

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Bath & North East Somerset

Core Strategy Review

2016 - 2036

Commencement Document

November 2016

Bath and North East Somerset - *The place to live, work and visit*

Bath & North East Somerset Core Strategy Review

Commencement document: An initiation document setting out the proposed scope and programme for the preparation of the Bath & North East Somerset Core Strategy Review 2016-2036

Introduction

1. The existing timeframe for planning policy documents within Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) is to 2029. This is the end period of both the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Placemaking Plan. The Placemaking Plan allocates development sites in the context of the requirements established through the adopted Core Strategy and outlines an up to date set of detailed Development Management policies. The Placemaking Plan was submitted for examination in April 2016; the hearings took place in September and October; and adoption is anticipated early in 2017.
2. The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2014, includes a commitment to an early review of the housing requirement. The review of the B&NES Core Strategy is being undertaken alongside the other authorities in the West of England through a new development plan document, the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) which will cover all four UA areas. This will provide a new strategic planning context for B&NES to 2036.
3. The JSP will establish a new housing requirement for B&NES covering the period 2016 to 2036 and will allocate the JSP identified strategic locations for development along with any additional sites needed. The production of the JSP requires work to progress in parallel on reviewing the Core Strategy, in order to ensure that an updated local policy context, including site allocations, is brought forward at the earliest possible opportunity to meet the new development needs to 2036. This will mean that review of the Core Strategy will commence before the Placemaking Plan is adopted. This is considered necessary in order to establish a plan for meeting the development requirements set out in the JSP and to help provide certainty in relation to the longer term of supply of additional housing and economic development.
4. The site allocations identified in the currently adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Placemaking Plan will also contribute to meeting the 2016-2036 requirements identified in the JSP. Through the Core Strategy review additional development opportunities will be identified and allocated. The relationship of the Core Strategy review with other plans is addressed in greater detail in paragraphs 17 and 18 below.

Purpose of the commencement document

5. This Commencement document is the notice of intent that a reviewed Core Strategy will be prepared for B&NES for the period 2016-2036. It will be a development plan document (DPD) prepared in accordance with Regulation 18(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This document outlines the proposed scope of the DPD; its relationship to other plans; and the methodology and programme for its preparation.

Scope of the B&NES Core Strategy Review

6. The plan area will be the whole administrative area of B&NES Council and the plan period will be 2016-2036. This time period is consistent with the plan period of the JSP.
7. The primary purpose of the B&NES Core Strategy review is to identify and allocate sites to meet the housing and economic development requirements established through the JSP up to 2036. The Core Strategy review will seek to deliver the vision and objectives of the JSP by identifying and allocating as appropriate any strategic sites required, as well as establishing a strategy for and allocating sites to provide non-strategic development. The JSP is anticipated to address the following issues, which are therefore outside the scope of, but will provide the context for the Core Strategy review:
 - Establishing the overall housing requirement for B&NES.
 - The broad strategic distribution of housing and employment land/floorspace, including identification of strategic development locations.
 - Identification of strategic infrastructure proposals, including transport
 - Strategic Green Belt review

This will need to be kept under review as work on both DPDs progresses.

8. The emerging Placemaking Plan has been prepared in the context of and to deliver the Core Strategy. It also proposes policies that will, upon adoption of the Placemaking Plan, supersede some of the adopted Core Strategy policies. At the pre-submission draft stage the contents of the emerging Placemaking Plan and the adopted Core Strategy were published together so plan-users could see how the two plans relate to each other.
9. The Core Strategy review provides the opportunity to formalise this relationship by combining the two DPDs into one DPD (Local Plan). Given that the site allocations and detailed Development Management Policies contained within the Placemaking Plan will only recently have been adopted it is not proposed that these will be reviewed, unless changes to legislation or national policy makes this necessary during the preparation process. As such the Core Strategy review will remain focussed on the key elements of the Plan listed below:
 - Addressing the JSP revised housing (including affordable housing) and employment development requirements for B&NES for the period 2016 to 2036
 - The formal allocation of sites in the strategic locations included in the JSP to meet identified development needs, and setting development and design principles and infrastructure requirements
 - Establishing a strategy for identifying any other sources of housing/ employment land supply not identified in the JSP to meet identified development needs
 - The affordable housing policy approach
 - Reviewing the expansion objectives of the Universities and the relationship between student accommodation requirements/supply and the overall housing requirement

- Inclusion of new policies or amendments to existing policies arising from a-c above; or from new legislation e.g. the Housing & Planning Act; or from any other significant changes in circumstances and evidence to ensure that the plan is up-to-date
- Other policies that include a time related target e.g. retail capacity, renewable energy targets

10. The review process will result in a range of adopted Core Strategy policies being revised and new policies being included. This will be subject to change as the preparation progresses. However, within the focussed scope of the review identified above an indication of the policy areas that may require revision and new policies to be prepared includes those listed below

Policy Area	Core Strategy Policies
Vision & Objectives (responding to JSP)	Spatial Vision/Strategic Objectives
District housing & economic development requirements (to 2036)	DW1
Spatial strategy for B&NES and specific areas within the District	B1; B2; B3; KE1; SV1; RA1; RA2
Area specific development requirements (to 2036)	B1; B2; B3; KE1; SV1; RA1; RA2
Affordable housing requirements to 2036/policy approach (including starter homes)	CP9; RA4
Renewable electricity and heat targets (to 2036)	CP3
New site allocation policies (strategic and non-strategic)	-

Process of undertaking the Core Strategy Review

11. The Core Strategy review will be undertaken in accordance with Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Evidence Base

12. Preparation will be informed by a range of evidence that is proportionate to the scope of the review and is likely to utilise and build upon evidence informing the preparation of the JSP. This will include the following:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment - evidence on housing numbers, type and tenure
- Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, incorporating housing land supply delivery trajectory
- Student accommodation requirements & supply
- Authority Monitoring Report
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Sustainability Appraisal for the JSP
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape & visual impact Assessment

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Transport modelling and assessments
- Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Viability Assessments
- Design/Place-making
- Local Green Belt assessment
- Rural Facilities Audit

13. The review of the Core Strategy will have implications for other Council strategies and hence a co-ordinated approach will be undertaken

Sustainability Appraisal

14. Plan preparation will be informed by sustainability appraisal at all stages. A framework for the sustainability appraisal based on that used for the JSP and previous DPDs in B&NES will be agreed at the beginning of the project and used to assess and inform the plan-making process. It is intended to publish a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Duty to co-operate

15. Through Section 33A (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as introduced through the Localism Act 2011) the Council has a duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed public bodies on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also confirms that the duty applies particularly to planning issues that relate to the strategic priorities in paragraph 156 i.e.

- The homes and jobs needed in the area;
- The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape

16. In accordance with the duty the Council will engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies on the relevant strategic issues in undertaking the Core Strategy review. As set out above the Core Strategy review is being undertaken in the context of the JSP. There has been and continues to be significant joint working and co-operation in preparing the JSP. In this context and in accordance with PAS guidance the duty to co-operate in relation to the Core Strategy review only applies to any new or additional strategic cross boundary issues not addressed by the engagement undertaken in preparation of the JSP.

17. As work on the Core Strategy review will consider strategic issues affecting B&NES and adjoining authorities in greater detail than the JSP further constructive engagement in accordance with the duty to co-operate will be necessary. While the strategic issues to

which the duty will relate will be kept under review during preparation and without prejudging the Core Strategy review an initial list is set out below:

- a) Strategic relationship/implications of the amount and type of development planned for and allocated
 - b) Implications of strategic site allocations (where cross boundary impacts are possible)
 - c) Cumulative impact of non-strategic allocations e.g. at Bath or areas of the B&NES close to the boundary with another authority such as the Somer Valley
 - d) Assessments and delivery of strategic infrastructure, in particular transport, where either cross boundary or close to authority boundary
 - e) Policy/site issues raised through HRA e.g. relating to bats
18. Consultation and engagement with adjoining authorities and the other prescribed bodies will take place through a variety of means including liaison meetings and opportunities to comment both informally and formally at each preparation stage. A record of duty to co-operate activities will be kept.

Consultation

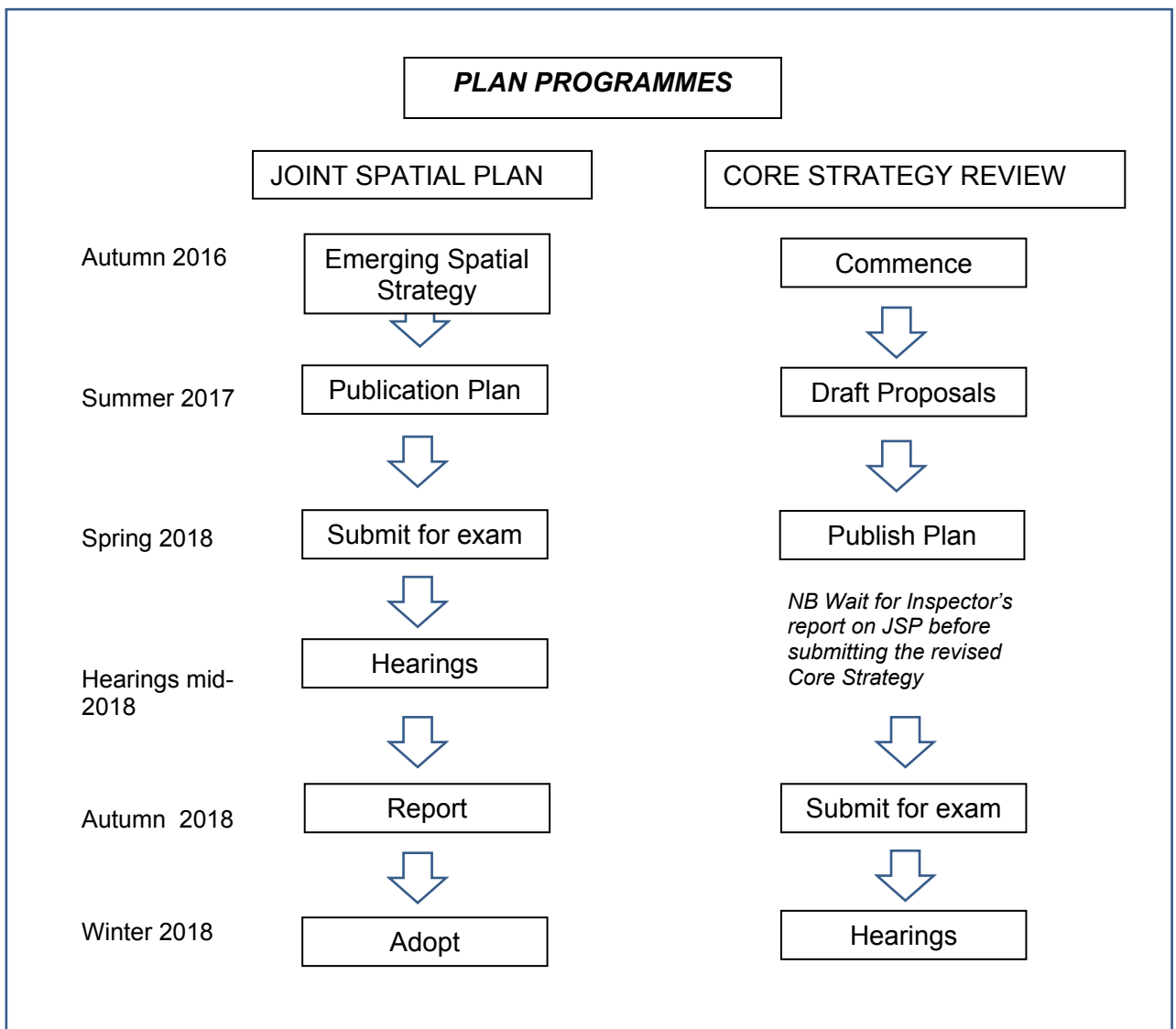
19. The plan will be prepared with community and stakeholder engagement in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and 'My Neighbourhood: Neighbourhood Planning Protocol' (the Council's Statement of Community Involvement). Formal consultation stages will take place over a minimum of 6 weeks. A Consultation Statement will be prepared and updated as the project progresses.

Relationship with other Plans

20. The relationship of the review with the JSP; adopted Core Strategy; and the Placemaking Plan is outlined in the Scope of the Review section above. Once 'made' (adopted) neighbourhood plans are part of the Development Plan and therefore, the relationship to neighbourhood plans needs to be considered. B&NES currently has three 'made' neighbourhood development plans at Clutton, Stowey Sutton and a cross-boundary plan covering Freshford and Limpley Stoke. Several other plans are in preparation, with some being at advanced stages in the process. As work on the Core Strategy review progresses, and the strategic context for the neighbourhood plans changes these plans may become increasingly out of date. Communities may wish to review them to take account of any implications arising.
21. B&NES Council will continue to support Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums within Bath in preparing neighbourhood plans and will discuss the implications of the Core Strategy review as it progresses. It is proposed that at the start of the process there is consultation with interested parties on the implications and the relationship between the Core Strategy review and emerging and 'made' neighbourhood plans.

Core Strategy Review Programme

22. The proposed timetable for the Core Strategy review is set out on page 19 in the Council's Local Development Scheme which can be found on the Council's website via www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningpolicy.
23. The diagram below summarises the Core Strategy review timetable and shows how it relates to the preparation of the JSP. The timetable below is dependent on progress with the Joint Spatial Plan which will set the overall strategic context to which the Core Strategy review needs to conform.



Let us know what you think

24. Views are being sought on the proposed content, scope and programme of the B&NES Core Strategy review. Consultation on this pre-commencement document runs from **7th November to 19th December 2016**. If you have any comments on the Pre-commencement document you can comment [online](#) or via e-mail to planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk. Please let us have any comments by 5.00 p.m. xxxxx 2016. Representations will be taken into account through the plan preparation process.

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