

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Date: Thursday, 21st March, 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

Councillors: Andy Wait, Grant Johnson, Michael Auton, Alex Beaumont,
Anna Box, Jess David, Ian Halsall, John Leach, Saskia Heijltjes and June Player



Michaela Gay

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NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

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**Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel -
Thursday, 21st March, 2024**

at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

- (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
- (b) The nature of their interest.
- (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** or **an other interest**,
(as defined in Part 4.4 Appendix B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 18)

11th January 2024

19th February 2024 (Call in meeting)

8. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will update the Panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions on the update provided.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAR PARKING PROPOSALS AGREED IN THE

BUDGET

This report will be published at a later date.

10. BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN OPTIONS (Pages 19 - 36)
11. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 37 - 40)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel. Any suggestions for further items or amendments to the current programme will be logged and scheduled in consultation with the Panel's Chair and supporting senior officers.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Michaela Gay who can be contacted on 01225 394411.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Thursday, 11th January, 2024

Present:- **Councillors** Andy Wait, Michael Auton, Jess David, John Leach, Alex Beaumont, Saskia Heijltjes, Grant Johnson and Shaun Hughes (in place of June Player)

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Anna Box

35 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Councillors Manda Rigby and Joel Hirst who were joining the meeting remotely (*the Chair thanked officers for making this possible*).

36 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Player gave her apologies, she was substituted by Councillor Hughes.

Councillor Box gave her apologies

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

39 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

40 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Mike Earle made a statement regarding 'The three initial trial Liveable Neighbourhood Schemes (LTNs) and the public availability of relevant data'.
A copy is attached to the minutes.

Cllr Duncan Hounsell - B&NES ward councillor (Saltford ward) made a statement on Liveable Neighbourhoods with reference to Queen Charlton.
A copy is attached to the minutes.

Adam Reynolds made a statement regarding 'Low Traffic Neighbourhoods'. *A copy is attached to the minutes.*

Ceris Humphreys made a statement regarding 'My experience of the area in which the New Sydney Place and Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood is proposed'.

Racheal Hushon regarding 'Liveable Neighbourhoods'. *A copy is attached to the minutes.*

Professor Christine Harrington made a statement regarding 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' - Lead Person of the New Sydney Place and Sydney Road Action Group, and author of the submission of the New Sydney Place LTN Proposal in February 2021. *A copy is attached to the minutes.*

Robert Hardman made a statement regarding 'Liveable Neighbourhoods - the one way system in Lyme gardens'

Malcolm Baldwin, Chair - Circus Area Residents Association made a statement regarding 'The importance and context of the Circus Area/Catharine Place Liveable Neighbourhood implementation'. *A copy is attached to the minutes.*

41 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

42 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Sarah Warren, Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet She explained that the Cabinet have been working on the Budget proposals; Economic Strategy; Local Plan and SVEZ (Somerset Valley Enterprise Zone) along with the following:

- Sustainable Transport – consultation on schemes
- Bid to WECA regarding EV (Electric Vehicle) charging
- Transport Plan
- Social prescribing – Active Way Project Somerset Valley
- Renewable Energy – 2 care homes have solar panels which makes 5 buildings this year and 12 on the Council Estate.
- Retro fit – 'Green Homes' event was run in November
- Heritage retrofit
- WECA rural funding – applications have just opened.

Panel member questions:

Councillor Hughes asked if EV (Electric Vehicle) charging would be on roads rather than pavements. The Executive Director - Sustainable Communities explained that

this would be explored with the provider – it will be a partnership and will depend on the location. There will be engagement with ward members.

Councillor Johnson asked about the capacity regarding EV charging – will people have to leave cars charging overnight, potentially in a different street. The Executive Director stated that this was a useful consideration.

Councillor Heijltjes asked for an update regrading on street parking for E bikes and E scooters. The Cabinet Member confirmed that an officer will be visiting her ward as introducing E bikes has changed the parking arrangement.

Councillor Johnson asked for an update regarding solar panels on maintained schools. The Executive Director stated that she would update the panel on the pipeline for this.

Councillor Wait updated the Panel regarding solar panels in Keynsham – there is a meeting next week on this.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if the Transport Action Plan could be added to the workplan for the Panel. She also asked if there could be a School Streets audit. The Cabinet Member stated that work is currently being carried out on School Streets. She agreed to the Transport Action Plan update for the Panel.

43 LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Highways - Councillor Manda Rigby and Cabinet Project Lead for Highways: Councillor Joel Hirst gave a presentation which covered the following:

- Liveable Neighbourhoods programme
- Liveable Neighbourhoods programme funding
- Existing Liveable Neighbourhood trial schemes
- Existing Liveable Neighbourhood trial schemes – key outcomes from surveys and monitoring
- Existing Liveable Neighbourhood trial schemes – some public comments
- Proposed Liveable Neighbourhood trial schemes for Spring 2024
- Development of the Full Business Case
- Future development of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme

Panel members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Leach stated that Liveable Neighbourhood schemes must be well designed so that they do not have to be reversed. He asked how the preliminary designs are put together after the co-design workshops with residents. The Cabinet Member explained that the original suggestions come from the community which is then put through Highways Engineers and our consultants.

Councillor Heijltjes asked what the point of the scrutiny session is if the Single Member Decision will be made tomorrow. She asked that the decisions go to the Cabinet and that the business case be shared with the Panel. The Cabinet Member

stated that the Panel are scrutinising whether the Cabinet are doing things in line with what was laid out, individual decisions on separate schemes were not planned to come to the Panel.

Councillor Johnson (Paulton ward) stated that he did not know Bath as well as some others so it would have been useful to see some more detail (maps) showing before and after data from the current trials. The Cabinet Member stated that the Panel are checking that plans are in line with policies that have already been decided and stated that all information will be available on the website regarding the Single Member Decisions.

Councillor David explained that she had been involved in some community work which had identified a crossing point/traffic calming/pavement widening and asked if this type of work would still be taken forward if there are funding methods available. The Cabinet Member stated that none of the community work would be wasted and it is identifying funding streams that is the key determinant. Some of the schemes score highly due to the traffic restriction criteria. She stated that maybe some unspent money could forward such schemes. The overarching policy was about health and wellbeing and making it easier to walk and cycle.

Councillor Leach asked if several designs were considered for each scheme. The Cabinet Member explained that the officers and consultants got a shopping list of potential interventions. They did not have a 2/3 year period to look at every scheme possible. With the ETRO's – the trial is, in effect part of the consultation. We have done all we can to take in all evidence and tweaks can be made to the schemes on the ground.

Councillor Leach asked if other options were considered where modal filter location options were assessed. The Director of Place Management explained that the officers and consultants consider the best area for the modal filter based on feedback from the community.

Councillor Heijltjes stated that some of the 15 schemes include through traffic restrictions (eg Lyme Gardens) and other do not. The Cabinet Project Lead stated that the Lyme Gardens scheme is a proposal as part of a bigger piece. He stated that he is keen to explore the 'school street' element. Not all schemes could be worked up in the time so schemes that were deliverable in the timeline were identified. We tried to include a range of geographies.

Councillor Hughes asked if the Cabinet Member was happy with engagement in terms of the consultation response being balanced between residents and those living in areas of displacement. The Cabinet Member stated that some people will say we do too much engagement and others say not enough. We went out of our way to have drop-in sessions. We decided to go down the trial route which in effect is the consultation. We have to balance the responses such as the comparison between somebody having to drive 3 minutes longer and health and safety of the wider area.

Councillor Leach asked about the level of traffic analysis for each of the designs. Cathryn Brown - Senior Project Manager, explained that in the wider Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme the approach has been the trial and monitoring. Some have

had baseline monitoring before a pilot and then continued monitoring to allow comparison.

It was explained that Councillor Leach's further questions (with answers supplied by officers and the Cabinet Member) would be circulated to Panel members and appended to the minutes.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if the circulation plans could be brought to the Panel.

44 DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25 - PROPOSALS WITHIN PUBLIC CONSULTATION (RELEVANT TO THE PANEL REMIT)

The Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel - Councillor Sarah Warren and the Cabinet Member for Highways - Councillor Manda Rigby introduced the item and answered the Panel questions along with Sophie Broadfield - Executive Director of Sustainable Communities and Chris Major – Director of Place Management.

Councillor Warren stated that local government is facing challenges in managing intense pressures on budgets and recently a number of councils have issued S114 notices. In 2013 our Revenue Support Grant from central government was £31m, this year, it's £800k. She explained that we can bid for government grants for one-off specific purposes but this involves working up competitive bids which takes a lot of officer time, and makes it difficult to plan. The pressures on spending, particularly in social care (statutory service), accounts for a large portion of the budget. This means discretionary areas - such as Green Transformation – have less available.

Councillor Warren stated that on Green Transformation - the proposed budget for next year we will sustain levels of funding to support the corporate priority on climate and ecological emergencies. Many of the new posts across Green Transformation and Strategic Transport teams are in place. She stated that the Council will: invest in renewable energy generating infrastructure on the Council estate, contributing to our 12MW target for Council-generated energy; work with partners to develop new renewables projects contributing to our district-level targets of an additional 300MW generating capacity by 2030; work with WECA and with local partners to support scale up of retrofit activity across the district; increase work with communities to raise awareness and support local action for climate and nature; implement biodiversity net gain through the planning system and continue to take action on sustainable transport.

(Delivery of significant improvements in public transport infrastructure through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, A4 Bristol to Bath Corridor and Somer Valley Links projects. Developing an active travel masterplan to help shape and inform future roll out of active travel infrastructure. Working with the combined authority to develop and deliver electric vehicle charging points across the district. Earmarking £2m of our CAZ reserve to commence the build out of the Scholars' way cycle route, as well as a supplement for local highways improvement schemes

aiming to improve pedestrian safety around the district in support of our recent vision zero declaration).

Panel members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor David asked if there was any more information regarding the parks teams' operational strategy. The officer commented that the importance of open spaces is acknowledged, however these spaces cost £2.5m per year to maintain and a few options are being considered that would save money – this would be a small percentage of the overall spend. He further explained that the entirety of the model will be looked at and there may be some tough decisions regarding future development but there is a recognition of the importance of green spaces. He agreed to give the panel more information on the review.

Councillor Johnson asked about the additional top up payments regarding WECA and strategic transport. The Executive Director explained that there is a proposal to not provide the uplift to the transport levy as was done last year in recognition of the significant underspend regarding concessionary fares. The Cabinet Member added that she will continue to lobby the WECA Mayor to restore bus services. The Executive Director explained that it was a decision for the WECA Mayor on how to spend the top up.

Councillor Hughes asked about proposed changes to recycling centre opening times. The officer explained that there is consultation on a proposal to reduce opening hours in terms of opening on certain days of the week (while the Pixash site would remain open 7 days per week). He stated that there may be a reduction in hours to certain sites but that this is not a redundancy issue as there would be reallocation to other sites. He explained that the booking system works well and people will book on the days where sites are available (or if they have an urgent issues, use the Pixash site). He assured the Panel that there is still capacity to maintain the number of bookings and that this model is mirrored in other authorities.

Councillor Rigby – Cabinet Member for Highways – explained that there are two major proposals under this portfolio as set out below:

- Line painting – we have assets that require investment. We have fallen behind on resurfacing, potholes, line painting etc. and are trying to get back to a certain level. Health and safety is the priority regarding the programme.
- Extending emissions-based parking charges to other authority car parks. This is the sliding scale regarding car emissions. There are currently no charges in some car parks within the authority. She stated that there is a need to make places healthier and safer and offering free parking does not help us to maintain the asset. She stated that a turnover of car parking spaces is good for the high street. This is an extension of the principle in Bath of 'polluter pays'. She ended by stating that very few places up and down the country offer free parking.

Panel members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Johnson stated that this is a U-turn on a decision on parking charges from 2 years ago. He stated that the arguments are counterproductive – parking is

restricted to 4/5 hours anyway, so people do not park all day every day. He added that the high street is fragile and charges would make this situation worse. He asked where there was detailed research as to why this should happen. The officer stated that there is limited data around overstays where there are no charges in the car park. It is difficult to prove a negative. He stated that there was formal consultation.

Councillor Hughes stated that Midsomer Norton high street cannot be compared to Keynsham high street where there has been significant investment to improve footfall. Bath also has a lot of money spent on it and by comparison, Midsomer Norton is neglected and some businesses will not survive. People will park in the Tesco car park which offers free parking. He added that there is not an issue with air pollution in Midsomer Norton and that cars are often a necessity and not a luxury. The Cabinet Member stated that she did not compare Midsomer Norton to Keynsham. She explained that the authority is under significant financial pressure and therefore has to look at all of its assets. We also want to reduce emissions and we want to be fair and equitable across the whole authority. She stated that communities will be listened to and this is being consulted on. Councillor Wait pointed out that car parking charges were in place in Keynsham before the developments in the high street and that there is a small car park in Keynsham which is free for two hours.

Councillor Leach stated that, in speaking to many residents in his ward, he had picked up a lot of support for emissions-based parking charges.

Councillor Auton stated that he shared the frustrations of the Councillors speaking on this issue and thought it was very important for towns to have free parking. He explained that he had spent 3 mornings and spoken to 80 people on the parking issue. 80% of those people were parking for less than 2 hours. He stated that if there must be charges, would the Cabinet consider allowing the first 2 hours free of charge. He stated that he is concerned about the impact on businesses and asked if there could be a permit for staff to park for the day. The Cabinet Member thanked Councillor Auton for his work in speaking to people about this and agreed that this could be discussed. She explained that there would be a TRO and full consultation and there could be a discussion on how to structure charges. Councillor Wait stated that, in Keynsham there was currently 30 minutes free parking.

Councillor Hughes stated emissions-based parking charges may work in Bath but he saw the method as punishing the poorest in Midsomer Norton.

Councillor Johnson asked about the 'TBC' in Annex 3 and also asked if a Housing Revenue Account was needed if the authority builds 300 houses. The Executive Director stated that she would get further information regarding the 'TBC' and that yes, the Council is committed to expand Council House building and confirmed that a Housing Revenue Account is needed over a certain number of houses.

45 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Scrutiny Officer Ceri Williams updated the Panel on the progress in the Task group.

The Panel noted the future workplan with the following suggested additions:

- Transport Action Plan
- Circulation Plan

A site visit to Pixash Recycling site was discussed. The local Councillors group will extend the invite to Panel members.

The meeting ended at 12.24 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Monday, 19th February, 2024

Present:- **Councillors** Andy Wait, Jess David, John Leach, Alex Beaumont, June Player, Saskia Heijltjes and Fiona Gourley (in place of Michael Auton)

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Grant Johnson

46 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

47 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Auton gave his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Gourley.

Councillor Johnson gave his apologies.

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

50 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

51 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

The following members of the public made a statement to the Panel. Panel members asked some questions.

Mike Earle made a statement regarding the data from the trial and access to information on this issue.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if Mr Earle lived in Southlands, Mr Earle stated that he did not and that his concern was with the democratic process.
Councillor Player asked if Mr Earle had been refused data when he had requested it. Mr Earle stated that yes on several occasions, he was advised to submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

Angie Paddock (*statement attached to these minutes*)

Councillor Player asked why Ms Paddock thought the 3 weeks of the data collection period was particularly quiet. Ms Paddock explained that during those 3 weeks there was only 1 event at the RUH (Royal United Hospital) when there were usually 3 or 4 per week.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if Ms Paddock felt supported by the ward Councillors. Ms Paddock stated that the ward Councillor is listening.

Councillor Player asked why Ms Paddock thought groups of cyclists appeared when the cameras were installed. Ms Paddock stated that she believed the cycling group had been contacted.

Councillor Player asked if the aim of the scheme of a safer, healthier environment had been achieved. Ms Paddock stated that it worked for one side of Southlands but was a two-tier situation.

Meg Collin (*statement attached to these minutes*)

Councillor Heijltjes asked if Ms Collin believes the outcome of the survey would be different if parking issues are resolved. Ms Collin stated that she does not know but would like to say yes.

Councillor Wait asked if she believed 21 cyclists per day is reasonable, Ms Collin stated that she had not counted but his seems reasonable.

Councillor Gourley asked about the public transport in Weston. Ms Collin stated that it was a better service than anywhere else she had lived but could still be improved.

Peter Heywood - Chair – Future Weston (*statement attached to these minutes*)

Councillor Heijltjes asked how Future Weston would suggest the streets could be made safer. Mr Heywood stated that this was not a problem in the first place. Restricted parking may be looked at.

John Chapman made a statement mentioning that, in his view, the scheme had created an 'unliveable neighbourhood'. He explained that there are now reversing vehicles and it is the wrong scheme in the wrong place. It has caused division.

In response to a question from Councillor Player, Mr Chapman stated that the planters should be removed and the money spent on the High Street.

In response to a question from Councillor Wait, Mr Chapman confirmed he was not a resident.

Councillor Wait confirmed that members of the public are able to register to make a statement at Panel meeting. Nobody was stopped from making a public statement.

Councillor Malcolm Treby made a statement and urged the Panel to uphold the call in and recommend removal.

Councillor Heijltjes asked how Councillor Treby had supported his residents. Councillor Treby explained that he held a monthly surgery, public meetings and email correspondence.

Councillor Halsall asked if any of the 71% could be non-residents. Councillor Treby explained that the second report did ask if people were residents, and this showed 57% against the scheme.

The Chair thanked the speakers.

52 CALL IN OF DECISION - LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS: SOUTHLANDS TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (WL)

Lead Call in Councillor statement – Councillor Robin Moss

Councillor Moss explained that of the three schemes, this one had been called in due to public opposition. He stated that he was not against measures to make neighbourhoods cleaner and safer but schemes do need to have public support. He stated that a traffic circulation plan for the whole of BANES is needed. He asked for a reset on this decision and a conversation with the local community.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor David asked Councillor Moss how confident he was that the majority oppose the scheme currently. Councillor Moss pointed to the statistics in the Council papers which state that 71% of the local community oppose the scheme.

Councillor Heijltjes asked why the call for a BANES circulation plan had not been called for sooner. Councillor Moss explained that, as ward member for Westfield, he had called for this many times for his area.

Councillor Halsall stated that if this scheme is scrapped, funding could be lost for the wider scheme. Councillor Moss stated that this has been a concern but that the WECA Mayor would not allow single schemes to effect overall policy.

Councillor Player asked if a decision should be based on money, we should put resident's views first as that is who we represent. Councillor Moss explained that this is one of the smaller schemes and it should be about spending money wisely.

Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Manda Rigby, statement

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Rigby stated that the aim of the programme is safer, quieter more equitable streets. She explained that the issues of through traffic and parking were identified at the start of the process, the scheme had not attempted to address parking. She explained that there have been 6 engagement/consultation opportunities – 3 prior to the trial, 2 during the trial and 1 afterwards. In terms of the 71% figure – this refers to the open public consultation which was not restricted to Southlands residents. It is intended that monitoring will take place in April 2024 which will take into account different routes.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Leach asked why respondent's addresses were not taken in the public consultation. The Cabinet Member explained that the wider public view was taken first.

Councillor Heijltjes asked how much was spent on consultants. The Cabinet Member stated that she did not have a specific number for this.

Councillor Halsall asked that, if the scheme goes ahead, would there be funding for other things in the community. The Cabinet Member stated that, if the scheme does not go ahead, we cannot do other things such as barriers for reversing. She explained it was not an intention to split the community. She stated that the number of people who have engaged has declined, a lot of people have not expressed an opinion. She added that the issue of parking needs to be looked at – we would like views on Residents Parking Zones (RPZs).

Councillor David asked about the resident's concern on the quality of consultation and how it could be improved. The Cabinet Member explained that there were 6 attempts at engagement which included letters and meetings, but people have busy lives, there is a silent majority. She added that the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel could undertake a study on getting engagement rates up.

Councillor Beaumont asked if the scheme has done what was intended. The Cabinet Member stated that it has stopped 100% of through traffic.

Councillor Player asked about data collection, the Cabinet Member explained that no notice is given when data is collected (via cameras) – it is representative and proportionate.

Councillor Player stated that the aim is safer and healthier streets, she asked if that had been achieved. The Cabinet Member explained that there is some validity that the scheme seems to have worked better on one side than the other but taking everything into account, she believed the area was safer and healthier.

Councillor Heijltjes asked why parking issues were not being addressed during the experimental TRO. The Cabinet Member explained that RPZs (Residents Parking Zones) could not be joined with the first trial of the scheme.

Councillor Heijltjes asked if the voices of young people had been sought. The Cabinet Member stated that social media had been used and the school had engaged.

In response to a question from Councillor Wait regarding pollution, the Cabinet Member stated that the neighbourhood roads are still within the normal boundaries.

Closing statement – Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Manda Rigby

Councillor Rigby stated that there was competition for trials and that it was impossible to accommodate all wishes. She assured the Panel that every decision has been made in accord with policy, mandate and process. Councillor Rigby stated

that there is limited road space and the aim was to put pedestrians at the top. She accepted the needs for more improvements if the scheme was made permanent, she believes that more interventions can be brought forward. She urged the Panel to dismiss the call in.

Closing statement – Lead Call in Councillor, Councillor Robin Moss

Councillor Moss stated that the call in had given the opportunity for discussion regarding Southlands and the bigger picture and he hoped that this have given the opportunity to see the woods not just trees. He asked for a conversation on traffic schemes and hoped there would be reconsideration on this decision.

Panel debate

Councillor Leach stated that he was surprised to hear reference to the bigger picture when this meeting is concerned with a particular scheme. He noted the discussion on whether the consultation responses represent the wider community. He noted the difficulties on raising the levels of engagement. He stated that he would assume overall that the large majority are broadly happy.

Councillor David stated that it had been helpful to hear strongly held views and was concerned that the call in was based on feedback from the first consultation. She noted that there are issues to be addressed regarding parking and noted that there is a basis for wider improvements to the area.

Councillor Halsall stated that the Panel had heard views from people against the scheme. There had not been a referendum but a survey. All want cleaner air, safer and more equitable travel. He noted that this had been a temporary experiment and if it is made permanent – there is the option to make improvements.

Councillor Player stated that there should be a review and necessary solutions put in place before it is made permanent, not afterwards.

Councillor Gourley stated that the call in was led by a Councillor outside of Bath, some rural areas would also like to stop rat running which has been achieved in Southlands. She noted the importance of working closely with WECA on funding.

Panel decision

Following a proposal from Councillor Halsall, seconded by Councillor Gourley, the Panel **resolved** to dismiss the call-in: the decision shall then take effect immediately. (7 for, 1 against and 0 abstentions)

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING	21st March 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Local Plan Options document	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p>List of attachments to this report: 1st February 2024 Cabinet Report: Local Plan Options consultation and Local Development Scheme</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Council is required to prepare a Local Plan. A Local Plan establishes a spatial strategy, site allocations and a policy framework to guide and shape change and growth within the District. The Local Plan will be a key document in delivering the Council’s corporate strategy and its priorities. In February this year Cabinet approved a Local Plan Options document for public consultation. As part of this consultation the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel has an opportunity to consider, discuss and provide its views on the Options presented. These views, alongside comments received during public consultation, will help to inform the next stage of preparing the Local Plan, which is producing a Draft Local Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

2.1 Consider the Local Plan Options document and provide its views, alongside wider public consultation, in order to help inform preparation of the Draft Local Plan

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council is required to prepare a Local Plan. In the UK we operate a plan-led system which means that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan (primarily a Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans) unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This means that a Local Plan is a key document in guiding and shaping any development or use of land that requires planning permission.
- 3.2 A Local Plan establishes a spatial strategy, site allocations and a policy framework to guide and shape change and growth within the District. The Local Plan will be a key document in delivering the Corporate Strategy and its priorities, as well as other Council strategies including the recently adopted Economic Strategy.
- 3.3 Preparation of a Local Plan goes through a number of statutorily defined stages, that must encompass the consideration and testing of reasonable alternatives or options, before preparing and agreeing a proposed strategy and policy framework.
- 3.4 In February this year Cabinet approved a Local Plan Options document for public consultation. The Options document sets out the key issues affecting the District, suggested spatial priorities for the Local Plan and a range of location options for delivering needed housing and employment space, as well as policy approach options for Development Management policies that apply District-wide.
- 3.5 As part of the consultation the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider, discuss and provide its views on the Options presented. These views, alongside comments received during public consultation, will help to inform the next stage of preparing the Local Plan, which is producing a Draft Local Plan. It is at the Draft Local Plan stage that the Council will be making decisions as to which sites it proposes to allocate for development and its proposed Development Management policies. The Draft Local Plan is then subject to public consultation, before both the Draft Plan and the consultation comments received are submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by a Planning Inspector. Following examination, and if the Local Plan is found sound (or agreed) by the Inspector, it can then be adopted by the Council. Once adopted it becomes the framework for determining planning applications.
- 3.6 The current programme for the key stages is outlined below:
- Options consultation (Reg 18) – February/March 2024
 - Publication of Draft Plan for consultation (Reg 19) – December 2024/January 2025
 - Submission of the Draft Plan for Examination – March 2025
 - Inspector’s Report – November 2025
 - Adoption – December 2025
- 3.7 The February Cabinet Report summarises the key elements of the Options document and it is attached to this report as attachment 1. For information the Local Plan Options document and supporting material is available on the Council’s website at: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/local-plan-options-consultation>

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The statutory considerations and framework for preparing the Local Plan are outlined in section 4 of the Cabinet Report (see attachment 1).

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The resource implications of preparing the Local Plan Options document are outlined in section 5 of the Cabinet Report (see attachment 1).

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The Local Plan Options document has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) which ensures that the council has considered the implications for people with protected characteristics of consultation on the Options document. The EqIA has been published alongside the Local Plan Options document. As set out in section 10 of this report consultation will be widely publicised and the Options document and supporting evidence will be available in accessible formats. Consultation also includes specific and targeted engagement with seldom heard groups and there will be a variety of opportunities to provide feedback.

7.2 The Options document represents an early stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. Throughout the preparation process the equalities impacts of the Local Plan will be carefully considered. At the Options stage the EqIA is primarily focussed on identify and referencing the opportunities for the Local Plan to address equalities issues and the needs of people with protected characteristics e.g. in terms of inclusive design or meeting the housing needs of and access to housing for groups of people with protected characteristics. At the Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) stage the Council will be setting out its proposed policies. As the Local Plan progresses towards the Draft Local Plan the equalities impacts of proposed policies will be identified and considered with reference to appropriate equalities data.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 Helping to address the climate and ecological emergencies through contributing to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 e.g. reducing carbon emissions arising from new development; and facilitating nature recovery are key spatial priorities of the Local Plan. Policy approaches or options set out in the document specifically aimed at meeting these priorities are set out, including through:

- Locating new development where it is best served by sustainable modes of travel and minimises car travel
- Policy approaches to minimise energy use or carbon emission rates in new development and ensure they are, as a minimum, zero carbon
- Options to help further reduce embodied carbon from all scales of development

- Setting out policies that are aimed at better enabling the delivery of renewable energy installations in the most appropriate locations
- Options to increase Biodiversity Net Gain in new development and working with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to maximise nature recovery opportunities/benefits

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None, given that preparation of a Local Plan covering the district is a statutory requirement.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 In preparing this Report the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development has been consulted and cleared the report for publication. Preparation of the Local Plan Options document itself has entailed input from a range of stakeholders aligned with the council’s objective of giving people a bigger say, including:

- Community representatives workshops, including parish & town councils, stakeholders and ward councillors, held in January and July-September
- Working with key stakeholders including the universities, RUH and Curo (through the Future Ambitions Board) and the Integrated Care Board/NHS
- Bespoke tailored engagement with a number of seldom heard groups

10.2 Engagement and consultation on the Local Plan Options is taking place over an eight week period from 12th February to 8th April 2024 and is being undertaken in accordance with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement. The means by which the consultation has been publicised and the various consultation and engagement activities undertaken are summarised in section 10 of the Cabinet Report (see attachment 1).

Contact person	<i>Richard Daone, Deputy Head of Planning 01225 477546</i>
Background papers	<i>Local Plan Options document and supporting information available at: https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/local-plan-options-consultation</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Attachment 1

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Cabinet	
MEETING	1st February 2024	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3497
TITLE:	Local Plan Options consultation and Local Development Scheme	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Attachment 1: Local Plan Options Consultation Document		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 To deliver the Council's spatial priorities arising from the Corporate Strategy and Economic Strategy this report sets out the proposed Local Plan options for public consultation and the arrangements for public consultation scheduled to start in February 2024. It also seeks changes to the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is the Council's programme for the preparation and review of planning policies.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

2.1 agree the spatial priorities of the Local Plan as set out in attachment 1 for public engagement, particularly to support a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy and provide for more housing that is affordable

2.2 agree the policy and development location options set out in Attachment 1 (Local Plan Options Consultation Document) as the basis for public engagement

- 2.3 agree the revisions to the B&NES Local Development Scheme outlined in para 3.3 of this Report**
- 2.4 agree and authorise the Director for Sustainable Communities to carry out the approach to public engagement in Section 10 of this report**
- 2.5 delegate authority to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development, to agree textual changes in finalising the Local Plan Options consultation document and the revised Local Development Scheme**

3 THE REPORT

Local Plan 2022-2042

- 3.1 The preparation of a Local Plan enables high quality development to be delivered in a planned and co-ordinated way that will help the council meet its priorities e.g. related to moving towards and maintaining a prosperous, greener and fairer economy, providing affordable housing, moving towards carbon neutrality and better addressing the ecological emergency. It also enables delivery of development to be aligned with infrastructure provision that can be funded or part funded by developer contributions. The council publicised its intention to prepare a new Local Plan by publishing the Local Plan 2022-2042 Launch Document in November 2022. The Launch Document outlined the proposed plan period (twenty years to 2042); scope of the Local Plan; and the arrangements for preparing it.
- 3.2 Following the WECA Mayor halting work on the Mayoral Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), the B&NES Local Plan will cover all strategic and non-strategic policies relating to the development and use of land across the district. As such it will be a full Local Plan and upon its adoption will replace the B&NES Core Strategy, Placemaking Plan and Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU).
- 3.3 The Local Plans of the three WECA Unitary Authorities will address the strategic issues that would have been addressed by the SDS. The three UAs are working closely together on our respective Local Plans. Through the Duty to Co-operate we are required to engage constructively and on an on-going basis on strategic cross boundary matters. In accordance with the Duty to Co-operate B&NES is engaging not only with Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council, but with our other neighbouring authorities of North Somerset, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils.
- 3.4 Having published the Launch Document the next stage of plan preparation is to gather evidence, formulate options (or reasonable alternatives) and to test them through public engagement. This Report outlines the key elements of the Options Document and seeks approval of the Options Document (Attachment 1) as the basis for this public engagement.
- 3.5 The Council's development plan must include strategic policies to address its priorities for the development and use of land in its area. The primary purposes of a Local Plan are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It says strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, (to ensure outcomes support beauty and placemaking), and make sufficient provision for:

- housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

3.6 Non-strategic policies should be used to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.

3.7 The Local Plan is a key corporate document in helping to address the Council's priorities and objectives that have a spatial or place manifestation. In order to guide the identification of options and ensure the Local Plan delivers the intended outcomes a set of draft spatial priorities are included within the Options Document for comment. These are closely aligned with the Corporate Strategy and are as follows:

Our Local Plan will plan for development in response to local needs to create attractive, healthy and sustainable places in line with the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Plan will:

- ***Create a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy***
- ***Maximise the delivery of housing that is more affordable***

In doing so, our plans for development must:

- ***Enable B&NES to become carbon neutral by 2030 and deliver a climate resilient district***
- ***Protect and enhance nature through facilitating nature recovery***
- ***Improve health and well-being outcomes for all, including through planning health promoting and inclusive places and providing for cultural enrichment***
- ***Reduce the need to travel unsustainably and enable improved connectivity for all through sustainable modes of transport and facilitating locally available services and facilities***
- ***Respect, conserve and enhance our heritage assets and their landscape settings, in particular the World Heritage Site of Bath and National Landscapes***
- ***Align the timely provision of transport, health, education, social, cultural and green infrastructure with development***

- 3.8 Where there are conflicts between these priorities it will be the role of the Local Plan to balance and resolve them. These conflicts and the implications of different options are outlined in the Options Document in seeking the views of residents and other stakeholders.
- 3.9 In light of the proposed spatial priorities and the primary role of the Local Plan in helping to create a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy and facilitating the delivery of housing in response to local needs evidence work has been undertaken to objectively assess the district's economic and housing needs. The Options Document then proposes a range of location and policy options in response to these needs.

Economic and Employment Needs

- 3.10 The Economic Strategy (considered elsewhere on the agenda for this Cabinet meeting) establishes the strategy for shaping the District's economy and highlights a range of key actions aimed at improving economic prosperity, the sustainability of the economy and ensuring opportunities and prosperity are shared by all. Within this context assessment has been undertaken of forecast economic performance and growth during the Local Plan period, as well as the quality and suitability of existing employment land and premises and the associated requirements for new employment space to meet future needs. The assessment has been undertaken on a sectoral basis. Ensuring there is sufficient employment space of the right type in the right locations is a key role of the Local Plan, in helping to meet future needs and deliver the Economic Strategy ambition of moving towards and maintaining a prosperous, greener and fairer local economy.
- 3.11 The study concludes that there is a need to strongly protect existing employment/industrial space, particularly in Bath where there is a shortage of supply. In addition, existing office space should be protected where possible, albeit some of the poorer quality and less suitable stock can be lost (on a case by case basis). Importantly additional high quality office space, suitable for modern occupiers, should be planned for. Most of this need relates to Bath, particularly close to the city centre. Additionally, to meet the needs of key economic sectors a supply of new and replacement space is needed, including innovation and research & development space (in Bath and potentially Keynsham) and industrial premises across the district, particularly in the Somer Valley area.

Housing Needs

- 3.12 The Economic Strategy also highlights that the lack of availability and affordability of housing is a key issue affecting Bath and North East Somerset and that this also impacts on the performance of our economy and wider sustainability issues. In order to underpin the Local Plan an assessment of housing needs across the District has been undertaken. This study is known as a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA).
- 3.13 The context for assessing local housing needs is also set by national planning policy, primarily set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The recently published revised NPPF (against which the Council's Local Plan will be examined) makes it clear that the government standard method derived figure of housing need should be seen as an advisory starting

point for establishing a housing requirement for the area. There may be exceptional circumstances, including relating to the particular demographic characteristics of an area, which justify an alternative approach to assessing housing need in which case the alternative approach should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. The standard method figure of housing need is 725 homes per annum, or 14,500 over the twenty year plan period. A locally derived methodology based on the NPPF results in a very similar figure. Therefore, it is proposed to use the standard method based figure as the housing need to which the Local Plan must respond.

- 3.14 Of the overall need for 14,500 new homes more than 6,000 will be accommodated on sites (mainly brownfield sites in Bath) already committed for development via planning permission or allocated in the adopted Local Plan. A significant element of the projected population growth within Bath and North East Somerset comprises students aged 18-23 and given their accommodation requirements are different to other households should be considered separately from general needs housing.
- 3.15 Evidence in the LHNA shows that a significant element of our housing need is for affordable housing, particularly in the city of Bath. In line with the NPPF, need is identified for both affordable housing for those that cannot afford market rents or purchase, as well as households that can afford to rent but aspire to own their own home. Evidence supporting the Economic Strategy also suggests that a lack of housing that is affordable for key and other local workers is detrimental to the performance of the local economy.
- 3.16 In addition to objectively assessing Bath and North East Somerset's needs the council is required to consider and respond to any unmet needs arising in neighbouring local authorities. Through the preparation and recent publication of its Draft Local Plan (Publication of a local plan under Regulation 19 of Town and Country (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012/767) Bristol City Council has identified that it is unable to accommodate fully its objectively assessed need for housing. Bristol City Council has therefore, requested that its neighbouring authorities, including Bath and North East Somerset, consider whether they can respond positively and accommodate a proportion of their unmet needs. This Council will need to consider this request in preparing the Local Plan 2022-2042.

Location Options

- 3.17 As set out in paragraph 3.9 above an element of the housing and employment needs identified will be met on existing committed sites. In preparing the Local Plan 2022-2042 existing allocations in the adopted Local Plan that haven't yet been implemented are being reviewed. The first priority in responding to our housing and economic needs is to utilise brownfield sites, including those that are currently allocated, as well as additional opportunities. However, in order to meet the objectively assessed needs greenfield sites would also need to be brought forward for development.
- 3.18 A range of new location or site options is identified in the Options Document that could contribute towards meeting the needs for additional housing and employment space, along with the necessary supporting infrastructure. These location or site options are drawn from sites in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which comprise both those submitted

by landowners, developers and communities, as well as those identified by the council for consideration, location options have been identified. The wide range of HELAA sites has been filtered down to those locations that are considered to be sustainable alternatives or options for potential allocation. This process has been underpinned by the Sustainability Appraisal (that will be published as part of the Options document consultation) and based around key principles, including:

- Sustainable transport connectivity - to minimise the need to travel by car and enable the use of public transport and active travel. This will also minimise carbon impact.
- Climate change and environmental impacts and opportunities – ensuring that options help address climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as facilitating nature recovery and the protection and enhancement of key natural and historic environment assets.
- Flood risk – ensuring that vulnerable uses are not located in the areas of highest flood risk and that future development does not make flood risk worse and is resilient to future risk.
- Green Belt – considering the impact of locations on the Green Belt. For any Green Belt options, ‘exceptional circumstances’ would need to be demonstrated to justify removing land from the Green Belt.
- Infrastructure provision – ensuring development is located in areas that can be served by supporting infrastructure in an efficient and cost effective way.

3.19 The location or site options that have been identified are set out in the Options Document. The sustainability effects and carbon impact of each of the location or site options are set out in the Sustainability Appraisal and Climate Impact Assessment that will be published as part of the Options document consultation. The District-wide strategy or distribution of development will be built up from these locations and alternative strategy scenarios are also tested in the Sustainability Appraisal.

3.20 Location options are outlined on a place basis. For each main settlement or place within the district the key issues and priorities are identified. The Local Plan will then seek to address these priorities, including through the development location and policy approach options. A short summary of the key options on a place-basis is outlined below.

Bath

3.21 Bath is recognised nationally and internationally as a double inscribed World Heritage Site (WHS). Both of the WHS inscriptions relate to the whole city. Being a WHS has significant economic benefits especially as the city is an international visitor destination and the city’s heritage also provides the inspiration for innovation and change. However, change does need to be very carefully managed in order to ensure the WHS and its outstanding universal value is not harmed. For example, this means that the height of new buildings needs to be carefully considered and guided and the sensitive landscape, including green hillsides within and surrounding the city, protected. However,

given the role of the city as the main centre of population, commercial activity and services and facilities within the District the development needs and pressures are also significant.

3.22 The substantial development needs of Bath; the highly sensitive historic environment; and the limited supply of land means that meeting some needs, over others, must be prioritised. It is proposed that meeting housing needs and those for employment space should take priority over other uses, including Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) (see options in paragraph 3.27 below). Most of the major brownfield site opportunities within the city have already been identified or delivered, however, there may be some additional development capacity. Site or area options include:

- a) For key employment/industrial areas (such as Newbridge Riverside) options to continue to protect for industrial uses or enable intensification with some flexibility to encourage creative industry/businesses.
- b) Bath Quays North – allocated in the adopted Placemaking Plan principally for much needed high quality. modern office space. Options to retain the current allocated land use mix, or partly due to delivery issues, enable greater flexibility to facilitate a broader range of innovation-based employment space and some limited housing for economically active people (specifically excluding PBSA).
- c) Review of various other allocations in terms of their land use mix/policy approach in order to better facilitate delivery of housing or employment space.
- d) Bath Recreation Ground – options relating to maintaining the existing allocation but with some amendments to site requirements for greater clarity, or removing reference to provision of a stadium in this part of the city.
- e) Review the approach at Universities’ campuses to understand whether there might be scope for further development, including PBSA (see also District-wide policies section below).
- f) West of Bath – given the finite capacity of the city to accommodate development to meet its needs options for the growth of the city have been explored. An area to the west of the city in the Green Belt has been considered for a strategic level of development. The NPPF makes it clear that exceptional circumstances must exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries. As the location lies close to the city and is relatively well connected through public transport, development here would result in benefits. However, assessment by independent experts commissioned by the Council show that any development in this area would be very likely to cause substantial harm to the WHS. The NPPF makes it clear that substantial harm to the WHS should be ‘wholly exceptional’. This means, at this stage, it is unlikely that this location will be identified and allocated in the Draft Local Plan. However, it will be consulted upon to test and understand whether the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm.

Keynsham/Saltford

3.23 Whilst Keynsham and Saltford suffer from traffic congestion at peak times both settlements are relatively well connected by sustainable modes of transport, as they lie in a public transport corridor served by bus and rail and

one which is proposed to be the focus of further investment and improvements. Keynsham, in particular offers a good range of services and facilities. As such a range of location or site options are proposed for consultation.

- a) Redevelopment of some brownfield sites in or close to Keynsham town centre
- b) Greenfield site options for the expansion of Keynsham and/or Saltford, some of which are very well related to the Bath to Bristol corridor, including the North Keynsham area. In addition to housing, supporting infrastructure and employment uses would need to be incorporated. These options all lie within the Green Belt. The NPPF makes it clear that exceptional circumstances must exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries. Development in this area would need to be linked to investment in Green Infrastructure provision/improvements, including retaining a green gap separating Keynsham and Saltford

Hicks Gate

The Hicks Gate area lies to the northwest of Keynsham, on the edge of Bristol. Options are proposed for residential led mixed-use development in this location. This land also lies within the Green Belt. The NPPF makes it clear that exceptional circumstances must exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries. The land in question also adjoins the Brislington area in Bristol where land is allocated in the Bristol Local Plan for residential development. Therefore, the council would need to work closely with Bristol City Council in maximising the potential for a high quality, comprehensive cross-boundary development, that may also incorporate the relocation of the Brislington Park and Ride onto land within B&NES and enable it to become a proper multi-modal transport interchange.

Whitchurch village

- 3.24 Whitchurch village lies close to the south east edge of Bristol, but is separate from the city. It is crucial that this separation is maintained. Due to its relatively good sustainable transport connectivity options are put forward for potential development (of varying scales) with the opportunity to provide different benefits to the village. All the development options lie on land currently in the Green Belt. The NPPF makes it clear that exceptional circumstances must exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries.

Somer Valley

- 3.25 The Somer Valley area comprises a network of settlements, all with their distinctive character. It lies outside the Green Belt and is relatively well connected by sustainable transport. Options are proposed at Radstock (north Radstock and East Radstock/Writhlington), Peasedown St John and Farrington Gurney for new areas of development to provide new housing, but also employment opportunities, renewable energy and delivering improved infrastructure. At Midsomer Norton opportunities for strategic levels of housing are very limited. However, a number of potential smaller site opportunities are identified adjoining the town.

Rural area

3.26 The rural areas contain villages of different character, size and sustainability. The Options document proposes that some proportionate growth (nominally 5% over twenty years) should be planned for at the villages best connected by sustainable transport and with a better range of services and facilities. Site options for development are not identified in the Options Document and it is proposed to work with the relevant communities/parish councils in assessing and identifying sites to be allocated to meet local housing and employment needs in the Draft Local Plan. Additionally, the Options Document seeks to enable local communities in villages to bring forward smaller scale community led development if they so wish.

District-wide Development Management Policies

3.27 In addition, the Local Plan will set out policies for determining planning applications across the whole district. The adopted Local Plan includes a range of policies, some of which have recently been updated through the LPPU. Many of these policies remain fit for purpose and will remain unchanged. However, options are proposed for other policies to help ensure they respond to up to date evidence and better achieve the council's corporate ambitions and the spatial priorities of the Local Plan. Some of the key areas of policy options include:

- Maximising the delivery of various types of affordable housing on qualifying sites and emphasising the role of viability established through plan-making.
- Greater flexibility in better enabling affordable housing on rural exceptions sites.
- Ensuring a mix of housing types are delivered in line with the evidence of local need.
- More strictly managing PBSA so that it is delivered only on-campus, or as an option on sites specifically allocated for PBSA (which may lie outside Bath).
- Further reducing carbon emissions associated with development through stricter energy or target emissions standards and stricter embodied carbon standards.
- Better focussing and facilitating renewable energy applications
- Facilitating greater nature recovery e.g. through increased Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.
- Requiring applicants to demonstrate their proposals reflect the principles of planning for healthier places, including requiring a health impact assessment.
- Further emphasising requirements around public transport and active travel as the basis for addressing transport impacts of development
- Strong requirements to ensure the phased provision of infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impacts of development as early as possible in the development process.

3.28 The above section of this report summarises the key options that are set out in full in the Options Document (attachment 1), which it is proposed should be published as the basis for public engagement.

3.29 Preparation of the Options document has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal, Climate Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. Respectively they identify the sustainability effects, carbon impacts and likely impact on the National Site Network sites (protected nature sites) of the options. Reports of all three appraisals/assessments will be published alongside and as part of the Options document consultation. All three assessments/appraisals are an iterative process applied through all stages of plan preparation and as such they will be used to inform the Local Plan as it progresses to Draft Local Plan stage.

Local Development Scheme

3.30 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the Council's planning policy work programme over a three year period to assist those who want to engage in the process of local plan preparation. In some cases, the policy changes through local plan preparation also require an associated Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be amended and these are also shown in the LDS. The LDS must be kept up-to-date and the main changes are:

- Amendments to the preparation timetable for the Local Plan 2022-2042, as follows:
 - Options consultation (Reg 18) – February/March 2024
 - Publication of Draft Plan for consultation (Reg 19) – December 2024/January 2025
 - Submission of the Draft Plan for Examination – March 2025
 - Inspector's Report – November 2025
 - Adoption – December 2025
- Review of CIL charging schedule and Planning Obligations SPD timetables aligned with the preparation of the Local Plan 2022-2042 (it should be noted that the timetable proposed may need to be reviewed again given that the government is likely to be changing arrangements for developer contributions towards infrastructure provision)
- SPDs – under the new planning system SPDs are due to be replaced by Supplementary Plans. This change is subject to secondary legislation and therefore, there remains uncertainty as to implementation. Timetables for supplementary documents of whatever form (including design guidance/design codes) will therefore need to be kept under review

3.31 The LDS is published on the Council's website and includes a date from which it is effective. Subject to the Cabinet decision the LDS will be updated as set out above and published on the website with an effective date of 12th February 2024 (decision implementation date).

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning

and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 70(2) Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

- 4.2 Section 19(1B) - (1E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that each local planning authority must identify their strategic priorities and have policies to address these in their development plan documents (taken as a whole). The development plan for an area is made up of the combination of strategic policies (which address the priorities for an area) and non-strategic policies (which deal with more detailed matters).
- 4.3 In light of the UK Plan-led system, Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires that Local Planning Authorities must review local plans and the National Planning Policy Framework states that this must take place at least once every 5 years, and Plans should then be updated as necessary. This must in whole or in part be to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.
- 4.4 The Council updated parts of its Local Plan (comprising the Adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan) through the LPPU. The LPPU was adopted in January 2023. However, a full update of the Local Plan now needs to be prepared in order to ensure that the needs for development within the district (e.g. for housing and employment space) over the longer term can be objectively assessed and responded to positively.
- 4.5 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 which will make some changes to plan-making. Regulations by the Secretary of State are required to bring these changes into force. The Government has said local planning authorities (LPAs) must submit their local plans for examination by 30 June 2025 (and adopt them by 31 December 2026) if they want their local plans to be adopted under the current system. If LPAs are not able to meet these deadlines (or if their local plans fail at examination), then LPAs must prepare their local plans under the new plan-making system. The Council's new Local Plan is being prepared under the current system and as will be clear from the programme set out in paragraph 3.4 of this Report it is anticipated will be submitted before the 30 June 2025 deadline.
- 4.6 The first formal stage in preparing the Council's new Local Plan is Regulation 18 of Town and Country (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012/767 which provides the opportunity to gather evidence and test options with local communities and stakeholders. The Options Document, included as Attachment 1, articulates the options that will form the basis of this engagement.
- 4.7 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out the programme, resources and arrangements for the production and review of statutory planning documents required by the Council. The LDS must be kept up-to-date.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The Local Plan Options document has been prepared utilising existing staff resources, led by the Planning Policy team and involving various other teams across the council, and also both council and WECA funding. Council funding has been primarily from the existing Local Development Framework budget, although it has been supplemented in 2023/24 by funds via an agreed facility to draw-down from central reserves. In addition, this council successfully bid for strategic masterplanning funding from WECA and this has also been utilised in preparing the Local Plan Options document. It is currently envisaged that the remaining stages of Local Plan preparation can be funded within existing budgets.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 The Local Plan Options document is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) which ensures that the council has considered the implications for people with protected characteristics of consultation on the Options document. As set out in section 10 of this report consultation will be widely publicised and the Options document and supporting evidence will be available in accessible formats. Consultation will also include specific and targeted engagement with seldom heard groups and there will be a variety of opportunities to provide feedback.
- 7.2 The Options document represents an early stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. Throughout the preparation process the equalities impacts of the Local Plan will be carefully considered. At the Options stage the EqIA is primarily focussed on identify and referencing the opportunities for the Local Plan to address equalities issues and the needs of people with protected characteristics e.g. in terms of inclusive design or meeting the housing needs of and access to housing for groups of people with protected characteristics. At the Draft Local Plan (Reg 19) stage the Council will be setting out its proposed policies. As the Local Plan progresses towards the Draft Local Plan the equalities impacts of proposed policies will be identified and considered with reference to appropriate equalities data. The EqIA is therefore, an iterative process that will help to ensure the Local Plan addresses equalities issues and that its policies provide opportunities to ensure development proposals properly address the needs of everyone including people with protected characteristics.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 Helping to address the climate and ecological emergencies through contributing to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 e.g. reducing carbon emissions arising from new development; and facilitating nature recovery are key spatial priorities

of the Local Plan. Policy approaches or options set out in the document specifically aimed at meeting these priorities are set out, including through:

- Locating new development where it is best served by sustainable modes of travel and minimises car travel
- Policy approaches to minimise energy use or carbon emission rates in new development and ensure they are, as a minimum, zero carbon
- Options to help further reduce embodied carbon from all scales of development
- Setting out policies that are aimed at better enabling the delivery of renewable energy installations in the most appropriate locations
- Options to increase Biodiversity Net Gain in new development and working with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to maximise nature recovery opportunities/benefits

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None, given that preparation of a Local Plan covering the district is a statutory requirement.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 In preparing this Report the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development and the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer have been consulted. It has been cleared for publication by the S151 and Monitoring Officer.

10.2 Preparation of the Local Plan Options document (included as Attachment 1) has entailed input from a range of stakeholders aligned with the council's objective of giving people a bigger say, including:

- Community representatives workshops, including parish & town councils, stakeholders and ward councillors, held in January and July-September
- Working with key stakeholders including the universities, RUH and Curo (through the Future Ambitions Board) and the Integrated Care Board/NHS
- Bespoke tailored engagement with a number of seldom heard groups

10.3 Engagement and consultation on the Local Plan Options is proposed to take place over a six week period from 12th February to 25th March 2024 and will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This consultation will be comprehensive and involve a wide range of stakeholders e.g. communities/residents, parish and town councils, statutory organisations, the voluntary sector, developers, as well as seldom heard groups (see paragraph 10.5 below). The engagement activities and consultation will be widely publicised using a range of media/communication channels and ensuring the consultation material is accessible. The Options document and supporting evidence will primarily be available on the Council's website, in accessible formats, as well as in hard copy format at various locations. Comments will be encouraged primarily on-line via a clear and easy to use web-form, but stakeholders will also be able to submit written/paper comments and, where appropriate, verbally.

- 10.4 Information on the Options and how to comment/get involved will also be provided and explained through a range of consultation events. These will include:
- In person staffed exhibitions in key locations across the District (in or close to settlements where development options are being proposed)
 - Webinars primarily relating to key policy topics
 - Short videos explaining the purpose of and key messages from the Local Plan, as well as explaining the place-based options
- 10.5 In addition it is proposed to build on previous engagement with seldom-heard groups with a range of further meetings based around what they said during previous engagement and how we have responded.
- 10.6 The proposed approach is comprehensive and aligns closely with the council's priority of giving people a bigger say. The issues raised in all of the comments received will be carefully considered in progressing towards the next stage of Local Plan preparation, which is the Draft Local Plan.

Contact person	<i>Richard Daone, Deputy Head of Planning - 01225 477546</i>
Background papers	<i>Equalities Impact Assessment of Local Plan Options</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

Page 37

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or, Democratic Services (). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website.

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
21ST MARCH 2024				
21 Mar 2024	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Implementation of the car parking proposals agreed in the budget	Andrew Dunn Tel: 01225 39 5415	Executive Director - Sustainable Communities
1 Feb 2024 21 Mar 2024 E3497 Page 38	Cabinet Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Local Plan Options Consultation and Local Development Scheme	Richard Daone Tel: 01225 477546	Executive Director - Sustainable Communities
2ND MAY 2024				
2 May 2024	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Housing Policy	Graham Sabourn Tel: 01225 477949	Director of Sustainable Communities
11TH JULY 2024				
12TH SEPTEMBER 2024				
14TH NOVEMBER 2024				

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED:				
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

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