

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO: STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2017

SUBJECT OF REPORT: SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PUBLICATION VERSION

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL OF DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider the response to consultation.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 The Publication Version of the Site Allocations Plan was published for consultation in November 2016. The consultation ran from Monday November 7th 2016 until Monday December 19th 2016. There were 465 individual comments.

1.2 The 18th October 2016 Executive Committee approved the publication version with the following resolution:

(1) that the Publication version of the Site Allocations Plan be approved for public consultation followed by submission to the Secretary of State, subject to an amendment reducing the number of homes at Moor Road, Yatton from 80 to 60 with no development on The Orchard other than for access, and to the submission with the plan of a summary of the issues raised by individual members at this meeting;

(2) that the Publication version of the Site Allocations Plan be given weight in assessing development proposals; and

(3) that any further minor typographical amendments or changes required prior to submission be agreed by the Director of Development and Environment, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

1.3 The next stage of the plan-making process is to formally consider the responses received and any other relevant information and if agreed, to submit the Publication version of the document to the Secretary of State.

1.4 The Publication Version approved by the 18th October 2016 Executive Committee is the version that the Council, having taken account of the evidence and

engagement undertaken, intend to submit to the Secretary of State for examination. All responses received will be submitted for consideration by the Inspector. However there is an opportunity for the Council to consider the responses received and any other relevant information and decide whether further amendments are required. If these do not affect the soundness of the plan, then the Council can recommend amendments to the Inspector. These can be agreed by the Director of Development and Environment, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader. If proposed changes are more significant, these will require approval by the Executive Committee (7th February) and may involve a further round of consultation

2. POLICY

2.1 The Government, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), strongly advocates a plan-led approach to development. This is underlined in proposals in the Housing and Planning Bill to allow the Secretary of State to intervene where local planning authorities do not have a plan in place by mid-2017. The statutory plan making process provides the context for the delivery of the Council's key objectives of promoting lifelong learning opportunities, enhancing health and wellbeing, protecting and improving the environment, building safer and stronger communities and increasing prosperity. This report supports the D&E Directorate Annual Statement key commitment to adopt the Core Strategy and associated development documents to guide development and regeneration and underlines the Council's commitment to a speedy, plan led approach.

2.2 The context for the detailed policies is provided by the Core Strategy policies, which have now all been adopted and government guidance such as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. DETAILS

3.1 The Secretary of State in his letter of 18 September 2015 confirmed the Core Strategy housing requirement at 20,985 dwellings over the period 2006-2026. This is now part of the development plan. The final paragraph of his letter set out the expectation that the Council should now make progress with the remaining parts of the local plan:

"The Government now expects North Somerset Council to move forward with the other elements of its Local Plan and to deliver the homes its communities need."

3.2 Following the original adoption of the Core Strategy in April 2012, the Council published and consulted upon a Consultation Draft Sites and Policies Plan in Spring 2013. Further progress was delayed pending the outcome of the reassessment of the Core Strategy housing requirement. Given the circumstances, the decision was taken to progress the development management policies separate from the site allocations.

- Part 1: Development Management Policies has been through the examination process and was adopted in July 2016.

- Part 2: Site Allocations document to define how the district housing requirement as set out in Policy CS13 and other allocations will be delivered.

3.3 The Site Allocations Plan is being progressed in parallel with the completion of the examination of the remaining Core Strategy remitted policies. This has now finished and the Core Strategy remitted policies were adopted at Full Council on 10 January 2017 .

3.4 The principal task of the Site Allocations Plan is to identify the new residential allocations necessary to deliver the Core Strategy requirement, taking into account the need to provide deliverable sites to ensure the Council can maintain a five year housing land supply.

3.5 The site allocations are to address the existing Core Strategy period to 2026. This document included a commitment to plan review by the end of 2018. The strategic requirements for the West of England to 2036 are currently being assessed through the Joint Spatial Plan which is expected to be adopted in 2018. The adoption of a new strategic planning context will require the reassessment and rolling forward of the existing development plans into a new North Somerset Local Plan to 2036.

Plan making process

3.6 Now that the Core Strategy housing target has been confirmed as 20,985 dwellings for the period 2006-2026 it is important that the Council now proceeds towards adopting the Sites and Policies Part 2: Site Allocations Plan.

The revised timetable is as follows:

Stage	Date	Event
Plan-preparation	February-April 2013	<i>6 weeks consultation on Consultation Draft.</i>
	March- April 2016	<i>6 weeks further consultation on the Consultation Draft</i>
	April –Sept 2016	<i>Assessment of responses; Consultation Report preparation of revised document.</i>
	Nov 2016	<i>Consultation on Publication Version</i>
Examination	Feb 2017	<i>Submission to Secretary of State .</i>
	Summer 2017	<i>Examination conducted by independent Inspector including hearings</i>
	Autumn 2017	<i>Inspector's report issued.</i>
Adoption	Winter 2017	<i>Formal adoption by the Council.</i>

Plan content

3.7 The North Somerset Council Sites and Policies Part 2: Site Allocation Plan (SAP) is a Local Plan prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012 (Section 6). Once adopted it will be a development plan document. Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.8 The purpose of the Site Allocations Plan is to identify the detailed allocations required to deliver the North Somerset Core Strategy, consistent with government guidance. This includes a review of existing and the identification of new allocations covering, for example, residential and employment uses, as well as designations to safeguard or protect particular areas such as local green space or strategic gaps.

A summary of the main proposals is set out below.

Housing

3.10 The plan looks ahead to 2026 with a target of 20,985 dwellings to be built over the plan period. A considerable number of dwellings currently have planning permission and many allocated sites remain available from the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and the 2013 Consultation Draft of the Site Allocation Plan. However additional sites need to be allocated in order to meet not only the identified Core Strategy requirement but ensure the Council has a 5 year housing supply.

3.11 Over the period April 2006 to April 2016 7,995 dwellings have been built leaving a residual requirement of 12,990 dwellings to be identified to 2026. This residual requirement is slightly exceeded and is made up of the following:

- proposed new allocations, unimplemented housing allocations carried forward from the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and large unimplemented housing sites (11,525 dwellings - including Weston Villages)
- other large housing sites with unimplemented planning permissions (161 dwellings)
- small sites with consent (473 dwellings)
- a windfall¹ allowance over the period 2016 – 2026 (897 dwellings)

3.12 The table below sets out the broad distribution of the residual requirement. The table shows a small surplus over the Core Strategy target of 20,985 which allows for a small amount of flexibility.

¹Windfall Sites are sites which have not been specifically identified as available but based on past building rates will come forward over the remainder of the plan period

	Completions 2006-2016	Proposed allocations and large sites with planning permission	Other large sites with consent (not proposed to be allocated)	Small sites with consent	Windfall allowance (based on past rates)	Total commitments
Weston urban area	2,895	2,707	89	140	422	6,253
Weston Villages	567	5,933	0	0	0	6,500
Clevedon	320	221	0	64	90	695
Nailsea	143	815	15	28	45	1,046
Portishead	2,788	373	16	47	63	3,367
Service villages	706	1,255	10	53	119	2,163
Remainder of North Somerset	576	221	31	141	158	1,127
Total	7,995	11,525	161	473	897	21,051

*

3.13 The distribution of new housing proposals is based on the North Somerset Core Strategy settlement hierarchy. This approach, subject to detailed planning constraints and key sustainable development principles, focuses the search for the majority of new development at Weston-super-Mare (in particular the town centre), followed by the towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead and then the nine service villages. Infill villages are less sustainable locations for the location of additional housing development.

3.14 The adoption Core Strategy makes no provision for amending the Green Belt. The recent re-examination of the consequential changes on the remaining remitted policies concluded that sufficient capacity exists without the need for Green Belt.

3.15 However, due to the need to identify sufficient land that is readily available and capable of being delivered within five years, a number of greenfield sites on the edge of the service villages of Congresbury, Churchill and Yatton have been identified for residential development. Many of these sites already have planning consent. Although additional land is identified at Weston-super-Mare, in order to provide a range and choice of sites, other locations need to be identified. Portishead and

Clevedon and to a certain extent Nailsea are very much constrained by Green Belt, flood risk and other environmental constraints.

Attached as Appendix 1 is the proposed Housing Delivery Action Plan which contains a number of initiatives that will be undertaken to improve the delivery of housing over the plan period.

3.16 A full list of large housing sites is contained within Schedule 1 of the plan. Many of the above sites have been subject to planning applications or pre-application discussions which is an indication of their availability and, where appropriate, the contribution they can make to the 5 year housing supply position.

Employment

3.17 In order to ensure balanced growth there are a number of sites in the main towns where mixed use (residential, employment, retail, community use) is encouraged and the plan overall allocates over 86 hectares of employment land (Schedule 2). The plan also safeguards a large number of well-established employment areas from alternative uses (Schedule 3).

Local Infrastructure

3.18 In conjunction with Part 1 of the Plan which provides the detailed planning policies, and the Developer Contributions SPD, the Site Allocations Plan addresses local infrastructure requirements. An important function of the Site Allocations Plan is to make adequate provision for community uses such as organised sport and more informal recreation whether provided by the local authority, voluntary agencies or the private sector. The objective is to ensure that adequate community facilities are secured and made available as development proceeds.

3.19 Schedule 4 and the requirements associated with new housing sites (Schedule 1) identifies land safeguarded for community uses.

Local Green Space

3.20 The Government, in its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of March 2012, introduced a new designation called "Local Green Space" (LGS) enabling local communities, through local and neighbourhood plans, to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.

Paragraph 77 of the NPPF states that the designation "*will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space*" and should only be used where specified criteria would be met. It states that the designation should only be used where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife, and is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

3.21 Taking this guidance into account and considering responses received to the previous consultation, a list of LGS sites is proposed, with a justification for each, set out in Schedule 5 and identified on the detailed proposed allocations.

Strategic Gaps

3.22 Core Strategy Policy CS19 establishes the principle of strategic gaps. It states that “the council will protect strategic gaps to help retain the separate identity, character and/or landscape setting of settlements and distinct parts of settlements”.

3.23 Strategic gaps are needed because reliance on countryside policies alone would be unlikely to provide sufficient protection against development which would harm the separate identity, character and/or landscape setting of settlements or distinct parts of settlements. Strategic gaps, with detailed boundaries, are identified on the Policies Map between the following places:

- Weston-super-Mare, Hutton, Locking and Parklands Village
- Weston-super-Mare and Uphill
- Weston-super-Mare and St Georges
- Congresbury and Yatton
- Nailsea and Backwell

Weston Regeneration

3.24 There are a number of policies supporting the regeneration of Weston Town Centre, the need to enhance the A370 corridor and provide a park and ride site. The Weston Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out in more detail how the housing allocations are to be brought forward and what design guidelines need to be pursued. The contribution that Weston Town Centre makes towards the Core Strategy housing requirement is critical and this SPD will assist delivery.

Summary of main issues raised

3.25 The consultation ran from Monday November 7th 2016 until Monday December 19th 2016. There were 465 separate comments on the plan

3.26 Set out below is a summary of the major issues raised by the public, developers, organisations and landowners:

- a total of 46 additional sites were put forward, the majority for residential development. Many of these sites are in the Green Belt or have been considered before either as a planning application ,through the “call for sites”; or the last round of consultation on the Site Allocations Plan in March 2016;
- it was suggested that many of the housing sites put forward are undeliverable within the 5 year period and that the surplus in the housing figures is insufficient to allow for delay;
- the majority of housing sites allocated already have planning consent;

- the cumulative impact of development proposed has not been assessed in particular at Nailsea and Yatton;
- development of the Nailsea sites (Engine Lane, Uplands) objected to on the basis of poor access to the town centre, lack of services, green field site loss of open spaces, minimal employment opportunities, poor road network, landscape impact, loss of high quality agricultural land, loss of biodiversity and flood risk (a total of 73 objectors);
- development at Moor Road Yatton objected to on the grounds of loss of playing pitches, congestion in the High Street, loss of biodiversity, lack of community facilities and landscape impact (13 objectors);
- significant objection to the loss of existing employment premises at Old Mill Road, Portishead Responses highlighted the lack of alternative sites/buildings in the locality to accommodate displaced businesses ,the continual loss of employment opportunities at Portishead to residential use and how the businesses at Old Mill Road provide much valued local services (36 objectors);
- objections to the density and mix of residential development at Trendlewood Way, Nailsea (23 objectors);
- request to relax the employment designation at a number of existing/proposed employment sites at Clevedon, Portishead and Weston and change their allocation to residential;
- suggested new sites for Local Green Space designation and some objections to those proposed. Objections were raised to the Local Green Space designation of Farleigh Fields, Backwell, Nowhere Lane, Nailsea, land adjacent to Claverham Village Hall and Brookfield Walk Clevedon. Additional sites were suggested at Yatton (including Moor Rd), Nailsea (including The Uplands) Congresbury, Wrington and Weston
- suggested additions to and reductions to all the Strategic Gap designations:
 - (i) strategic gaps needed around all service and infill villages
 - (ii) opposition to strategic gap between Locking and Weston, Nailsea and Backwell
 - (iii) strategic gap between Yatton and Congresbury to be amended to allow for much needed medical centre to be built;
- an inconsistent approach to the Sustainability Appraisal in particular the justification for designating residential sites;
- lack of a Habitat Regulation Assessment accompanying the plan (this is being finalised and will be agreed prior to submission);
- request to allocate land for the proposed Mendip Vale Medical Centre between Yatton and Congresbury;
- request to allocate land for sporting facilities in the Green Belt at Failand.

3.26 A more detailed assessment of the response to consultation and plans of suggested sites put forward for development will be presented at the SPED meeting.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 The Consultation Draft of the Site Allocations Plan was published for consultation in March 2016. The following were invited to take part in the consultation:

- North Somerset residents: Press Release and Advert
- Town and Parish Councils: workshop held on 10th March 2016
- Agents, landowners and developers who had previously expressed an interest
- Statutory Undertakers
- Adjoining Local Authorities.

Consultees were informed about the consultation via:

- E-mail or letters to a database of participants in previous Local Development Framework documents
- Distribution of posters to local councils and libraries and used as an advert in the local press
- Local press
- Social media
- Exhibitions

Staffed exhibitions were held at:

- Weston Library, Monday 21 March, 4pm-7pm
- Nailsea Library, Tuesday 22 March, 4pm-7pm
- Churchill Primary School, Wednesday 23 March, 4.30pm-7pm
- Portishead Library, Thursday 24 March, 4pm-7pm
- Clevedon Library, Tuesday 29 March, 4pm-7pm
- Congresbury School Rooms, Wednesday 30 March, 4pm-7pm
- Yatton Library, Thursday 31 March, 4pm-7pm
- Winscombe Community Centre, Monday 4 April, 4pm-7pm.

Consultation on the Publication Version involved contacting all the respondents to the consultation draft, the wider database and attending public exhibitions at Backwell, Nailsea, Banwell and Churchill.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

By providing greater certainty, the Site Allocations Plan should reduce the speculative development pressures and costs of supporting appeals, and greater clarity to service providers. The new allocations will bring financial benefits such as through New Homes Bonus.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

The absence of a clear development plan will increase the risk of speculative development proposals.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Sites and Policies Plan has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment. A range of sites is proposed to deliver identified needs.

8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

An up-to-date adopted development plan will support service delivery. |

9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Failure to progress the plan will result in a uncertainty and a lack of clarity and potentially reduce the Council's effectiveness in dealing with speculative development pressures.

AUTHOR

Graham Quick
Local Planning Team Leader
01934 426177

BACKGROUND PAPERS

2nd February 2016 Executive Committee Report
Site Allocation Plan (Consultation Draft) March 2016.
Site Allocation Plan (Publication Version) Oct 2016
18th October 2016 Executive Committee Report

APPENDIX 1

Housing Delivery Action Plan January 2017

Regular progress monitoring of applications

Using the already established Major Applications meetings, which are held regularly and well attended by cross directorate officers, it is proposed to hold a standard agenda item, discussing progress of all major residential planning applications. This will enable regular discussion of any issues, and applications that aren't progressing in a timely manner can be flagged to be escalated to the Priorities group.

Bringing forward proposed allocations

On paper the Site Allocations Plan Publication Version identifies sufficient sites to deliver the plan period requirement overall. Efforts will be focussed on expediting delivery of those sites that (with intervention) could be brought forward in the trajectory from later in the plan period.

Specific focus will be given initially to those sites in council or HCA ownership.

Frontload the planning process

Once the housing white paper is received an officer working group will be set up to address any implications and investigate opportunities for supporting housing delivery, such as the production of development briefs for allocated sites, and permissions in principle to provide developers with a degree of certainty.

Condense the amount of time between resolution to grant outline consent and start on site

Sites have long lead in times from the grant of outline consent and being considered shovel ready. Examples of how this could be addressed include:

- Requiring reserved matters applications be submitted within a short timeframe
- Upon granting outline consent specifying exactly what will be required with the reserved matters
- Requiring conditions to be discharged within a short timeframe
- Issuing shorter consents

This will be looked at further as part of a workstream on the use of planning conditions.

Legal agreements

S106 legal agreements notoriously take a considerable amount of time for various reasons. Discussions to be held about how this can be addressed. CIL implementation is expected to reduce the number of S106 contributions, although legal agreements will still be required.

Resources

The use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) will be investigated.

Liaison with developers

A good relationship has been forged with the Weston Villages developers, particularly around the delivery of employment led remit, through the Joint Delivery Review Board. It would be beneficial to replicate this with other developers by holding a quarterly housing delivery forum with the large site developers and agents.

Understanding the housing delivery market

We are consider commissioning consultants to undertake a review of housing delivery within North Somerset to enable further understanding of the local context. Brief to be prepared and quotes sought.

Trajectories

Upon receipt of major planning applications, delivery trajectories will be requested, which should set out anticipated milestone dates. This will enable further comprehensive monitoring of individual sites, and trends relating to timescales.