

PARISH LIAISON MEETING

18TH JUNE 2014

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK UPDATE

1. PROGRESS OF THE CORE STRATEGY

Introduction

1.1 An update on the Core Strategy was given to the last Parish Liaison meeting in February. At that time the Inspector had considered issues relating to the overall housing requirement and following the hearing in December 2013 concluded that he was not persuaded that overall housing provision needs to be greater than the around 13,000 homes proposed by the Council.

1.2 The Inspector stated that the issues he wanted to scrutinize more closely were;

- the Spatial strategy (housing/employment distribution);
- housing delivery, including 5 year supply calculation and the SHLAA;
- the timing and consequences of plan review;
- the Green Belt allocations & safeguarded land; and
- other matters arising from the consultation were due to be discussed at hearings in March & April 2014.

1.3 Those hearings have since taken place and this note gives a brief update on the next steps in the Core Strategy process.

Hearings in March & April 2014

1.4 The issues outlined in paragraph 1.2 above were debated at the hearings in March & April 2014. In addition to these issues, the other issues discussed included;

- whether small (non-strategic) scale changes to the Green Belt in order to accommodate development;
- sustainable construction/affordable housing requirements and the impact on development viability; and
- the gypsy & travellers accommodation policy.

1.5 The Core Strategy remains at Examination until the Council receives the Inspector's Report. The Inspector has advised that the Council should receive his report towards the end of June. Whilst the Inspector has not supplied the Council with any interim conclusions he confirmed at the end of the hearings that he would advise the Council if he had any significant outstanding concerns on the soundness of the Core Strategy. As no such concern has been made, it is likely that the Inspector will find the plan sound, subject to some modifications. With regard to the Green Belt allocations it is worth noting that the Inspector commented on the finely balanced nature of the arguments.

Next Steps

1.6 Once the Council receives the Inspector's draft Report it has up to two weeks to undertake a fact check prior to the Inspector issuing his final Report.

- 1.7 It is intended that the Inspector's recommended modifications and adoption of the Core Strategy are considered at the full Council meeting on 10th July. Prompt adoption of the Core Strategy is highly desirable because;
- Once adopted the Council can give full weight to it in planning decisions thereby closing the vulnerability to aggressive planning applications in the more unsustainable parts of the district
 - It enables progress to be made on the preparation of the CIL which has to be in place by early Spring 2015 in order to limit loss of income to the Council and town & parish councils
 - It facilitates delivery of corporate objectives by providing clarity on key development locations and on the delivery of housing and economic growth
 - It provides certainty to local communities and the development industry on the location of new development.

- 1.7 Following adoption of the Core Strategy, and for the purposes of determining planning applications, the Council's Development Plan will be as set out below;
- The adopted Core Strategy
 - Saved policies in the B&NES Local Plan
 - The Joint Waste Core Strategy

These Development Plan Documents are supplemented by a suite of adopted Supplementary Planning Documents that are listed on the Council's website.

- 1.8 Assuming the successful adoption of the Core Strategy, the key priorities for policy development are;
- Preparation and adoption of CIL (verbal update to be provided at the meeting)
 - Progression of the Placemaking Plan to provide the greater level of detail on the Council's aspirations on those sites where it is necessary and to incorporate the Enterprise Area Masterplanning work (see section 2 below)
 - Progression of the Gypsy & Traveller sites identification Plan (see section 3 below)
 - Working with the other West of England authorities on a co-ordinated plan review across the sub-region.

2. PROGRESS OF THE PLACEMAKING PLAN

Introduction

- 2.1 Town & Parish Councils will be aware that the Placemaking Plan Launch document setting out the broad scope of the document and issues to be considered was published for public consultation autumn 2013. The next stage of the Placemaking Plan is the preparation of an Options document which it is anticipated will be considered by Cabinet in November this year for approval for public consultation. The Options document is a spring board towards the preparation of the Draft Plan which is currently programmed for publication in spring 2015.
- 2.2 In preparing the Options document the report to the last Parish Liaison Meeting identified the following key streams of work;
- Preparation of generic district wide planning policies (including an update to the current Local Plan policies)
 - Allocation of key development sites not already allocated in the Core Strategy, mainly brownfield development sites in and around Bath
 - Work with Town & Parish Councils to identify sites for development and assets for protection in rural areas
- 2.3 These streams of work continue to progress and a brief update on the work being undertaken with Town & parish Councils is set out below.

Work with Town & Parish Councils

- 2.4 The Town and Parish Councils have responded positively to working collaboratively with the District Council on the Placemaking Plan. More than forty Parish/Town Councils are involved in this challenging task and they have supplied one or more of the following:
- character assessment of their village
 - suggested important assets to for protection through the Placemaking Plan
 - identification and assessment of potential development sites
- 2.5 The District Council has now undertaken an initial review and validation of the work submitted by Town & Parish Councils by the specified deadline. This focussed on reviewing the application of the toolkits supplied to parishes and validation of the current designations applying to potential development sites. A validation report has been supplied to relevant Town & Parish Councils.
- 2.6 More detailed review of the character assessment and site appraisals submitted is now being undertaken by B&NES. This will include visiting/appraising some of the development sites to assess their suitability for allocation in the Placemaking Plan. Once this review work has been undertaken the District Council will send further feedback to the town & parish councils and discuss emerging conclusions as appropriate. A note setting out the proposed programme/process for the next steps

will be sent out to all town & parish councils soon. Building on the excellent work undertaken thus far these next steps will include the invitation for town & parish councils to be involved in and undertake some work in reviewing their Housing Development Boundaries.

- 2.7 The successful involvement Town & Parish Councils in the Placemaking Plan has enabled a significant local resource to be mobilised to the benefit of local communities which will enable them to have greater ownership of the planning framework for their areas as encouraged by the Localism Act. The benefits of this approach have been recognised by Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 2.8 Town and Parish Councils also have the opportunity to progress the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (see update in section 4 below).

Placemaking Plan Options Document

- 2.8 The workstreams described above will come together in the Placemaking Plan Options document, consultation on which is due in Autumn 2014. The Options document will comprise;
- The sites emerging from the work by Parish and Town Councils
 - Policy approach to the protection of assets identified by Parish and Town Councils
 - Options for the review of HDBs
 - Proposals emerging from the Enterprise Area Masterplan work
 - Updated policies from the Local Plan and new policies where needed
 - Allocation of other key brownfield sites
 - Outputs from other Council strategies such as the Transport Strategy, the Leisure Strategy, the Green Spaces Strategy, the Economic Strategy and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

3. PROGRESS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

3.1 To date there are nine parished areas with Neighbourhood Plan Area designations within B&NES. One of these (Chew Valley) comprises a cluster of parishes. The nine designated areas are as follows:

- Batheaston
- Chew Valley Area
- Clutton
- Englishcombe
- Freshford
- Midsomer Norton
- Stanton Drew
- Stowey Sutton
- Timsbury

3.2 Many of the areas are progressing Neighbourhood Plans and are gathering evidence, formulating policies and undertaking consultations. A brief update on these areas is set out below:

Batheaston and Timsbury

Batheaston and Timsbury are now at the evidence gathering stage and are holding consultation events to learn what their parishioners want to protect, what they would like to improve and what their aspirations are for the future. From these consultation events the parishes are establishing Steering Groups to gather evidence on different Neighbourhood Planning topics and are beginning to prepare Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Clutton and Stowey Sutton

Clutton and Stowey Sutton Parish Councils have held several consultation events, gathered lots of evidence about their villages and are now at the stage where they are drafting their Neighbourhood Plan policies.

DCLG visited both parishes in January 2014 and was impressed by the amount of Consultation and the direction of the Plans.

Stanton Drew

Stanton Drew has been engaging widely with their Parish and have established steering groups to gather evidence and formulate policies on different topic areas for their Plan. DCLG visited in January 2014 and offered advice and assistance. DCLG acknowledged all the hard work that has been undertaken by Stanton Drew on developing their Plan.

Midsomer Norton

Midsomer Norton is currently working on developing Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Chew Valley area

Seven parishes in the Chew Valley area are working together on a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chew Valley have been designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area and are currently working on developing their evidence base.

Englishcombe

Englishcombe has been focusing on the Placemaking plan however it are looking at starting work on their Neighbourhood Plan again in the future.

Freshford

Freshford and Limpley Stoke have undertaken final consultation on their draft Plan and are in the process of making amendments with the intention of submitting it for validation by B&NES and Wiltshire Councils and examination in summer 2014. The current programme envisages the referendum in autumn 2014 and adoption at the end of the year.

Neighbourhood Planning Support

- 3.4 Some areas have recently successfully secured £7,000 funding and/or in-kind support from Locality/Planning Aid. The National support package for Neighbourhood Planning is still accepting applications for funding from Parish/Town Councils and Neighbourhood Forums – full details can be found on the Council's website at www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning
- 3.5 The Council's website is also being updated to provide information on the national context and the growing use of Neighbourhood Planning. It will set out more information on developing a Neighbourhood Plan and on the whole suite of Neighbourhood Planning tools available to use by Parish and Town Councils.
- 3.6 Positive feedback from National Neighbourhood Planning unit at DCLG has also been given with regard to B&NES Council and the communities and neighbourhoods preparing plans. B&NES Council has been chosen as a "leading authority" and is one of a select few Council's nationally who has been invited to join the Neighbourhood Planning Champions network. This will help to improve the advice and support B&NES Council is able to provide to town and parish councils.

4. PROGRESS ON GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

- 4.1 An update on this work was provided to Parish Liaison Meeting in February 2014. This update included setting out the revised timetable for this work agreed in the Council's Local Development Scheme and identification of some of the key tasks needed to take forward preparation of the DPD. These included:
- a. On-going site assessment work
 - b. Co-operation with adjoining authorities to ensure a joint strategic approach to provision has been undertaken;
 - c. Assessing the contribution that major development sites can make towards accommodating travelling communities;
 - d. Investigating the scope to regularise existing Travelling Showpeople accommodation;
- 4.2 Since the Parishes Liaison Meeting in February work has and continues to be taken forward with the other authorities in the West of England in securing a consistent approach to the assessment of accommodation needs and to establish arrangements for ensuring the Duty to Co-operate is met. This work will influence and set the context for meeting the needs arising in B&NES. Now that the work on the Core Strategy is coming to an end, a greater focus can be given to the preparation of this DPD.
- 4.3 Town and Parish Councils may be aware that a planning application at the unauthorised site at Lower Bristol Road, Bath has recently been granted planning permission. This will enable the site to provide 8 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches for travellers. This will meet the District's needs for transit pitches (as identified in the GTAA) and significantly contribute to meeting the need for permanent pitches.