for the K2A site. Detailed discussions are in course with shortlisted firms. The results of the marketing suggest that there is good interest in the market in building the full potential of the site.

K2B

Planning permission for 285 homes granted on appeal in July 2011. Taylor Wimpey is the developer and are currently undertaking work to satisfy the pre-commencement conditions in the planning consent. Taylor Wimpey is actively marketing new homes on their website.



Plan of development sites in Keynsham

Economic Development

Keynsham Town Council has recently established a Creative Industries Working Party which will serve as a forum for relevant parties to consult and co-ordinate all aspects of creative industries in Keynsham. The focus of the group is supporting the job creation in particular at Somerdale but also looking at the wider economic development of the town. Membership comprises representatives from Keynsham Town Council, B&NES Council, businesses/traders and landowners/developers.

Key actions of the group are to:

- Engage with Taylor Wimpey's marketing strategy for the commercial space at Somerdale
- Engage with Taylor Wimpey's commercial partner
- Develop close relationships with the four local universities
- Ensure that the employment space at Somerdale is successfully let
- Consider the development of a Keynsham brand for promotion of the area as a business location
- Liaise with Bath Spa University on a possible multi-media project, which would promote Keynsham as a business location.

Indicative Development Programme

The following table provides an indicative development programme highlighting the development sites described above.

