

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	<b>Planning, Housing and Economic Development Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>
MEETING DATE:	<b>Tuesday 5th January</b>
TITLE:	<b>West of England Joint Spatial Plan &amp; Joint Transport Study</b>
WARD:	All
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document Joint Transport Study: Key Principles Report	

### 1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The four West of England authorities are preparing a Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for the sub-region. As part of considering options, the four UAs have published an Issues and Options document for public consultation. The consultation period lasts until 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and the Panel are asked to provide their comments on the published options.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Panel comment on the options set out in West of England Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options Document and the Joint Transport Study.

### 3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The JSP is being prepared by the officers of the four UAs, costs of which are managed within existing budgets. However, additional funding has been required to procure specialist expertise and for the public consultation process. It is proposed that this will be funded during 2015/16 from reserves.
- 3.2 The Joint Transport Study (JTS) is being undertaken by Atkins on behalf of the West of England Councils. The need for additional resource input from Atkins is presently being reviewed, to support the initial transport assessment of JSP options. This is likely to entail a small additional funding requirement from B&NES and the other UAs, the source for which will be identified and approval sought through usual process prior to any further commitment.

## 4. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Joint Spatial Plan once adopted will be a Statutory Development Plan Document. It will therefore have full weight in the Planning system once adopted. Its preparation must therefore be in compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“the 2004 Act”) and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”). This includes the public consultation and the need for an examination when the Plan will be tested for soundness. The tests for soundness are that the Plan;
- has been **positively prepared** – the plan seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits;
  - Is **justified** – the plan is the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
  - Is **effective** – the plan is deliverable; and
  - Is **consistent with national policy** – the plan enables the delivery of sustainable development
- 4.2 The engagement and consultation programme encompasses both the Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options document and the first stage of the Joint Transport Study. It has been designed to comply with statutory planning requirements and exceeds the minimum requirements set out in each of the individual councils’ Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.3 The Draft Placemaking Plan must be subject to a fully integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004).

## 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Joint Spatial Plan is the response from the West of England Councils’ to the plan positively to the national growth agenda. The four UAs recognise the need for a competitive, collaborative and growing economy to provide a good quality of life for its residents. It is important to invest in housing, transport, health care, education and community facilities, public open spaces both formal and informal, and ensure sufficient land is available to support the needs of business. The UAs recognise the need for cross-boundary working and co-operation to achieve these objectives.
- 5.2 Growth in homes and jobs must be aligned with provision of the necessary infrastructure and this is a key element of the JSP. Therefore to support the JSP the Unitary Authorities have also commenced a **new Joint Transport Study (JTS)**. This will ensure decisions on where future growth should be located are made with an understanding of the level of investment in transportation systems needed to achieve sustainable communities.
- 5.3 The purpose of the JSP is therefore threefold;
- to identify the housing land requirements for the Wider Bristol Housing Market Area (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) ie the actual

number of new homes and employment land that are needed (The SEP already identifies the economic and jobs growth ambitions).

- Set out a broad spatial strategy to deliver the growth ambitions.
- Identify the infrastructure needed to support this growth.

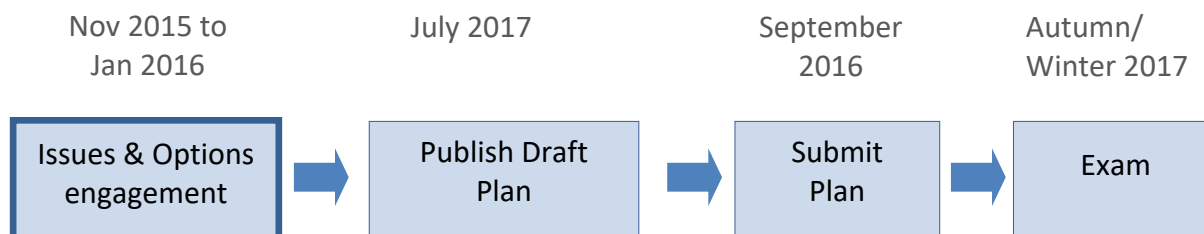
5.4 The four UAs are therefore using their strategic planning and transport powers to put in place the local plan framework to support the growth ambitions of the Strategic Economic Plan. To ensure this takes place in a sustainable way, the four Unitary Authorities have committed to the following guiding principles that will underpin the preparation of the JSP and the JTS. These are:

- Commitment to a plan-led approach to guide future development and secure funding for essential infrastructure are consistent with the Government core planning principles.
- That strategic planning decisions are made in a fair and open way.
- The plan is about delivering the homes needed for future generations: affordable, well-designed, well-located and well-connected.
- The West of England needs to plan for more homes if it is to meet the area's growing need for housing and continue to be economically successful.
- The West of England's local authorities are committed to providing the homes and transport that the area needs in a sustainable way. The Joint Spatial Plan will set out their commitment to a forward-thinking approach to guide future housing development in the West of England.
- Securing funding for infrastructure and transport is an essential part of our long-term approach. The Joint Spatial Plan will support the provision of infrastructure to unlock the homes the area needs.
- Recognition that the need for growth and new homes must be balanced by maintaining quality of life and a strong environment: these are things that make the West of England so successful.
- The focus for new housing should be on previously developed land making the best use of urban sites and minimizing the need for developing green space.

5.5 Whilst Bath has a separate HMA and an adopted Core Strategy up to 2029, it is included in the JSP in recognition of the need for joint working and to plan properly for the sub-region. The Duty to Co-operate in the Localism Act 2012 requires that Public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. The JSP will provide the basis for all four UAs to review and roll forward their Core Strategies. In the case of B&NES, this will be a partial review with a full review scheduled for 2019/20.

## Timetable

5.6 The timetable for the preparation of the JSP is illustrated below.



## Issues & Options document

5.7 The Issues and options engagement is part of the informal Consultation on the Plan and which helps to ensure all reasonable options are considered. To facilitate this, an Issues and Options Document (IOD) has been published and is attached to this report). Broad community engagement is planned up to 29th January 2016.

5.8 To facilitate discussion, Chapter 2 of the IOD identifies the critical issues that will be to be addressed by the JSP. It is important that the scope of the JSP remains focussed on the identified key issues. Based on the issues, the IOD proposes ten spatial objectives and a vision, based on the West of England Strategic Economic Plan vision in order to steer the spatial strategy.

5.9 Chapter 3 of the document sets out the evidence on the quantum of development that needs to be accommodated. In summary, the Wider Bristol Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that around 85,000 dwellings are needed between 2016 and 2036. Around 56,000 are already identified in existing plans leaving around 30,000 still to find. The affordable housing needed between 2016 and 2036 is around 30,000 of which around 20,000 still need to be identified.

5.10 Chapters 4 and 5 the document then propose options to accommodate growth in light of the issues identified. Central to this is the need to maximise delivery of housing on brownfield sites. The options and mechanisms needed to achieve this will be a key element of any strategy to be included in the JSP. This will require a collaborative approach with the development industry to maximise delivery.

5.11 Based on the responses to the 'call for sites' from the Development Industry and other technical work, the document identifies a range of possible strategic development locations and proposes five high level scenarios using these locations. A high level assessment is made of each scenario on how well it meets the plan's objectives. These scenarios are;

1. Protection of Green Belt.
2. Concentration at Bristol urban area.
3. Transport focus.
4. A more dispersed approach.

5. New settlement/a limited number of expanded settlements.

- 5.12 If it is concluded that the housing requirement should be greater than the objectively assessed need identified, then additional strategic locations may be needed in the agreed strategy. Likewise, preparation of the JSP might conclude that meeting the full need might cause too much environmental harm and therefore it is inappropriate to seek to deliver it. In this case, the local planning authorities in the West of England will need to liaise with adjoining districts to ascertain their capacity to assisting in housing delivery.
- 5.13 A broad engagement programme is currently underway which will include a range of activities to ensure a robust consultation.

## **Evidence**

5.14 Some of the key evidence underpinning the preparation of the JSP includes;

### Housing

- (1) An assessment of the objectively assessed need for housing (OAN) in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- (2) An assessment of the likely available locations for development (the Housing & Economic Land Availability Study or HELAA) including the 5 year housing land supply requirement
- (3) An assessment of the brownfield housing land capacity

### Economy

- (4) The West of England economic growth and job growth ambitions in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)
- (5) An Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA)

### Infrastructure

- (6) An understanding of the Infrastructure needed to support the growth proposals, including the transport requirements in the JTS

### Environment

- (7) Various environment studies including flooding, ecology, landscape and Green Belt

### Sustainability Appraisal

- (8) Ongoing sustainability appraisal of the economic, environment and social aspects of the options

## **Joint Transport Study**

5.15 The purpose of the Joint Transport Study is to provide a clear direction for the long-term development of the transport system in the West of England to 2036 and beyond. This will follow on from the current Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) which sets investment priorities to 2026. The Joint Transport Study will also inform, and be informed by, the Joint Spatial Plan, and will therefore consider alternative spatial scenarios and facilitate work to identify a preferred spatial strategy.

- 5.16 The JTS is being undertaken alongside the JSP with complementary milestones. The first stage of the JTS has assessed the performance of the current transport network, study objectives and outline concepts for investment in improving the transport network. In addition, the Issues and Options document includes a commentary on transport issues and a transport-focused spatial scenario.
- 5.17 The Key Principles Report is one of the first outputs from the Joint Transport Study. Its purpose to review the current policy context, identify key challenges, set clear objectives, and develop the guiding principles for the development of a wide range of strategic options for consideration through the Joint Transport Study. This will ensure that the subsequent steps of the Joint Transport Study are guided by clear objectives and principles, and that potential options clearly correspond to actual needs.
- 5.18 **The contents of the Key Principles Report are set out below;**
- Chapter 2 provides an overview of key policy documents for the West of England and the implications for the strategic direction of the study;
  - Chapter 3 presents the transport challenges for the area, both now and in the future, by building on and updating the evidence base in the current Joint Local Transport Plan, together with estimates of future housing needs and employment growth;
  - Chapter 4 sets out an initial vision and accompanying set of objectives for the Joint Transport Study, drawing on the policy direction discussed in Chapter 2 and the challenges identified in Chapter 3;
  - Chapter 5 presents a set of guiding principles which build from the study objectives and set out the approach to identifying strategic options;
  - Chapter 6 provides an initial set of Future Transport Concepts, which have been identified through targeted stakeholder discussions; and
  - Appendix A sets out potential component schemes within the Future Transport Concepts.

## **6. RATIONALE**

- 6.1 Five scenarios are presented for comment in the IOD to assist in deriving the most appropriate strategy in light of the most reasonable alternatives. The Panel are therefore being asked at this stage to comment on the likely options and not the preferred strategy

## **7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The project is still at the stage of consideration of options and a preferred option has not yet been agreed.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The IOD is being subject to a broad consultation from November 2015 to January 2016. The representations received will inform the development of the draft Plan due for consultation in summer 2016 for public comments. This in turn will help to

inform the preparation of the pre-submission draft plan. All representations will be made publically available.

8.2 The Council's section 151 Officer has the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

## 9. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Lisa Bartlett 01225 477550, Simon de Beer 01225 477616</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#"><u>B&amp;NES Core Strategy 2014</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>National Planning Policy Framework</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>National Planning Practice Guidance</u></a></li><li>• <i>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004</i></li><li>• <i>Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012</i></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>Wider Bristol SHMA 2015</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>West of England Strategic Economic Plan</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>Housing Capacity Evidence Paper</u></a></li><li>• <a href="#"><u>Economic Development Needs Assessment</u></a></li></ul>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format.</b>	

ATTACHMENT 1: THE WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT SPATIAL PLAN ISSUES AND  
OPTIONS AND JOINT TRANSPORT STUDY SUMMARY DOCUMENTS

[West of England Joint Spatial Plan: Issues and Options](#)

[Joint Transport Study: Key Principles Report](#)