

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
METING	Council
MEETING DATE:	9th November 2017
TITLE:	B&NES Local Plan 2016-2036, Options document
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report:	
Appendix 1 – B&NES Local Plan Options consultation document	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 In order to facilitate delivery of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), and to ensure an up-to-date planning policy framework for B&NES, the Council needs to prepare a new Local Plan. The Local Plan will:

- review the adopted Core Strategy; and
- provide an opportunity to formally combine the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.

1.2 The Local Plan will cover the period from 2016 – 2036. The first stage of preparing the new Local Plan is the options stage. This Report seeks approval to publicise an options document for consultation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Council is asked to:

- (1) Consider the comments of the Planning, Housing & Economic Development Scrutiny Panel held on 7th November,
- (2) Agree the publication of the options document attached as Appendix 1 for consultation,
- (3) To agree the public consultation arrangements in para 8.3 of this report
- (4) Delegate to the Divisional Director of Development the authority to make minor changes to the options document in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The preparation of the Local Plan will be funded from the LDF budget. Primary costs relate to securing essential evidence and specialist expertise on selected issues and the implementation of a comprehensive and collaborative process. The LDF Budget is funding the preparation of the Local Plan and other necessary planning policy documents and their preparation programmes as set out in the Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 External funding sources will be sought to secure the delivery of proposals such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund, Housing Deal and Devolution Funding.
- 3.3 The cross service nature of the preparation work will require close collaboration between services and the appropriate arrangements are in place to enable this.
- 3.4 The Local Plan also needs to be prepared in partnership with local communities which will have different capacities to participate.
- 3.5 The JSP and the Local Plan together will have implications for the development process and hence for the value and use of land. Preparation of the new Local Plan will also require a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document in due course.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The Local Plan will 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”). Once adopted, it will be a statutory Development Plan Document (“DPD”).
- 4.2 Preparation of the Local Plan will also accord with national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and guidance in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 4.3 The Local Plan options document, subject of this Report, marks the start of consultation under Regulation 18 of the Regulations.
- 4.4 The Local Plan will 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). The options document attached as Appendix 1 has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, which is available as a background paper to this Report.
- 4.5 Given this options document represents a very early stage of plan-making and does not set out policies or proposals it will not be used for Development Management purposes in the determination of planning applications. Preparation of the new Local Plan will need to take account of legislative changes that may arise from the 2017 Housing White Paper.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2014, includes a commitment to an early review of the housing requirement. This review is being undertaken through the West of England Joint Spatial Plan which will provide a new strategic planning context for all four West of England authorities including Bath & North East Somerset. In late 2016 the Council consulted on the Core Strategy Review commencement document. The review, which is not solely focussed on housing requirements, is being undertaken through the preparation of a new Local Plan for B&NES. This also provides an opportunity to formally combine the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan into one Local Plan (as now required by national policy).

5.2 The Local Plan is therefore being prepared:

- in the context of and to deliver the Joint Spatial Plan; and
- to respond to changed local circumstances and new national policy and legislation.
- to encompass a development strategy to guide site allocations (including strategic development locations and smaller sites) to meet development requirements, identify and facilitate delivery of associated infrastructure requirements; and
- to include district-wide Development Management policies for determining planning applications.

5.3 It will cover the same period as the Joint Spatial Plan (2016 – 2036). Upon its adoption it will replace the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.

5.3 Preparation of the Local Plan will be supported by a range of evidence and the Council will work closely with the local community and other stakeholders through the various stages of the preparation process. Comments received on the commencement document have been considered and issues regarding the scope and nature of this Plan and ensuring statutory requirements are met have been and will be addressed throughout the preparation process.

5.4 The document which is the subject of this Report marks the start of the options consultation. The purpose of the options stage is to facilitate and encourage discussion and comment around the key issues facing B&NES and to test possible solutions to address these issues. The scope of the Local Plan outlined above is broad comprising various inter-related elements. Therefore, in order to expedite the process of testing options relating to a range of policy areas and to help focus discussion the consultation is being divided into phases. The first phase (comprising two periods of consultation) will be a discussion around options and the second phase will be consultation on the preferred approach. The options document covers four main areas:

1. *Vision & Priorities – outlining the key challenges facing B&NES and spatial priorities that the Local Plan should address*
2. *Strategy – within the context of the Joint Spatial Plan starting the conversation about possible alternative approaches to providing additional homes not being provided in strategic development locations*

3. *Strategic Development Locations – presenting the emerging proposed approach to development at the strategic locations at North Keynsham and Whitchurch and raising key questions & issues for discussion*
 4. *Student accommodation – as a key element of housing need initial consideration of University expansion and possible approaches to providing student accommodation that will need to be considered within the context of the other development pressures and the strategy for Bath*
- 5.5 Consultation on these issues will take place over a seven week period in parallel with that on the Joint Spatial Plan, commencing on 22nd November 2017 and ending on 10th January 2018. Consultation will be supported by publication of the options document, a range of publicity and staffed exhibitions/drop-in events at key locations. The options document attached as Appendix A has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and is supported by a number of Topic Papers which are available as background papers.
- 5.6 A second Options consultation will be undertaken in the spring of next year. This will be supported by the publication of an options document which will be brought to Members for consideration prior to consultation. It is envisaged this document will cover issues including Development Management policies that require review and place-based strategy issues. Following further evidence based work and consideration of the comments received consultation will take place in the summer of 2018 on the preferred approach (including strategic development sites and smaller site allocations).
- 5.7 The options/preferred options stage outlined above, which encompasses extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement, will enable reasonable alternatives to be thoroughly tested and will inform the preparation of a Draft Local Plan. The Draft Plan will set out the proposed site allocations and policies. It will be subject to formal consultation prior to submission for Examination by a Planning Inspector. The currently anticipated programme for the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan is summarised below.

Preparation Stage	Programme
Options/Preferred Options	November 2017 – May 2018
Draft Plan	Autumn 2018
Examination	Spring 2019
Adoption	Autumn 2019

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The UK Planning system is a Plan-led system. This means that planning applications for development must be determined in accordance with Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that each Local Authority should produce a Local Plan for its area and emphasises the importance of having it up to date. Publication of the commencement document in December last year

marked the start of the process of preparing an updated Local Plan which will be progressed through the publication of and consultation on the options document appended to this Report.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 None. Preparation and maintenance of an up-to-date Local Plan is national requirement and the preparation procedures are regulated by statute.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Preparation of the Local Plan options document has entailed significant internal consultation, including with Strategic Directors, Cabinet Members and the LDF steering group. The Council's Monitoring Officer and section 151 Officer have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.
- 8.2 The Local Plan options document is being published to facilitate discussion with and comments from a wide range of stakeholders across the District, including residents, businesses, various interest groups and statutory consultees. Therefore, both this options document and the Local Plan at key stages in its preparation will be subject to extensive consultation.
- 8.3 The public consultation arrangements have been designed to be inclusive (in light with the Council's Statement of Community Engagement) but need to be within the scope of the LDF budget. The key elements are as follows;
- Publication of a Local Plan Options consultation document (see attachment 1)
 - Two mail-outs to all stakeholders, first giving advance notice of the consultation and then inviting them to comment on the Local Plan Options document
 - Four staffed exhibitions in Whitchurch, Keynsham, Bath, Somer Valley with bespoke events on the University Issues
 - An item in Council's 'Together - Residents' magazine (replaces Connect Magazine) to reach every household in B&NES
 - Continuing with the on-going work with Parishes/Town Councils (including Parish Liaison Meeting - 26 October 2017, bespoke briefings and technical work)
 - Publicity and information available at Council Offices and on the website with posters/flyers available for distribution
- 8.4 In making the above recommendations the officer have had regard to the Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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>West of England Joint Spatial Plan publication Draft 2017 Sustainability Appraisal of B&NES Local Plan 2016 – 2036 Options document (part 1) B&NES Core Strategy 2014 B&NES Placemaking Plan 2017</i>
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