

Presentation: Local Plan Update

**Presenters: Simon de Beer – Head of Planning, B&NES
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[A copy of the presentation can be found here](#)

Slide	Comment
Title Slide	
Slide 2 – Since our last update	RD said the Local Plan Partial Update has now been adopted. The new Local Plan was launched at the end of last year with B&NES engaging with parishes and other stakeholders.
Slide 3 - Local Plan 2022-2042	The plan is for the next 20 years until 2024. It will set out the priorities, spatial strategy, site allocations and policies for planning applications. It also links to strategies such as the Economic Strategy; Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Cultural Strategy which will be reflected and delivered through the Local Plan.
Slide 4 - Local Plan Process	We have undertaken workshops to identify issues and priorities. Next, we will be looking at options to help address these and will have further conversations with you on this. A draft plan will be produced in 2024.
Slide 5 - Local Plan Engagement: Launch Consultation	We've set out some of the primary ambitions including climate emergency, protecting and enhancing nature, affordable housing and jobs. Also, some additional suggestions made at the workshops eg, the need for different types of housing, not just affordable, was highlighted. Also, the need to develop infrastructure alongside housing. Views on the Green Belt vary with some wanting it to be protected and others wanting a review. Transport remains a key issue.
Slide 6 - Local Plan Engagement: Workshops	Workshops have taken place with communities and stakeholders on a place basis (Bath; Keynsham; Whitchurch; Somer Valley and Rural Areas). This has helped to identify what

	<p>communities value but also the issues and priorities to be addressed. These are grouped under six headings: Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience; Moving Around; Natural Spaces and Diversity; Identity and Belonging; Housing and Shared Prosperity; Healthy and Inclusive Communities. All parishes should have received a report setting out the detail</p>
<p>Slide 7 - Local Plan Engagement: Workshops</p>	<p>There was commonality across the various places with communities having a strong sense of identity, valuing the quality of the environment and beauty of the area. Also, the character of villages, the importance of access to recreation and the value of wildlife.</p>
<p>Slide 8 - Local Plan Engagement: Workshops</p>	<p>There was also agreement that zero carbon/climate is a high priority with action needed at a district, neighbourhood and individual level. There are some really good examples of projects taking place locally that need to be highlighted and shared.</p> <p>Improvements to public transport along with cycling and walking have been highlighted, including connectivity to Bath and to Wells as well as between towns. The importance of community transport and ability to walk/cycle to bus stops were also raised.</p>
<p>Slide 9 - Local Plan Engagement: Workshops</p>	<p>Natural spaces, biodiversity and maintaining/enhancing green spaces in rural areas along with preserving dark skies was highlighted along with the role of farming in shaping the countryside. Local food and the need for allotments/growing space was also raised.</p>
<p>Slide 10 - Local Plan Engagement: Workshops</p>	<p>The importance of retaining the character of towns and villages and respecting design guidance was highlighted. Also, the importance of community facilities and the Council's support in facilitating community action and neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>The need for more housing was acknowledged – house prices are high so affordable housing is important. However, there is also a need for smaller housing to enable older people to downsize and free up family houses for</p>

	<p>example. Local employment is needed alongside housing, along with access to GPs and health care services. The role of community hubs in supporting this was highlighted.</p> <p>RD handed over to Simon de Beer.</p>
<p>Slide 11 - Local Plan: Current Work and Next Steps</p>	<p>SdB said that we very much value the information parishes can provide. We need a robust evidence base for the Local Plan which will be tested at examination. We have listed some of the evidence we will be looking at.</p> <p>The Local Housing Needs Assessment will determine need and we value your help in telling us the need in your communities. Also, how can the plan help to support a greener economy and where this should be.</p> <p>The HELAA and SHLAA is a list and map of sites which are submitted by developers and land owners for development. People do get nervous about this but some will not be viable. We want to work with you on looking at the sites that come forward and assessing their viability. You are also best place to advise on how new growth might relate to infrastructure.</p>
<p>Slide 12 – Local Plan: Next Steps</p>	<p>The next steps are set out – we have heard your concerns and are looking at evidence and then options before consulting more widely with businesses and stakeholders. We want to work with you on solutions – both site based and policy - and will be contacting you in late Spring/early Summer on the best way to do this.</p>

Questions following the presentation

Q1: Where does speaking with us fit in the next steps?

A1: We will be in touch with you in a month or so on how you want to work with us – it may, for example, be helpful to speak with a group of parishes together.

Q2: How local is local? One of the unknowns is the part WECA plays. I understand Bristol has incapacity to supply the housing it needs and is approaching other authorities.

A2: It is a legal requirement for us to assist Local Authorities that cannot accommodate the housing they need but we are under no obligation to absorb it. We have not heard from Bristol but are expecting to.

Q3: Does WECA as the superior authority have influence?

A3: They did start a sub-regional strategy but stepped back and have left it to the Local Authorities.

Q4: Does Bristol have to contact all three of their neighbouring Local Authorities or can they come to B&NES alone?

A4: They need to write to all three.

Q5: There is little mention of education. In Keynsham, people cannot get their children into secondary schools – Wellsway is over-subscribed. There are new primary schools but secondary education needs looking at.

A5: We are working with colleagues on capacity and the best solution. It will be a key part of the Local Plan and the basis of 106 agreements which will be written into it.

Q6: If the new Local Plan is in train from 2022 and runs until 2042, to what extent does that undermine the existing Plan? Is it open to challenge from a developer?

A6: Not at all – the current Plan lasts until 2029. The aim is for the new one to be adopted in 2025.

Q7: The LPPU was adopted in January – does that apply to any planning applications yet to be determined but already in train?

A7: Yes but some applications have been submitted for a while and it could be difficult to apply the new LPPU to these – it should be the starting point for those submitted now.

Q8: You must have data on what housing people need and the areas where this can be built. Have you worked that out so you can fulfil the requirement, maybe through higher density? There is too much low density at present. Also, the concept of community hubs is interesting – would this be a GP surgery and meeting place as this is becoming more important. Our village doesn't have one, or a shop or pub – hubs have an important function – would it be a requirement?

A8: We don't know the housing need yet – this will be part of the evidence base and is being worked on at present. That is what we meant in terms of hubs and the Local Plan can look at the opportunity to fund these.

Q9: In the launch document, you highlight the doughnut economy but these are anti-growth with a focus on improving lives. How far to you intend to pursue this?

A9: It is a mechanism to help us deliver sustainability objectives. We don't want to impose growth that impacts on this. At the same time, we have needs as humans so it's about trying to find a balance between meeting needs without impinging – similar to an appraisal.

Q10: To what extent will the Local Plan take into account bio-regional aspects – there is a gap between needs, aspiration and actuality. We have a Neighbourhood Plan which includes an aspiration for more social housing but commercial wins the day with multi-million pound homes being built.

A10: The Local Plan is the primary factor in determining applications so should, if strong, assist. If it is weak, we make the decision which is then open to challenge from an Inspector. Plans and policies need to be based on robust evidence at a local level. If parishes have done housing needs surveys, this would be good evidence. We want to work closely with you over the next 6 months on the preparation of the Local Plan.

Q11: There may well be issues on the ecological front. Some of the largest landowners in the UK are in denial.

A11: The B&NES LPPU stipulates a 10% mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain within development. There is also a new Green Transformation Team at the Council.

