

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Housing & Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2013
TITLE:	<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Core Strategy:</b> Update on Proposed Changes and public consultation
WARD:	ALL
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>	

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report sets out an update on the Core Strategy. Following the Examination hearings last year the Inspector issued his preliminary conclusions. In response the Council has undertaken further work and proposed a number of changes to its Submitted Core Strategy agreed at the Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March. The Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy are subject to public consultation between 26<sup>th</sup> March and 8<sup>th</sup> May. The key changes proposed to the Core Strategy, as well as information on the public consultation and some of the issues raised are outlined in the report.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Housing & Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to note and comment on the:
- 2.2 proposed changes to the Core Strategy; and
- 2.3 the consultation being undertaken and the emerging public response

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The work to date on the Core Strategy has been funded out of the LDF budget. The costs of additional work required to support the Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy approved by Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March also necessitated drawing down on reserves identified for that purpose by Cabinet. As set out in the next steps (paragraph 4.16 of this Report) the Core Strategy Examination Hearings are anticipated to resume in summer of 2013. The costs associated with the resumed Examination will be significant and will be met out of the LDF budget. The Core

Strategy is a key priority of the Planning Policy team and therefore, significant staff time during the first half of 2013/14 will be devoted to it.

#### **4.0 THE REPORT**

4.1 The Council submitted its Core Strategy for Examination in 2011. The Core Strategy examination hearings were held in January and March 2012. In June 2012 the Inspector issued his preliminary conclusions ([ID/28](#) and [ID/30](#)). In responding to the Inspector's preliminary conclusions the Council has undertaken significant further work and is proposing changes to the Core Strategy. These changes were agreed for consultation by Council on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **Inspector's Preliminary Conclusions**

4.2 The Inspector's key conclusions in respect of housing were the need for:

- a NPPF compliant assessment of the housing requirement (he was concerned that the Submitted Core Strategy may not be planning for sufficient housing)
- inclusion of the shortfall from the B&NES Local Plan in the housing figure
- a 20% buffer to the 5 year housing land supply
- flexibility needed in the event of delay in bringing forward complex, brownfield sites
- further work on the sequential and exception flood risk tests
- a 15 year plan period following adoption
- greater consideration of affordable housing requirements

4.3 There were also a limited number of other policies on which the Inspector expressed concerns. These included:

- the blanket requirement for all housing sites to provide 35% affordable housing doesn't reflect the evidence of variations in viability across the district
- the requirements of the District Heating policy are too onerous
- the accommodation needs assessment for the Travelling Community should be updated
- the need to ensure sufficient flexibility is available in Bath & Keynsham to facilitate economic growth
- Clarification on the Council's policy on the future of the Recreation Ground in Bath

4.4 The Council has undertaken significant further work to address these issues which is briefly summarised below.

#### **Council Work to Address Housing/Strategy Related Issues**

##### Review of Housing Requirement (NPPF compliant) and Housing Land Supply

4.5 The Council has reviewed its housing requirement and housing land supply through two studies, and as a result of this work a number of changes are proposed to the Plan:

- The **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** was undertaken in accordance with the NPPF/national guidance and the latest best practice. It assesses demographics, market trends and other statistics, and identifies the housing requirement for B&NES. This updates the 2010 SHMA for B&NES.
- An assessment of the District's potential housing land supply has been undertaken through the **Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (SHLAA)**. It assesses the potential of sites to be suitable, deliverable and developable during the plan period and is part of the evidence base. Before development can proceed on sites assessed in SHLAA some will be allocated for development in the Placemaking Plan and for all planning permission needs to be granted.

4.6 Briefly the results of this work are set out below.

**Housing Land Supply:** SHLAA confirms existing supply as set out below.

*Table: Existing housing supply*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%*</b>
Bath	6,285	58%
Keynsham	1,641	15%
Somer Valley	2,095	19%
Rural Areas	831	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,852</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*NB totals rounded*

**Housing Requirement:** the table below summarises the results of considering the requirement for additional housing emerging from the SHMA and making provision for meeting the backlog of housing supply from the Local Plan and ensuring a five year land supply plus a 20% buffer. The overall requirement is around 12,700 dwellings.

*Table: Summary of the assessment of the housing requirement for B&NES*

	<b>Plan Period (18 yrs)</b>	<b>plus backlog</b>	<b>SHLAA Supply</b>	<b>Additional for Affordable Housing</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Homes</b>	7,470	8,637	10,852	1,870	<b>12,722</b>

4.7 The above shows that around an additional 1,870 dwellings need to be provided over and above the existing supply. Having already maximised opportunities on brownfield sites and in order to meet the housing need in the most sustainable way, the identification of additional locations, including the release of land from the Green Belt, is necessary.

## Spatial Strategy Changes to Provide Additional Housing

- 4.8 The NPPF (para 182) requires that the Council will need to demonstrate that it has chosen the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives based on a proportionate evidence base. Locations were assessed against the requirements of the NPPF and the seven Core Strategy objectives. Sustainability Appraisal was at the heart of this process and is the key tool in comparing the options. A number of other key areas of work have informed the determination of the locations to be taken forward including a Green Belt Review; Infrastructure assessment (to ensure that development is aligned with the provision of necessary infrastructure); and Deliverability (to ensure the individual locations/sites are deliverable and there is sufficient flexibility in the overall strategy).

### Changes to the Core Strategy

- 4.9 As a result of the work outlined above a range of locations have been identified in order to accommodate additional development (primarily housing). The proposed changes to the Core Strategy include the proposal to remove land from the Green Belt on the edge of Bath, Keynsham and SE Bristol. The additional housing (1,870 homes) required is proposed to be provided as follows:

Location/Area	New homes
Adjoining Bath (Odd Down, Weston and Lansdown)	720
Adjoining Keynsham (east and south western sides of town)	450
Adjoining SE Bristol (Whitchurch)	200
Somer Valley (locations not specified)	300
Rural Areas (some additional housing in villages meeting Policies RA1 and RA2 criteria)	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,870</b>

- 4.10 Land on the eastern side of Keynsham is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt not only to provide around 250 homes but also to provide a significant amount of new employment floorspace. This is necessary to help meet Keynsham's economic needs and to help maintain the strategy of balanced homes and jobs provision within the town, as well as providing flexibility within the strategy to facilitate job growth in both Keynsham and Bath as required by the Inspector.
- 4.11 The resultant changes proposed to the Core Strategy are set out in the Schedule of Proposed Changes and are summarised in a Core Strategy Update newspaper produced for public consultation which is a background paper to this Report and can be found at: [http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Core-Strategy/ProposedChanges/scspc\\_consultation\\_newspaper.pdf](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Core-Strategy/ProposedChanges/scspc_consultation_newspaper.pdf)
- 4.12 Other key changes proposed to the Core Strategy to meet the Inspector's preliminary conclusions include:
- Change to the Affordable Housing Policy (CP9) to take a split target approach seeking 30% affordable housing in some parts of the District and 40% in other areas. This approach reflects updated viability evidence.

- Amendment to the District Heating Policy (CP4) to focus only on the 3 most promising locations (priority areas) in expecting development to incorporate district heating infrastructure
- Policy CP11 on Gypsy & Traveller accommodation amended to reflect more up to date evidence on pitch requirements
- Policy relating to Bath Recreation Ground amended to provide greater clarity in supporting its redevelopment to provide a sporting/leisure stadium

### **Consultation on the Core Strategy Changes**

- 4.13 The proposed changes to the Core Strategy are being consulted on for a 6 week period from 26<sup>th</sup> March to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The consultation has been widely publicised using a variety of media, including Council website; mail out to all parties on the LDF mailing list; social media e.g. twitter; and press release published in local newspapers. The Council also held a number of public consultation events in each of the locations most affected by the Core Strategy changes.
- 4.14 The public events were attended by significant numbers of interested and concerned residents and businesses. A wide range of issues were raised at these events. The key/most frequently raised issues included the following:

#### All Locations

- Queried whether the Council is planning for the right level of growth and whether projected demographic/household growth will really come forward
- Council must seek to maximise development on brownfield sites and phase brownfield sites to be delivered before greenfield locations released

#### Locations at Bath

- Concern as to whether exceptional circumstances to justify release of land from the Green Belt on the edge of Bath can be shown
- Impact of development on the Cotswolds AONB and concern that development in the AONB (Weston and Odd Down) cannot be justified against NPPF tests
- Surface water/drainage impacts of development at Weston cannot be solved/mitigated
- Concerns around availability of land for development at Weston
- Impact of development on ecological interests at Weston and Odd Down (e.g. bats)
- Questioned whether adequate vehicular access can be provided at Weston (e.g. close to Primrose Hill) and Odd Down (e.g. from South Stoke Lane)
- Objection to a bus route passing through Sulis Meadows area of existing housing in order to serve new development adjoining Odd Down
- Concerns around transport impact of development (local and city-wide)
- Impact of development on Heritage Assets e.g. World Heritage Site and its setting; Bath Conservation Area (especially Primrose Hill); and the Wansdyke and South Stoke Conservation Area (land adjoining Odd Down)
- Need to maintain current separation of Bath and South Stoke village
- Objection to development of various fields within both Weston and Odd Down locations

### Land at Whitchurch

- Concern regarding the amount of housing proposed – need to consider the proposal for 200 additional homes in the context of the current size of the village
- Questioned whether there is local demand or need for 200+ new homes over the next 20 years in Whitchurch
- Pressure of new development on existing local services, such as schools
- Significant concern regarding the impact on the local and wider road network given significant current congestion on A37
- Impact of new development on the character of the village
- Clarification sought on how the 200 homes proposed in the Core Strategy relates to current or publicly known future planning applications (i.e. Orchard Park, Staunton Lane and Horseworld proposal)

### Somer Valley

- Clarification needed regarding where and how the additional 300 dwellings will be accommodated – views expressed that it should be shared equally between the larger settlements in the Somer Valley and not all directed towards Midsomer Norton
- Objections to the existing planning applications for housing sites adjoining Midsomer Norton/Westfield (Monger Lane and Fosseyway South)
- Greater clarity needed on existing housing commitments e.g. deliverability of the NRR development is uncertain and cannot be relied on.
- Need for a clear plan to facilitate 900 jobs net increase.
- No housing should be allowed without contributing to economic development in the SV.
- Need transport impact assessment for the total housing and economic development for the SV. New development will significantly worsen the traffic congestion

### Keynsham

- Some understanding that additional housing is needed at Keynsham – town is in a relatively sustainable location and additional housing will help to alter the population profile and keep local services viable
- Concern about cumulative impact of additional development adjoining Keynsham and within the town (especially Somerdale) on the highway network
- Specifically with regard to SW Keynsham concern that further development could lead to greater use of minor roads/'rat run' through Chewton Keynsham (Redlynch Lane) – need for the Council to look at potential solutions
- East of Keynsham – general acceptance of some development here as long as a green corridor/separation between Keynsham and Saltford is retained and Community Woodland is retained and, if possible, enhanced
- Some support for development east of Keynsham as it will provide additional job creation opportunities and will also help to facilitate aspirations for river to play a more prominent role
- Most important Green Belt gap to retain is that between Keynsham and Bristol
- Concern around Manor Road application in Saltford

- Support that the Council is not proposing development in the Uplands area – although acceptance that the landowner may continue to promote development here

4.15 As public consultation lasts until 8<sup>th</sup> May written comments are still being received and analysed. It is anticipated that these comments will reflect many of the issues raised above. It may be possible to give a verbal update on the overall number and content of the comments received at the meeting.

### **Next Steps**

4.16 The comments received on the Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy will be analysed by the Council and supplied to the Inspector. It is anticipated the Inspector will resume the Examination hearings later this year. Following the resumed hearings the Council should receive the Inspector's Report in the autumn and should be able to adopt the Core Strategy before the end of 2013.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## **6 EQUALITIES**

6.1 An EqIA has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 *Cabinet Member; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer*

7.2 No consultation is required on the revisions to the LDS. The revised consultation periods for the LDF documents will be set out in the revised Local Development Scheme.

## **8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

- a. *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations*

## **9 ADVICE SOUGHT**

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

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>David Trigwell (Divisional Director - Planning and Transport, Planning and Transport Development 01225 394125)</i>
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<b>Background papers</b>	<p><i>Inspector's Preliminary Conclusions (Refs ID/28 and ID/30)</i></p> <p><i>Schedule of Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy</i></p> <p><i>Core Strategy Update (summary newspaper produced for public consultation)</i></p> <p><i>National Planning Policy Framework March 2012</i></p>
<p><b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b></p>	



## APPENDIX 1: OPTIONS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVIEW

Plan	Existing Programme	Implications of CS suspension	Cost implications 2012/13	Conclusion
Core Strategy (DPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspector's report March 2012</li> <li>Adoption June 2012</li> </ul>	<p>The re-assessment of housing need and the review of the strategy will take around 6 months. The Council will then need to formally agree changes to the CS and then consult. The hearings are therefore likely to resume by July 2013.</p>	<p>The further work generated by the suspension will generate additional LDF costs which will need to be found through a review of the LDS priorities</p>	<p>Completion &amp; adoption of the CS is the first priority and this will be the focus of the LDF budget &amp; staff resources during 2012/13 and early 2013/14. This will have implications for other LDF plans, the programmes of which will need to be reviewed (Report due for Cabinet 12/9/12)</p>
G&T Plan (DPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Plan due December 2012</li> <li>Hearings June 2013</li> <li>Inspector's report Sept 2013</li> <li>Adoption Dec 2013</li> </ul>	<p>Review of Core Strategy necessitates a review of opportunities for sites outside the Green Belt</p> <p>Also need to review the needs assessment.</p> <p>The post consultation 'stock take' will entail a delay of around 6 months</p>	<p>Additional cost arising from stocktake includes a new needs assessment</p>	<p>See separate item on the PTE agenda which sets out the next steps for the G&amp;T Plan</p>
Place-making Plan (DPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options consultation Jan 2013</li> <li>Draft Pan Sept 2013</li> <li>Submit Dec 2013</li> <li>Hearings March 2014</li> <li>Report June 2014</li> <li>Adoption July 2014</li> </ul>	<p>Publication of options will need to be delayed by 3 months because it must wait for the review of the CS may lead to a review of locational options. In addition, the Inspector's concerns about the need for flexibility in site delivery will require a review of the SHLAA. However there are savings in</p>	<p>There is insufficient staff &amp; financial resources in LDF budget to undertake all 3 DPDs.</p>	<p>Options for progressing the PMP will be considered by Cabinet 12/9/12</p>

		undertaking a combined consultation		
MoD Concept Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due for endorsement Sept 2012</li> </ul>	None (other than to be absorbed into the Placemaking Plan)	None	No change - Endorse as planned in Sept 2012
CIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult on Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) Sep 2012</li> <li>• Exam March 2013</li> <li>• Report June 2013</li> <li>• Adopt Sep 2013</li> </ul>	<p>DCS cannot be agreed until the changes to the Core Strategy have been agreed and cannot be submitted until the Core Strategy Inspector has issued his report ie the CIL must be based on an up-to-date Local Plan. Revised programme;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult on DCS June 2013</li> <li>• Submit Oct 2013</li> <li>• Hearings Jan 2014</li> <li>• Report March 2014</li> <li>• Adopt April 2014</li> </ul>	<p>No further spend during 2012/13 as costs delayed to 2013/14.</p> <p>Loss of revenue arising from the delay in the programme is limited because there is contingency in the current programme (depending on the transitional arrangements )</p>	Progress preparation of CIL alongside Core Strategy. This will entail a delay of around 6 months but will still enable adoption of CIL in April 20124 in time to limit the loss of CIL income
S106 SPD	Due to be revised alongside publication of CIL Draft Charging Schedule	This is linked to CIL work therefore the review will be delayed to 2013/14 alongside the revised date for the CIL DCS publication. In the meantime, undertake a limited interim update in 2012/12 to ensure it is up-to-date	Cost of full review delayed from 2012/13 to 2013/14.	Full review 2013/14 aligned with CIL work
Article 4 Direction	Confirm Direction March 2013	No implications	'Ring -fenced' budget provided over & above LDF budget. No changes for 2012/13.	Could abandon but significant progress has been made and there is significant public support for the proposal

				No change to programme No change This is integral to the Article 4 Direction work
SPD on Housing in Multiple Occupation	Consult Oct 2012 Adopt March 2013	No implications	Limited LDF budget is needed for consultation on SPD	
Sustainable Construction & retrofitting SPD	Due to be adopted Sep 2012 (now delayed to Nov 2012)	None other than it will supplement the Local Plan pending adoption of the Core Strategy	No change 2012/13. Budget in LDF already committed and bulk of the work completed.	No change to programme
World Heritage Site Setting SPD	Due to be adopted Sep 2012 (now delayed to Nov 2012)	None other than it will supplement the Local Plan until the CS is finalised	No change 2012/13. Budget in LDF already committed and bulk of the work completed.	No change to programme
Neighbourhood Planning Protocol	Adopt in Sep 2012	None – adopt as scheduled	No change 2012/13. Budget in LDF already committed and bulk of the work completed.	No change to programme
Neighbourhood Plans	The Council has the duty to support communities who want to prepare NPs etc.	None	No additional financial costs are expected during 2012/13 and no additional budgetary provision has been made (other than £20k grant for Freshford & Limpley Stoke pilot). In future years Council may have to make financial provision to meet its obligations ie pay for referenda & exams. Costs will be dependent on the local demand. However the NPP & the PMP will be tools to prevent the work escalating too significantly	Preparation of NPs will therefore be curbed if there is significant demand.
Visitor Accommodation SPD	No timetable has yet been formally agreed although a draft SPD was anticipated in late	Review programme in light of the work on CS.	Provision was made by Cabinet for this work over & above the LDF budget	Programme to be considered by Cabinet on 12/9/12

	2012			
“Advertise ments & Banners” in Bath	No timetable has yet been formally agreed although a proposal was anticipated in late 2012	Review programme in light of the work on CS.	Provision was made by Cabinet for this work over & above the LDF budget	Programme to be considered by Cabinet on 12/9/12

