

POSITION STATEMENT

NORTH SOMERSET CORE STRATEGY

ISSUE 3 (A-E) SPATIAL STRAETGY

ON BEHALF OF,

MEAD REALISATIONS LTD AND THE MANOR FARM  
LAND OWNERS CONSORTIUM

NOVEMBER 2011

127 Hampton Road, Redland  
Bristol  
BS6 6JE

## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
(A) The degree of weight to be accorded respectively to the extant RPI0 and the draft Regional Strategy (RS) and the evidence that underpinned the dRS with regard to the overall spatial strategy of the CS its and broad locations for development	1
(B) Green Belt implications of the Core Strategy compared the draft RS	2
(D) Weston Villages developments as the main strategic provision of the Core Strategy, including by comparison with the draft RS provision for an urban extension SE of Weston	3
(E) Distribution of housing and employment by existing settlement: (i) Weston super Mare, (ii) Nailsea, (iii) Clevedon, (iv) Portishead, (v) Service villages including appropriateness of designations, (vi) Infill villages including appropriateness of designations .	3
Conclusion	4

Version: 1  
Author: cd  
Checked: cd  
Director: cd  
Date of Issue: 04/11/11

## Introduction

- I.1 Origin3 is instructed by Mead Realisations Ltd and the Manor Farm Land Owners Consortium to submit this Position Statement in respect of various sites within our client's ownership.
- I.2 This statement provides as a summary of, and update to, previous representations submitted to the Core Strategy. The statement is intended to aid the Inspector and discussion at the relevant Examination session, and we therefore deal with the specific issues for discussion set out in the examination programme (version 2, 5<sup>th</sup> October ED/07a).

### **(A) The degree of weight to be accorded respectively to the extant RPG10 and the draft Regional Strategy (RS) and the evidence that underpinned the dRS with regard to the overall spatial strategy of the CS its and broad locations for development**

- I.3 Paragraph 4.50 of PPS12 sets out the legal requirements in preparing Core Strategies. This includes general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy in accordance with the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- I.4 The question of revocation of Regional Strategies was examined in the recent CALA Homes litigation. Until such time as the Localism Bill is enacted and the necessary SEA work has been concluded to revoke Regional Strategies the requirements of PPS12 with regard to RS's remain extant.
- I.5 In this context the Core Strategy must be in general conformity with RPG10 at the present time.
- I.6 RPG10 supports significant growth at Weston-super-Mare, designating it a Principal Urban Area. As such, the general spatial strategy would accord with this policy position.
- I.7 The draft RS was not adopted and as a policy document, it has policy status. The evidence base which underpinned the draft RS remains relevant it was tested through the Examination in Public process and the with the exception of some changes made by the then Secretary of State, was the subject of SEA. This is particularly relevant in the context of the housing requirement and the role of Weston-super-Mare which was identified as a Strategically Significant City or Town.

- 1.8 The letter from Steve Quartermain to Chief Planning Officers on 6 July 2011 (attached) makes it clear at questions 10 and 11 that during this interim period, for example, it would be suitable to retain the overall housing targets (Question 10) but any deviation would need to be justified and transparent (Question 11).
- 1.9 Again, the Draft RS identified Weston-super-Mare as a key location for development and the principles set out in draft policy HMA1 are largely reflected in the emerging Core Strategy with regard Weston-super-Mare. The Core Strategy departs from the RS only in connection with the level of housing development which is discussed in relation to the housing topic.
- 1.10 Weston-super-Mare is the main town in North Somerset and is a sustainable location for growth. Both RPG10 and the draft RSS support growth at Weston-super-Mare. Weston was the only SSCT in North Somerset in the draft RS. The Council states that a sequential approach founded on the principles of sustainable development within PPS1 and PPS 3 for example, forms a consistent approach that has influenced the spatial strategy proposed by the Core Strategy.
- 1.11 Subject to concerns expanded later on with regard to the quantum of housing and conformity with RPG10 it is considered that the spatial strategy reflects national and regional planning guidance and is also a suitable response to local evidence and wider policy aims, namely the regeneration of Weston-super-Mare and the need for a comprehensive, employment led strategy for growth at Weston.

## **(B) Green Belt implications of the Core Strategy compared the draft RS**

- 1.12 We note that the adopted Bristol Core Strategy does not require land in North Somerset and that the Core Strategy proposes that the boundaries of the green belt remain unchanged.
- 1.13 The Core Strategy is an appropriate response to the growth identified by North Somerset. Further growth, for housing in particular, may need to be accommodated later in the plan period but the spatial strategy forms the best response to development currently proposed. The spatial response, including the concentration of growth at Weston-super-Mare, avoids development within the Green Belt.
- 1.14 Whilst the Green Belt should not be taken to be sacrosanct and the preparation of the LDF is the most preferable point at which to review its boundaries the Core Strategy has

positive implications for the green belt. The Core Strategy will help to preserve the openness of the green belt, the purpose for which land is included within the green belt.

- I.15 Directing growth to Weston-super-Mare prevents the loss of land in the green belt. We therefore support the Core Strategy in terms of its implications for the green belt. The need to protect the Green Belt is recognised by PPG2. Further, retaining the green belt boundaries will deliver growth at Weston-super-Mare and is a positive tool in helping to meet the clear regenerations and economic development aspirations of the Core Strategy.

#### **(D) Weston Villages developments as the main strategic provision of the Core Strategy, including by comparison with the draft RS provision for an urban extension SE of Weston**

- I.16 We fully support the identification of Weston Villages as the main strategic provision of the Core Strategy. A significant amount of background work and evidence has been undertaken over a number of years that has informed this strategy. We have also worked with North Somerset Council and other key landowners at Weston Villages to develop workable strategies and aid delivery.
- I.17 Development at the Weston Villages has begun to come forward. A resolution to grant planning permission, subject to the signing of S106 agreements exist for 900 homes (Persimmon scheme). In addition construction has already started on circa 100 houses and a science park at Locking Parklands. Furthermore, planning permission has also been granted for a Leisure Dome.

#### **(E) Distribution of housing and employment by existing settlement: (i) Weston super Mare, (ii) Nailsea, (iii) Clevedon, (iv) Portishead, (v) Service villages including appropriateness of designations, (vi) Infill villages including appropriateness of designations .**

- I.18 We support the concentration of housing and employment growth at Weston-super-Mare. Weston is the most sustainable location to accommodate growth, in accordance with planning policy. In concentrating growth at Weston, services and infrastructure will be provided in a sustainable and viable manner and regeneration aims will best be fulfilled.
- I.19 We agree that total growth at service villages and infill villages should be limited in comparison to higher order settlements. However, we consider that the Core Strategy is too restrictive in terms of growth at service villages and small rural settlements. The

current emphasis of the Core Strategy is on 'tightly controlling growth' and infill growth only at these settlements but we advocate a more flexible approach, based on meeting identified needs.

- I.20 Rural communities need growth. For example, a key driver of housing need is due to falling household size. It must therefore be recognised that even in order to retain a stable population and maintain current levels of service provision local communities must increase the number of homes available. Affordability of housing in rural areas is also a concern.

## **Conclusion**

- I.21 We are broadly supportive of the spatial strategy, which follows the principles of sustainable development set out in national planning policy and is broadly consistent with the spatial strategy set out in both RPG10 and the draft RS, particularly in terms of the concentration of growth at Weston-super-Mare.
- I.22 However, we do recommend that lower order settlements should accommodate more growth than the Core Strategy currently suggests in order to serve those communities and provide affordable houses and a range of facilities and services.