

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Planning, Housing and Economic Development Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel
MEETING	1st November 2016
TITLE:	West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study – Emerging Spatial Strategy and Bath & North East Somerset Core Strategy Review
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: Annex 1 – JSP/JTS consultation document ‘ <i>Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy</i> ’ Annex 2 - Core Strategy Review Commencement Document Annex 3 – Amendments to the B&NES Local Development Scheme	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report seeks the views of the Panel on the forthcoming consultation on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and Joint Transport Study (JTS) document entitled “Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy”. The consultation is due to take place across the West of England from 7th November to 19th December 2016.
- 1.2 The report also seeks the views of the Panel on the Core Strategy Review Commencement Document which is proposed for consultation within B&NES at the same time as the wider JSP /JTS consultation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on;
- (1) The West of England “Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy” consultation document (Annex 1).
 - (2) The Core Strategy Review Commencement Document (Annex 2).
- 2.2 The Panel is asked to note the proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme (Annex 3)

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The development and progression of the JSP and JTS have been planned within the West of England budgets, including forecasts through to adoption of the Plan in 2018.
- 3.2 The West of England budget is managed by B&NES on behalf of the other West of England authorities.
- 3.3 The review of the Core Strategy will be funded through the B&NES LDF budget.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Both the JSP and the revision to the Core Strategy must be prepared 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”) as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. Once adopted, they will both be statutory Development Plan Documents (“DPD”).
- 4.2 Preparation of the Plans has also accorded with national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and guidance in the National Planning Practice Guidance (“NPPG”). In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that the JSP and the revised Core Strategy are sound in that they (inter alia);
 - a) Have been positively prepared – the plans seek to meet objectively assessed needs for development, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits;
 - b) are justified – the plans are the most appropriate strategies, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) are effective – the plans are deliverable; and
 - d) are consistent with national policy – the plans enable the delivery of sustainable development.
- 4.3 Any changes to the Core Strategy must be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (“SA”) including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (“SEA”) in line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations (The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004). It must also be subject to an integrated Habitats Regulation Assessment (“HRA”) in line with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (“the Habitats Regulations”).
- 4.4 A Local Development Scheme is required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 4.5 Changes arising from the Housing & Planning Act 2016 will have implications for the preparation of the JSP and the Core Strategy review.

5 THE REPORT

Background

- 5.1 The JSP provides the planning framework to ensure development comes forward across the West of England up to 2036 in a co-ordinated manner. This co-operation on strategic planning matters is complemented by the approach taken on proposals for future transport investment which is being undertaken through the JTS. The JSP and JTS work programmes are coordinated with shared milestones.
- 5.2 Consultation on the first stages of both work-streams was undertaken between November 2015 and January 2016 (Issues and Options consultation), and the results were reported to members in June 2016. The Councils are now seeking communities and stakeholder views on the emerging spatial strategy for the West of England as set out in '*Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy*' (Appendix 1). This is due for publication in November 2016.
- 5.3 The Issues and Options (I&O) document set out the scale of the development and a range of potential locational options and spatial scenarios to accommodate this. The Emerging Spatial Strategy takes account of the results of the Issues and Options consultation and the November document presents the updated housing and jobs target, along with a potential set of locations and indicative capacities, to accommodate this level of development up to 2036.
- 5.4 The consultation also covers the second stage of the JTS, taking account of views of stakeholders and the public during the previous consultation, and setting out a Transport Vision including an ambitious set of integrated packages to tackle current challenges on the network, as well as addressing the impacts of developments arising from the JSP.

Key issues highlighted in '*Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy*'

- 5.5 The consultation draft of the '*Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy*' document is attached as Annex 1 to this report. Further technical documents will be produced and made available for the consultation to support this document.
- 5.6 The JSP will be a statutory Development Plan Document and will therefore need to be prepared in accordance with local plan regulations and national policy to ensure it is a 'sound' document supported by technical evidence. The selection of development locations will need to be clearly justified. At this stage no final decisions have been made and the spatial strategy is not fixed. The consultation document is intended to facilitate a conversation on the evidence and technical work to date and how the locations have been tested to inform the emerging spatial strategy. Responses to this next stage of consultation will help to inform the Plan as it progresses to its next stage.
- 5.7 The approach to formulating the spatial strategy is set out in a supporting topic paper which is attached at Appendix 3 to the consultation document. In summary, the approach has sought to adhere to sustainability principles, including a focus on developing in main urban centres and making the best use of urban land; seeking to locate development outside of the Green Belt as far as possible; and consideration of Green Belt locations only where there is strong justification and evidence of exceptional circumstances.

- 5.8 Significant work has been undertaken on urban living and understanding the capacity to intensify the main towns and cities in a sustainable way. A topic paper outlining this work is attached at Appendix 4 to the consultation paper. This supports one of the key objectives of the JSP which is to ensure the strategy for delivering sustainable growth is based around ensuring all opportunities are taken to maximise the use of existing previously developed (brownfield land) before greenfield locations are identified.
- 5.9 Alongside this, the assessment of the need for housing has been updated. The current evidence identifies a need for 102,200 homes to be developed during 2016-2036 across the four local authorities although the JSP will test for up to 105,000 homes during 2016-2036. This is a working number until the evidence to support the publication plan is finalised in Summer 2017. A paper setting out the basis for the Housing Target is attached at Appendix 5 to the consultation document.
- 5.10 A significant proportion of the overall Housing Target would need to be delivered as affordable housing in light of the identified level of need. Appendix 1 to the consultation document sets out the scale of this challenge, such that it will not be able to fully meet the affordable housing need over the plan period through the planning system alone. Instead the JSP recognises that a proportion of the overall affordable housing need could be delivered through the planning system. It is also recognised that the overall approach to the provision of affordable housing is undergoing a period of significant change nationally following the enactment of the 2016 Housing & Planning Act and planned introduction of the Government's Starter Homes Initiative. The approach to affordable housing will therefore be required to be kept under review.
- 5.11 Around 66,800 dwellings are committed across the West of England in the form of permissions, local plan allocations or future small windfall sites. The JSP prioritises the need to maximise the use of brownfield sites, particularly within existing urban areas, and 14,600 dwellings are identified from this source – primarily in Bristol. That leaves up to 23,600 dwellings to be identified through the JSP.
- 5.12 The majority of development can be accommodated outside the Green Belt. However, whilst Government policy attaches great importance to Green Belts, which should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, the assessment of evidence and the formulation of the most appropriate strategy has led to the conclusion that there are exceptional circumstances for amending the Green Belt to accommodate some of the development. How this should be undertaken, and the basis by which locations have been selected, is set out in the Topic Paper which is Appendix 3 to the consultation document. This amounts to a loss of around 1% of the Green Belt and this enables the overall function of the Bristol and Bath Green Belt to be retained, whilst sustainably accommodating the homes and jobs that are needed in the West of England.

Key issues highlighted in *the Transport Vision*

- 5.13 Preparation of the Joint Transport Study (JTS) has entailed two workstreams. It has entailed the preparation of the Transport Vision to address current challenges on the network and has also assessed the transport impacts of the draft spatial scenarios to inform the emerging spatial strategy. This includes the selection of the

preferred locations for growth in B&NES. As part of this process, relevant transport interventions have been identified to enable delivery of the proposed JSP growth.

- 5.14 The Transport Vision is described in the Consultation Summary attached at Appendix 2 to the consultation document. It is very ambitious, representing a total of around £7.5 billion of investment in multi-modal packages, for delivery across the West of England over the next 20 years. This represents the scale of investment that is considered necessary to tackle key existing challenges, and to support future economic growth, with an emphasis on public transport and sustainable travel options. This ambition is intentional, as the package is designed to address the scale of current challenges first and foremost, and new funding streams will need to be identified to help deliver this scale of investment.
- 5.15 The proposed transport investment is set out in the Consultation Summary, demonstrating an emphasis on multi-modal packages where highway, public transport and 'smarter choices' investment is closely linked. A key feature of this approach is the relationship between the management of some radial routes in Bristol, alongside new investment in orbital links, which provides the opportunity on several corridors to reallocate radial highway capacity to prioritise public transport and cycling.
- 5.16 The public transport investment also looks to deliver a comprehensive network of park and ride sites, and to extend the MetroBus network currently being implemented, as well as considering the delivery of higher profile rapid transit routes on a number of core corridors, potentially using light rail technology.
- 5.17 The extent of future growth at Bristol Airport is likely to have a significant influence on transport investment in the Weston-super-Mare to Bristol corridor, with major highway capacity and public transport schemes being more viable if the airport is expected to accommodate a significant growth in passenger numbers (potentially overspill from the South East) and supporting facilities.
- 5.18 The focus of attention in B&NES has been where existing challenges are most evident, including high levels of traffic congestion. Whilst there are underlying challenges affecting transport routes there are opportunities on some routes like the A4 corridor, where the presence of existing sustainable transport options exist which are capable of improvement and other areas such as Whitchurch where new high profiles public transport investment will be required to support development.
- 5.19 The JTS consultation asks for views on a range of issues, including the overall scale of the package, its emphasis on sustainable travel choices and links with Bristol orbital highway capacity. Identifying funding to deliver the package up to 2036 in its entirety will be challenging and it may be appropriate to consider different ways to raise revenue to help meet the funding requirement. This issue is also highlighted in the consultation summary to instigate discussion and feedback from the public.

Next Steps in the Programme

- 5.20 The consultation will for 6 weeks run from 7th November until 19th December 2016. Key milestones include the following:
- Completion of the JTS by March 2017, taking account of consultation representations;

- Consultation on a JSP publication plan draft in Summer 2017;
- Consideration of the consultation responses to inform the Submission Plan by the end of 2017;
- Consideration of the recommendations from the JTS in an updated Joint Local Transport Plan by the end of 2017;
- Submission of the JSP to the Secretary of State by in early 2018; and.
- Examination in Public and adoption in 2018.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

5.21 The draft consultation documents have included consideration of the environmental impacts of locational options and spatial scenarios. The JTS will include a strategic environmental summary of its recommended approach and packages. Following the completion of the JTS, its recommendations will be taken into account in the updating of the current Joint Local Transport Plan and draft of the Joint Spatial Plan. These will both include a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Core Strategy review

5.22 In May 2016, Full Council agreed to undertake the review of the B&NES Core Strategy alongside the JSP. Annex 2 includes a Commencement Document to launch the review. This sets out the programme, scope and arrangements for the review.

5.23 The Commencement document proposes that the scope of the review is to;

- a) Incorporate the revised Housing Requirement for B&NES for the period 2016 to 2036 arising from the JSP and establish an affordable housing target;
- b) allocate sites identified in the JSP and establish policy, development and infrastructure requirements;
- c) establish a strategy for and identify any other sources of housing land supply not identified in the JSP to meet identified development needs;
- d) review the affordable housing policies in light of the Housing & Planning Act 2016;
- e) review the five-year Housing Land supply;
- f) Include policies or amendments to existing policies arising from a-c above; or from new legislation eg the Starter Homes Initiative; or arising from the Inspector's report on the Placemaking Plan; and from any other significant changes in circumstances and evidence to ensure that the plan is up-to-date.

5.24 It is essential that existing allocations and commitments in adopted plans are retained in order to maintain the Council's housing land supply including the five year HLS..

5.25 The Core Strategy review will have implications for other Council strategies and arrangements will need to be agreed to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

Amendments to the Local Development Scheme

5.26 The timetable for the review of the Core Strategy needs to align closely with that of the JSP but allowing for key JSP milestones to be achieved in order to avoid abortive work on the review of the Core Strategy. The JSP timetable has altered slightly and this will require changes to the B&NES Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the revised timetable for both documents. The overarching

programmes of both plans are illustrated after para 20 of the Commencement Document in Annex 2.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 The consultation on the JSP emerging spatial strategy enables wide engagement on emerging proposals before they are finalised in the Publication Plan in 2017. The review of the Core Strategy was agreed by Council in May 2016.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The option of proceeding straight to JSP Publication stage was dismissed as not giving stakeholders and residents enough opportunity to engage in the conversation in respect of emerging options.
- 7.2 The review of the Core Strategy will also enable wide consideration of alternative options as part of the statutory process of plan preparation. Consultation is a statutory requirement

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The **JSP/JTP** public consultation on the JSP/JTS will run between 7 November and 19 December 2016 and is supported by an engagement strategy which seeks to ensure that a coordinated and coherent approach is taken to promoting both the JSP and the JTS. This is being managed by a dedicated engagement coordinator who will work closely with the JSP and JTS project teams.
- 8.2 Key methods will include the use of both digital and hard copy material presented in a range of formats and styles from the technical documents to short high level summary/ awareness raising postcards. To complement this, the key messages and FAQs will be promoted through a range of forums. Again these will be both digital as well as through 'on the ground' activities and events.
- 8.3 The consultation programme will begin with a launch event and subsequent conversations with the business, health, infrastructure providers and other key stakeholder groups. The business community have been asked to assist in facilitating a business consultation event to ensure wide participation of the business community at this stage of the process. In addition individual events may be run and managed by each authority targeted at supporting their respective communities to help understand the level and impact of the growth being promoted.
- 8.4 The engagement programme will be underpinned by a press and media protocol and Communications Strategy.
- 8.5 Through this approach, it is intended that a fair, open and balanced discussion can be held about the JSP and JTS plans to ensure everyone has an opportunity to get involved and make their comments. An important theme of the consultation is that consultees understand that the spatial strategy is not fixed and no decisions have been made on its final content. This stage is another opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the potential options put forward.

- 8.6 The West of England Strategic Leaders' Board considered the consultation document on 17th October and their comments will be reported to Cabinet.
- 8.7 **Core Strategy:** Within B&NES, consultation will take place at the same time on the Core Strategy review Commencement document as agreed by Full Council in May 2016. This will need to be carefully managed to avoid confusion. A more user friendly version of the Commencement Document will be prepared for the public consultation. The amendments to the LDS do not require consultation.
- 8.8 Both the Monitoring and s151 officers have had opportunity to review and input in to this report.
- 8.9 This report is deemed to be exempt from call-in because it would cause the Council to 'miss, or fail to comply with or fulfil, a statutory deadline or duty' (as defined in the Exceptions to Call-In rules of the Constitution) thereby preventing the West of England UAs from proceeding with the consultation as timetabled.

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.

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Background papers	<i>Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options (November 2015)</i> <i>B&NES Council Report (May 2016)</i> <i>B&NES Core Strategy 2014</i> <i>National Planning Policy Framework 2012</i>
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