

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING: | Planning, Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel |
| MEETING DATE: | 7 th May 2013 |
| TITLE: | Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan Launch Document |
| WARD: | All |
| AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM | |
| List of attachments to this report: Annex 1: Bath and North East Somerset Placemaking Plan Launch Document | |

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Placemaking Plan is to facilitate the delivery of key development sites and in a way that meets community aspirations. The Placemaking Plan will complement the strategic framework in the Core Strategy by setting out detailed proposals for identified development sites including the new urban extensions proposed in the Core Strategy.
- 1.2 In the Somer Valley and the rural areas, where specific locations are not identified in the Core Strategy, the Placemaking Plan will provide a vehicle to work with local communities to identify appropriate development sites as needed.
- 1.3 The plan is intended to be produced in a collaborative way drawing on the principles set out in the Council's emerging Local Engagement Framework reported elsewhere on this agenda. This will ensure that B&NES work closely with local communities and other key stakeholders to identify valued assets for protection, opportunities for development and necessary infrastructure requirements.
- 1.4 There is an aspiration to adopt the Placemaking Plan by the end of 2014, and this is acknowledged as a very ambitious programme. The details of the collaborative process of producing the Placemaking Plan will need reflect this target programme.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The PTE Scrutiny Panel is asked to provide any comments on:

- 2.1 the Placemaking Plan Launch Document;

- 2.2 the broad programme of activity and actions contained in the introduction of the Launch Document; and
- 2.3 the collaborative approach that the Council is proposing to take with the production of the Placemaking Plan.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The preparation of the Placemaking Plan will be funded from the LDF budget. Primary costs are the need to secure essential evidence and specialist expertise on selected issues, and on the implementation of a comprehensive and collaborative process. The LDF Budget is funding the preparation of the Core Strategy, the Placemaking Plan, the CIL and the Gypsy & Travellers Plan and their programmes will need to reflect the available resources
- 3.2 The cross service nature of the site development work will require close collaboration between services and the appropriate arrangements are being established to enable this. This is particularly important given the ambitious programme for adoption.
- 3.3 The Placemaking Plan also needs to be prepared in partnership with local communities and stakeholders which will have different capacities to participate.

4 THE REPORT

Background

- 4.1 Purpose of the Placemaking Plan is to complement the strategic policy framework in the Core Strategy. Within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Placemaking Plan will:
- facilitate the delivery of key development sites by providing the necessary planning and site requirements to meet Council objectives (e.g. Economic Strategy, the City of Ideas)
 - safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of places in B&NES and identify opportunities for change.
 - be prepared in a collaborative way to ensure that it responds to the aspirations of local communities in line with the Council's emerging Local Engagement Framework.
 - address how infrastructure requirements will be met and how other obstacles to the delivery of development sites will be overcome. It will update the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Plan

be prepared to be aligned with the production of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Key Sites

- 4.2 For the redevelopment of brownfield sites the Placemaking Plan will provide the necessary policy clarity on the nature and mix of uses; the quantum of development; design requirements; how sites relate to their surroundings and the role that different sites play in delivering a co-ordinated spatial strategy. For the additional housing areas proposed in the Core Strategy, the Placemaking Plan will set out more site specific detail and act as the vehicle for determining the revised Green Belt boundaries. The Placemaking Plan will set safeguards to ensure the harm to the environment is minimised and that development is well integrated and makes a positive contribution to local communities.

Site identification

- 4.3 In the Somer Valley and the rural areas where specific sites are not identified in the Core Strategy, preparation of the Placemaking Plan will require close working with local communities to identify appropriate sites for development within the context of the Core Strategy as well as to identify key assets to be safeguarded. However in light of the limited weight that can be attributed to the Core Strategy in advance of the Inspector's report due later this year, there will still be pressure for new development linked to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in the interim.

Policies

- 4.4 The Placemaking Plan will include a suite of Development Management policies which will be used to assess and determine planning applications. This provides a timely opportunity to respond to the NPPF and to develop positive and proactive policies to address key issues arising from both the NPPF and the Core Strategy. This is also the chance to review the adopted Local Plan policies which are becoming increasingly out of date and to consider if there are any new policies needed.
- 4.5 Policies to be reviewed will include those relating to design, housing density, minerals, nature conservation, historic environment, landscape and environmental protection. A more detailed policy framework will also be developed for Green Infrastructure which will provide the catalyst for promoting healthy and active lifestyles, high quality, multifunctional and connected open spaces, opportunities for local food cultivation as well as protecting and enhancing biodiversity. A policy framework to enable a shift to more sustainable modes of transport is also a key policy area to develop.

Delivery

- 5.6 One of the primary purposes of preparing the Placemaking Plan is to facilitate delivery of new development to meet the Council's objectives. The Placemaking Plan will do this by clarifying the planning requirements, addressing solutions to development obstacles, taking account of viability and taking a strategic view of infrastructure requirements. It will be prepared alongside the preparation of the CIL, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and a review of the S.106 planning obligations SPD to enable a coherent strategy.

Programme

- 5.7 The programme for producing the Placemaking Plan is to be finalised, but it will target adoption by the end of the 2014. This is acknowledged as a very ambitious programme that will require a concentration of corporate resources if it is to be achieved.
- 5.8 The collaborative approach to the production of the Placemaking Plan, whilst recognised as being essential to the quality of the outcome, will also need to be modified to take account of the accelerated programme. This process will need to be designed and communicated very clearly to communities and stakeholders so that we can maximise the benefits of a collaborative approach, within the confines of a very ambitious programme for delivery.
- 5.9 The aspiration to adopt the Placemaking Plan by the end of 2014 has the political support of the cross party LDF Steering Group, who recognise the benefits that the Placemaking Plan will provide to the communities of Bath and North East Somerset, and to enabling the delivery of corporate priorities such as the Enterprise Area, and housing delivery. They support the collaborative approach towards the production of the Placemaking Plan, whilst recognising the need for this to be tempered with the demands of the programme.
- 5.8 Whilst the Council's immediate plan-making priority is to focus on the Core Strategy hearings up to July 2013, the next six months is a critical stage in the preparation of the Placemaking Plan. The objective is to ensure the appropriate evidence is available to understand relevant issues; consider policy and alternative options; and collaborate with local communities. This will lead to the production of options for broad consideration and consultation. The significant variation in the nature of the district as well as the difference in policy requirements will lead to different approaches and range of options across B&NES.
- 5.9 Using the results from the Options consultation, the Council will prepare a draft Plan in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders for formal public consultation. This plan, along with the comments received, will be submitted for examination by an independent inspector. The weight that can be attributed to the Plan will increase as it progresses; gaining substantive weight once the inspector's report is received.

The Launch Document

- 5.9 The involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the preparation of the Placemaking Plan is crucial in order to produce an effective and deliverable plan, but this will need to be tempered given the ambitious programme for adopting the Placemaking Plan. This is particularly important in those places where significant change is expected or where there is the need to identify development sites. The purpose of the Launch Document is to stimulate discussion and to facilitate collaboration and joint working at an early stage in the process. The Launch Document sets out the proposed scope of the Placemaking Plan, the key issues to be addressed and an overview of how B&NES will work in collaboration with local communities.
- 5.10 The Launch Document sets out the timetable for the preparation of the Placemaking Plan to guide the input from local communities and what needs to

happen at different stages. B&NES will facilitate the input from local communities through a range of activities described in the Launch Document as appropriate, such as:

- informal discussions with different stakeholder and interest groups;
- holding bespoke events and workshops;
- using existing mechanisms such as Bath City Conference;
- assistance with, identifying and protecting valued assets, generating placemaking principles and site requirements, identifying infrastructure requests and priorities; and
- providing information, advice and guidance to local communities eg the Toolkit approach presented to the Parish workshop in February 2013.

5.11 These activities will vary from place to place as summarised. In the parished parts of the District, B&NES has already begun to work with local communities. However in Bath, more consideration will need to be given to how the Council will work with local communities to enable participation in the development of the Placemaking Plan. B&NES Council will take the lead on working up more detailed proposals for the urban extensions but in collaboration with relevant local communities. This work will be aligned with the Council's emerging Local Engagement Framework to ensure join-up between engagement work in localities

5.13 B&NES cannot offer direct financial resources to local communities but can offer help in a range of other ways including securing access to Government grants for local planning work. The Council held a workshop in February 2013 to initiate work with Town and Parish Councils on the Placemaking Plan. The Council can assist local communities with toolkits to undertake local character and site assessments which will help to identify important local assets for protection, areas for enhancement and management of change. This will assist in the identification of appropriate development opportunities and the review of Housing Development Boundaries. B&NES can also provide information on aspects such as population, housing stock survey, traffic data and housing need.

5.14 The role of the development industry also needs to be recognised in the preparation of the plan in order to ensure deliverable and viable proposals and the emphasis in the Localism Act that developers undertake early engagement with communities on large development schemes.

The Placemaking Plan & Neighbourhood Planning

5.15 The Localism Act 2012 seeks to devolve a degree of plan-making to local communities in order to facilitate new development. Local Communities can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan but it must be in conformity with the District Council's Plan and the NPPF. The focus of the workload is on the community, including plan preparation, evidence preparation and examination and not all areas have the capacity to support this. Funding for Neighbourhood Planning only covers cost if a Neighbourhood Plan is successful at examination. Grants are available for communities but these are limited nationally. Resources will limit B&NES' ability to facilitate Neighbourhood Plan preparation and is therefore proposing to work in collaboration with local communities via the Placemaking Plan.

- 5.16 The Placemaking plan can achieve the same ends as Neighbourhood Planning but in a more efficient and cost effective way and in the same time-frame. The Placemaking Plan route will enable B&NES to assist in community engagement, lead the examination process negate the need for a local referendum and associated campaigning and offer technical support.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 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.

7 EQUALITIES

a) An EqIA has not been completed as the launch of the Placemaking Plan represents the first stage in its preparation and no policy direction is being proposed at this stage. The Placemaking Plan will be prepared in the context of the parent document, the Core Strategy, for which an EqIA has been completed.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 *Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Parish Council; Town Council; Trades Unions; Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Youth Council; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Charter Trustees of Bath; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

- 8.2 The introduction to the launch document in Annex 1 sets out the proposed approach to public engagement. The Plan must also be prepared in a way which fulfils the duty to co-operate, including consultation with prescribed consultees.

9 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

- 9.1 *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations*

10 ADVICE SOUGHT

- 10.1 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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| Contact person | <i>David Trigwell, Divisional Director - Planning and Transport, 01225 394125</i> <i>Simon de Beer, Policy & Environment Manager, 01225 477616</i> |
| Background papers | <i>Submitted Core Strategy</i> |
| Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format | |

ANNEX 1: B&NES PLACEMAKING PLAN LAUNCH DOCUMENT