

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference****E3581****Re-setting the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan**

Decision maker/s	Cllr Matthew McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development
The Issue	<p>The new Local Plan will establish the policy framework for determining planning applications for the next 15 years and will determine where planned development takes place. As a result of the government's proposed revisions to both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the standard method housing figure Cabinet took the decision in September to reset the Local Plan. This decision is approval of publishing a short document updating stakeholders on the re-setting of the Local Plan and explaining what this means, as well as outlining potential District-wide approaches that could act as a focus in considering locations for additional development. In addition, another 'call for sites' is to be held for stakeholders to suggest potential sites for the Council to consider.</p>
Decision Date	27th January 2025
The decision	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees to:</p> <p>1.1 approve publication of the Re-setting the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan and the District-wide Spatial Strategy document (attachment 1 to the Single member Decision Report).</p> <p>1.2 agree that publication of the above document is communicated publicly as the re-launching of conversations with stakeholders on the Local Plan and that an engagement strategy should also be published.</p> <p>1.3 agree that a 'call for sites' for housing and employment development is held commencing week beginning 3rd February.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>The Council has already started preparation of the new Local Plan and undertook an Options consultation in spring 2024. Since that time Government has published changes to National Planning Policy and a revised standard method housing need figure. Due to the significant implications of these changes the Council has had to reset its Local Plan. Resetting the Local Plan is necessary so that further evidence work can be progressed, options for additional development assessed and further stakeholder engagement undertaken. In order to communicate why the Council is resetting the Local Plan, what this entails and some spatial strategy approaches to act as a focus in considering options for development it is necessary to publish a Resetting the Local Plan document. This document will both update stakeholders and mark the re-launching of conversations on the Local Plan. In parallel a further call for sites exercise will be carried out.</p>

Financial and budget implications	The publishing of the Resetting the Local Plan document does not have any direct budget implications. However, it should be noted that as a result of the revised national context significant further work will now be required on the Local Plan in undertaking further evidence work, considering additional options and engaging further with communities and other stakeholders. The means of funding the costs of this additional work is still being considered and will include submitting an 'expression of interest' for Government funding support for Local Plan delivery and Green Belt reviews announced alongside publication of the revised NPPF.
Issues considered	Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Corporate
Consultation undertaken	Cabinet colleagues; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer; Executive Director for Sustainable Communities
How consultation was carried out	Consultation was undertaken through discussions and email.
Other options considered	Two alternative options were considered and rejected. The first was not to publish a 'Local Plan re-setting' document. This was rejected because it is important to keep communities and other stakeholders updated on the Local Plan given the significant implications of revisions to national policy and to also keep people informed of the next steps. The second alternative considered was to publish the 'Local Plan resetting' document for consultation and asking for comments on potential spatial strategy approaches. However, it was decided that the risks or disadvantages would outweigh any limited benefit. There are risks that residents/stakeholders will not be able to engage meaningfully on very high-level District-wide spatial strategy approaches. Alternatively, a substantial volume of comments could be received diverting resources from more important and productive engagement with community representatives and other stakeholders on potential options. In addition, when commenting on the options presented for consultation in summer 2025 stakeholders will be able to reference and comment on the District-wide strategy approaches.
Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:	None.
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	None.

Name and Signature of Decision Maker/s	Councillor Matt McCabe Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development Bath and North East Somerset Council
Date of Signature	27 January 2025
Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision	