

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING – 19th JUNE: BRIEFING NOTE ON ITEMS 9,10 & 11

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This briefing note sets out a short update on the Planning Policy documents covered by items 9,10 & 11 on the agenda i.e.

- Core Strategy
- Placemaking Plan
- Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD

2.0 Core Strategy

2.1 The Core Strategy is currently at Examination. On 4th March 2013 B&NES Council approved Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy. These changes were proposed in order to address concerns raised by the Examination Inspector after the hearings in 2012 and as set out in his preliminary conclusions (ID/28 and ID/30).

2.2 The Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy (which can be found at the link below) were subject to public consultation from 26th March to 8th May 2013. The consultation period was extended to 22nd May in relation to the specific issue regarding the proportion of affordable housing to be sought at land adjoining Odd Down and land adjoining Weston (planning requirement (a) for Policies B3A and B3B).

2.3 The Council received nearly 1,100 representations. The representations have been forwarded to the Inspector for his consideration. A schedule of the representations set out in Proposed Change reference and therefore, Plan order has been prepared and will shortly be published on the Council's website on the Core Strategy Examination page. The original representations, along with supporting material, will be made available for public viewing in the One Stop Shop at Lewis House as soon as practicable.

2.4 Analysis of the representations is on-going. Unsurprisingly most of the representations relate to the overall amount of housing that is being planned for and the greenfield locations that have been proposed by the Council to help provide for this housing. With regard to the policy framework for the rural areas the main issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- Residential development outside the defined housing development boundaries would prove unsustainable (e.g. due to limited public transport infrastructure and employment) and change the open and rural character of villages
- Housing figures will increase due to development coming forward as a result of the NPPF's '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*' until the adoption of the Core Strategy
- Core Strategy should require the Placemaking Plan to set out key details of village character and identity
- Dwellings proposed for the rural areas will come forward too quickly – there should be a phasing policy
- Criteria a) and b) of Policy RA1 are too vague
- Villages that have recently accommodated large scale development should be protected from further development which could impact upon the infrastructure and village identity

- Housing provision in the rural areas is too low to help sustain rural communities or support the Council's expectations of employment growth
- Clarification is needed on how the scale of development in villages identified in Policy RA1 was calculated and concerns raised regarding how the Council calculated the future employment figures for the rural areas and how these figures informed the calculations of the revised housing figures
- Policy RA1 is too restrictive due to it limiting development to within village boundaries and by excluding Green Belt villages

2.5 Whilst the Plan is under examination, it is within the jurisdiction of the Inspectorate and the examination Inspector will determine the next steps. The Inspector has now resumed work on the Examination and is reviewing the Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy; the evidence underpinning the changes; and the representations on the changes. The next stages of the Core Strategy process are summarised below:

- Following consideration of the Proposed Changes; supporting evidence; and representations the Inspector will determine the issues of soundness for debate at the resumed hearings
- The Inspector via the Programme Officer will advise the Council of when the hearings will resume (current indications are that it could be late July and/or September 2013)
- Inspector and Programme Officer to compile programme for the resumed hearings
- Inspector to circulate questions to participants for response by the Council and discussion at the resumed hearings
- Following completion of the resumed hearings the Inspector will issue his Report outlining his conclusions and potentially recommended main modifications to make the Core Strategy sound. The Council anticipates receiving the inspector's Report in the autumn
- Council to consider inspector's Report; modify the Core Strategy (as necessary) before proceeding to adoption

2.6 The Council will publicise information received from the Inspector on the hearings and their resumption as soon as is practicable.

3.0 Placemaking Plan

Introduction

3.1 The purpose of the Placemaking Plan is to complement the strategic policy framework in the Core Strategy.. Within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Placemaking Plan will:

- facilitate the delivery of key development sites by providing the necessary planning and site requirements to meet Council objectives (e.g. Economic Strategy, the City of Ideas) ;
- safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of places in B&NES and identify opportunities for change;
- be prepared in a collaborative way to ensure that it responds to the aspirations of local communities in line with the Council's emerging Local Engagement Framework;
- address how infrastructure requirements will be met and how other obstacles to the delivery of development sites will be overcome. It will update the B&NES Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and be prepared to be aligned with the production of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

3.2 The Placemaking Plan Launch Document was agreed at Cabinet on 8th May 2013 and a copy of the document can be accessed via the B&NES dedicated webpage for the Placemaking Plan, see www.bathnes.gov.uk/placemakingplan. Please note that that the document is currently being prepared for publication , with the addition of maps, diagrams and photographs, and the details of the collaborative process that the Council will undertake is still to be drawn up.

The Placemaking Plan Launch Document

3.3 The purpose of the Launch Document will be to stimulate discussion and to facilitate collaboration and joint working at an early stage in the process. The Launch Document sets out the proposed scope of the Placemaking Plan, the key issues to be addressed and an overview of how B&NES will work in collaboration with local communities. B&NES will facilitate the input from local communities through a range of activities as appropriate, such as:

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

3.4 Within the context of the Core Strategy the Placemaking Plan will need to set out a planning policy framework to help shape the future of the towns and villages across the District. This work needs to be undertaken with the involvement of local communities, including through Town and Parish Councils. A process of engaging the Town and Parish Councils needs to be developed in order to secure input into the options stage of the

Placemaking Plan, and to ensure that a widespread understanding of the issues is achieved. Issues that are likely to require discussions include:

- Achieving sustainable development in the villages that meet the criteria of Core Strategy policy RA1 (the revisions to the Core Strategy suggests development of around 50 dwellings at these villages).
- Reviewing the Housing Development Boundaries of RA1 villages, RA2 villages and those washed over by the Green Belt.
- Delivering Affordable Housing.

3.5 Whilst the priority for the Planning Policy team is to focus on the delivery of the Council’s Core Strategy, a new Planning Officer, Julie O’Rourke has been appointed with the specific tasks of working with Parish and Town Councils. It will be an early task of Julie’s to prepare an appropriate collaborative process for the Placemaking Plan, taking account of the programme outlined below.

Programme

3.6 The programme for producing the Placemaking Plan is to be finalised, but it will target adoption by the end of the 2014. This is acknowledged as a very ambitious programme that will require a concentration of corporate resources if it is to be achieved.

3.7 The collaborative approach to the production of the Placemaking Plan, whilst recognised as being essential to the quality of the outcome, will also need to be modified to take account of the accelerated programme. This process will need to be designed and communicated very clearly to communities and stakeholders so that we can maximise the benefits of a collaborative approach, within the confines of a very ambitious programme for delivery.

3.8 The aspiration to adopt the Placemaking Plan by the end of 2014 has the support of the cross party LDF Steering Group, who recognise the benefits that the Placemaking Plan will provide to the communities of Bath and North East Somerset, and to enabling the delivery of corporate priorities such as the Enterprise Area, and housing delivery. However, the collaborative approach towards the production of the Placemaking Plan, whilst recognising the need for this to be tempered with the demands of the programme.

3.9 The programme for the main stages of preparation is set out below. However Its progress is closely linked to that of the Core Strategy

• Launch Document	• Spring 2013
• Preferred Options stage	• Autumn 2013
• Draft Plan	• Winter 2013/2014
• Submission to Secretary of State	• Summer 2014
• Hearings	• Autumn 2014
• Adoption	• Winter 2014

4.0 Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD

4.1 The September 2012 Cabinet meeting report set out the scope of the 'stock take' on the preparation of the Plan. An update on progress was provided to the Cabinet meeting of 12th June 2013, noting:

- The evidence of local need for pitches (the GTAA) has been updated;
- The site selection criteria considered by Cabinet in September 2012 are being used to assess site suitability for allocation;
- The scope to include Traveller pitches on major development sites will be further pursued through the Placemaking Plan;
- The Council is engaged in on-going discussions with neighbouring authorities on the strategic approach to meeting Traveller pitch need;
- A consultation statement has been published responding to the issues raised at the Preferred Options consultation;
- Site assessment continues on both the remaining Preferred Options sites and new sites arising from the 2012 Call for Sites.

Stock Take Progress: Evidence

4.2 The GTAA update completed in 2012 identifies the following need:

Need	Time Period	2012-2017	2018-2022	2023-2027	TOTAL (2012-2027)
Gypsy and Traveller		24	1	3	28
Travelling Showpeople		40	0	0	40
Transit		5	0	0	5

Stock Take Progress: Sites

- 4.3 The site at Station Road, Newbridge, is no longer available due to alternative uses being considered on this site. It will not be considered further for allocation within the Gypsies and Travellers Plan.
- 4.4 The site at Lower Bristol Road, Bath, is still being considered for allocation within the Plan. HCA grant funding was awarded to B&NES Council in late 2012 and a planning application is being progressed on the Lower Bristol road site; this is anticipated for submission in September 2013. The private site at Whitchurch is still being considered for allocation.
- 4.5 Assessment also continues on the 29 new sites identified through the previous Call for Sites. Site investigations, including specialist archaeological and contaminated land assessment, will inform this assessment.
- 4.6 Investigations are also underway as to whether any of the current Travelling Showpeople accommodation arrangements can be regularised; this could reduce the requirement to identify additional sites for traveling showpeople.

4.7 In order to ensure the plan is sound when submitted for examination, the Council must demonstrate that it has met the duty to co-operate. This requires that any strategy for provision must be co-ordinated across local authority boundaries. Cross boundary co-operation is also necessary to ensure that opportunities outside the Green Belt are properly explored. Non-Green Belt sites entails looking at the scope for accommodating traveller sites on large, mixed-use development sites. This work is underway.

Next steps

4.7 The previous report to the Parishes Liaison Group (February 2013) noted that the next stages were:

- The publication of the GTAA as part of the Core Strategy background evidence (COMPLETE);
- A decision on a revised strategy for public consultation is made at Cabinet (COMPLETE);
- Publication of the results of site assessments;
- Public consultation on the site options shortlist.

4.8 The latter tasks are not yet complete. Public concerns were previously raised during the 2012 consultation that only finalised site proposals should be published and as the assessment of sites is still underway it is not appropriate to indicate which sites may be suitable for allocation before that work is complete. Until further work has been undertaken (1) with adjoining authorities; (2) on the scope to include Traveller provision on major development sites; and (3) opportunities outside the Green Belt have been fully explored conclusions cannot be reached about site selection. The programme for the Plan as set out in Cabinet papers, and subject to Cabinet agreement, is as follows:

STAGE	DATE
Completing further work	to December 2013
Prepare Draft Plan	Dec. to March 2014
Public consultation on Draft Plan	Spring 2014
Revise and submit Plan for Examination	Summer 2014
Examination in Public hearings	Autumn 2014
Consider Inspector's recommendations and Adopt	Winter 2014