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1. Introduction

What is the local plan?

National guidance emphasises the importance of an up-to-date local plan which provides a vision for the future development of an area, a framework for assessing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities and is a platform for local people to help shape their surroundings.

The currently adopted Local Plan in North Somerset covers the period to 2026 and comprises the following three main documents:

- Core Strategy (January 2017)
- Sites and Policies Part 2: Site Allocations Plan (April 2018)

These documents, together with the Neighbourhood Plans form the statutory development plan which is used to help address decisions on planning applications.

Why do we need a new local plan?

The time period for the planning framework is being reviewed to 2036 and the existing plans will require to be updated.

The West of England authorities (North Somerset, Bristol City, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire) are working together to prepare a Joint Spatial Plan. This will identify the needs for housing, employment and key infrastructure 2016-2036 and the broad strategy for its delivery. The JSP was submitted for independent examination in April 2018. The West of England authorities are all required to review and update their existing local plans alongside the emerging JSP in order to provide detailed guidance to support its implementation.

What is the Joint Spatial Plan challenge for North Somerset?

The JSP as submitted identifies a need for 102,200 homes and 82,500 additional jobs across the West of England to 2036. While this will be tested through the examination process, the starting point for the North Somerset Local Plan 2036 is the proposed district apportionment.

North Somerset is expected to deliver some 25,000 homes. Of these some 13,932 dwellings are already committed in existing plans or have planning permission. This leaves sites for new dwellings to be identified through brownfield opportunities in urban areas (‘urban living’), strategic development locations (sites of 500+ dwellings specifically identified in the JSP) and smaller sites (‘non-strategic growth’ comprising sites of less than 500 dwellings to be identified through local plans).
What is the purpose of this document?

This is an early stage in the plan-making process. The purpose of the Issues and Options document is to identify the issues which need to be addressed and to receive initial feedback on a range of proposed alternatives. It is not a draft plan and does not contain detailed policies or site allocations. Detailed draft policies will be consulted upon at a later date, taking into account the results of this consultation.

What is a Sustainability Appraisal and will there be one for the Local Plan?

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is carried out at all stages of Local Plan preparation. The SA process is designed to help ensure that the plan is compatible with the aims of sustainable development. Sustainable development is defined as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The main purpose of SA is to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on sustainability of implementing the Local Plan.

The Sustainability Appraisal consists of a Scoping Report and the Main SA Report. The Scoping Report is the first stage which sets out the context, objectives and approach of the assessment. The draft SA Scoping Report is published alongside this document.

In order to assess what options would be most sustainable for the future development of North Somerset, it is necessary to identify key environmental, social and economic issues that currently exist within the district. Using this information, sustainability objectives are identified which aim to address the issues identified. Five key objectives and 20 sub-objectives are identified in the Scoping Report. These objectives alongside

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing commitments</th>
<th>13,932 (to 2026)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small site windfall</td>
<td>1,300 (130 pa 2026-36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Development Locations**

- Backwell: 700
- Banwell: 1,900
- Churchill: 2,675 (+125 post 2036)
- Nailsea: 2,575 (+725 post 2036)

Urban living: 1,000

Non-strategic growth: 1,000

**Total**: 25,082
decision-making criteria, used to evaluate potential options, produce the ‘SA framework’ on which the plans emerging policy options are assessed. The SA will inform judgement on what options best achieve the sustainability objectives.

The full methodology of the SA process can be viewed within the draft SA Scoping Report. With reference to the Scoping Report:

1. Have all relevant plans, programmes and policies been referenced?
2. Is any significant environmental, social or economic data missing or misrepresented?
3. Are any judgments made concerning baseline information incorrect?
4. Are there any additional sustainability issues within North Somerset that need to be considered in the development of the New Local Plan document?
5. Do you agree with the proposed Sustainability Appraisal Framework?
6. Are the objectives and effect criteria set out appropriate?

Following this consultation, all options will undergo Sustainability Appraisal.

A final Sustainability Appraisal Report will be produced which identifies the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) of the plan and reasonable alternatives and will propose measures to reduce or enhance those effects. This SA report will inform the preferred approach which will be put forward in the Publication version of the Local Plan.

How can I comment?
For details of the consultation and supporting documents, please visit:

(Add details)

What will happen to my comments?
The responses received will help to shape the detailed policies and site proposals. The responses and a summary of the issues raised will be published on the Local Plan 2036 website.

Next steps
The Local Plan is subject to a number of stages of preparation. There has already been some preliminary consultation. A “generating ideas” consultation was held in November 2017 specifically about the proposed garden villages and new communities at Banwell, Churchill, Nailsea and Backwell. There has also been engagement with town and parish councils, business groups and other organisations. There will be further community engagement and consultation on a draft plan anticipated to be available in summer 2019. After that the Council will agree a publication version which will be made available for formal representations. The plan is then submitted for examination.
by a Planning Inspector who will report on whether the document meets the legal requirements and is sound in planning terms. Modifications may be made to the plan at that stage. The Council will then formally adopt the plan.
2. North Somerset wide issues

North Somerset stretches from the edge of Bristol to the Mendip Hills AONB. The principal settlements are Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead but it includes a variety of different villages and rural areas, including a significant area of floodplain. It is a diverse area with a range of constraints (see map below) and opportunities. The Local Plan needs to identify what are the key issues affecting the district, in relation to areas which are special and unique as well as locations where there are opportunities for change, and to suggest what the Local Plan could do to make a difference.

Seven broad locations have been identified within North Somerset as a starting point for the identification of the main planning issues affecting different communities. The potential of the Local Plan to address the issues identified will then be explored. The order in which the issues are listed should not be taken as an indication of the priority given to them.
1. Weston-super-Mare
Weston-super-Mare is the largest town in North Somerset containing the greatest range of services, facilities and good access to transport facilities. The town is continuing to grow as development continues at Weston Villages and other locations, with jobs encouraged through the Enterprise Area near junction 21 of the M5, including the Food Enterprise Zone at Weston Airfield.

What are the key issues?

1. How to support urban regeneration of the town centre and adjacent areas, particularly on vacant or underused land to reduce pressure on greenfield sites.
2. How to increase the attractiveness and vibrancy of the town centre for residents and visitors and to tackle the changing requirements of retail and tourism.
3. How to support economic growth through making the town an attractive location for investment. The approach to growth at Weston has been employment-led to ensure that jobs and housing are delivered in tandem to improve self-containment and to reduce out-commuting.
4. How to improve the life prospects of residents from communities experiencing poverty, ill health or poor access to jobs and services.
5. How to encourage more journeys by public transport, cycling and walking, in particular to link the town centre and central/outer Weston areas and to address congestion issues particularly related to the M5 motorway.
6. How to protect and enhance the environment and heritage of the town.
7. A need for ongoing urban intensification, focused in the town centre and along the A370 corridor.
8. How to achieve higher urban densities without compromising on design infrastructure or quality of place.

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

- Working with other agencies to review land uses, unlock brownfield sites and co-ordinate infrastructure delivery. Policies can be included to promote residential development on previously developed or underused sites and increase densities on sites or to intensify commercial uses where appropriate.
- Policies promoting increased densities at the most accessible locations such as town centres and rail stations whilst seeking to protect local character, environment and functioning of the area. This is discussed further in the section 5: Urban living.
- Reassess the approach to retailing and other uses, including policies to allow opportunities to re-use or redevelop underused buildings such as hotels, care homes and former shops.
- Policies to ensure high standards of urban design when considering redevelopment proposals, and to consider the role of open spaces, local green spaces and strategic gaps in protecting the character of valued areas.
Reassess the existing employment-led approach to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose (see Section 6: Employment).

Policies to promote and enable better pedestrian and cycle connectivity between different areas of the town, such as between the town centre and Weston Villages and Hutton Moor, and to improve the public realm along and adjacent to key transport corridors.

Do you agree with these or are there other challenges or issues which we have not included and how might the Local Plan address these?

2. Clevedon
Clevedon is an historic seaside town located on the outer edge of the Green Belt with generally low-lying floodplain to the south. Clevedon is preparing a Town Vision to identify the key challenges and opportunities faced by the town. Some of the actions from this may feed into policies or proposals within the Local Plan. The key challenges below may be revised in light of the findings of the Town Vision.

What are the key issues?

1. How to help to promote and increase the attractiveness of the town centre to both users and investors such as retailers/other businesses.
2. How to protect and enhance the historic heritage of the town, particularly with respect to the seafront and Hill Road areas to maintain the historic character of these areas.
3. How to encourage greater integration between the Town Centre, Hill Road and the Sea Front.
4. How to encourage the retention of business/employment uses both within the town and to the south at Clevedon 5/20 and west of Kenn Road to ensure there are opportunities for residents to work locally, rather than commuting.
5. Is there a need to review accessibility by car and public transport to the motorway network and Bristol?
6. If the proposed contingency housing site identified in the JSP to the east of M5 J20 is ever brought forward in a future review of the plan, how could this be successfully integrated into the town?

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

• To include policies and allocations which will stimulate investment in the town centre to encourage economic growth and vitality.
• Inclusion of policies to promote schemes for enhancement of the environment and heritage of the town and also to ensure the retention of elements of local character in any development proposals.
• To consider the approach to the safeguarding of the potential contingency site east of Clevedon.
• To identify new housing sites within the town.
• To identify employment opportunities to address local needs, particularly sites well located in relation to the primary road network.
• Consider the opportunity for small scale Green Belt amendments.

*What are the main challenges affecting Clevedon and how might the Local Plan address these?*

3. Nailsea and Backwell
Nailsea and Backwell lie on the outer edge of the Green Belt. Backwell is located on the A370 and is separated from Nailsea by the railway line and station and the strategic gap. Nailsea is preparing a Town Vision to identify the principal issues facing the town. The key challenges below may be revised in light of the findings of the Town Vision.

*What are the key issues?*

1. The area has been identified for strategic growth in the JSP, and the Local Plan needs to test the scale of development proposed and how it can be most effectively assimilated.
2. The impact of the proposed strategic road infrastructure, its location and alignment, phasing, delivery and implications on the wider network.
3. The environmental implications of development on internationally-protected habitats and floodplain areas.
4. The need for new transport infrastructure, including new roads, the potential future role of the rail station, opportunities for public transport improvements, cycling and walking.
5. The need to increase the wider range and type of housing in Nailsea, particularly affordable housing.
7. The potential strategic growth at SW Nailsea is remote from the existing town centre. Could some development be better located in relation to existing services and facilities?
8. The need to encourage a range of local employment opportunities including for start-ups and small businesses.
9. The need to improve opportunities for sport, leisure, community and cultural activities and events.
10. The need to retain the village character of Backwell, support and enhance the village centre and address traffic issues on A370.

*How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?*

• Identifying the policies and allocations to guide the masterplanning and delivery of the strategic development locations, including new road corridors and public transport, housing, services, facilities and other infrastructure and phasing. This is discussed further in section 4: Garden villages and new communities.
• Consider the opportunity for local Green Belt amendments.
• Identify opportunities for public transport improvements, particularly the role of the station as a transport hub.
• Reassess the policy approach to addressing local housing needs at Nailsea, and identify potential allocations.
• Identify policies and allocations to support local economic growth, including new development areas and potential redevelopment opportunities.
• Identify further opportunities to improve Nailsea town centre.

What are the main issues affecting Nailsea and Backwell and how might the Local Plan address these?

4. Portishead
Portishead has had a recent period of regeneration around the dock with a marina and associated housing and other uses on a previously derelict and industrial area. There is little scope for further growth as the town is now tightly constrained by Green Belt. The Town Vision being prepared will help to identify the principal issues. The key challenges below may be revised in light of the findings of the Town Vision.

What are the key issues?

1. To ensure the retention of sufficient local employment opportunities within the town.
2. To improve accessibility to the M5 and Bristol through highway and public transport improvements.
3. To support public transport access to Bristol through the delivery of the Portishead rail line and other public transport improvements.
4. To identify opportunities for residential development, particularly on brownfield sites.
5. Investigate opportunities for allocating land for employment on the edge of Portishead.

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

• To support successful delivery of the re-opened Portishead rail connection and to encourage bus improvements, particularly to Bristol.
• To identify potential measures to reduce traffic congestion on routes to Bristol.
• Examine the potential for allocating additional employment land, possibly through small-scale Green Belt releases.
• To assess future land-use needs of the Royal Portbury Dock.
• To consider residential development opportunities, particularly on previously developed land.

What are the main issues affecting Portishead and how might the Local Plan address these?
5. Green Belt

Around 40% of the land in North Somerset is designated as Green Belt. The current extent is defined on the Policies Map. It was established in the early 1950s and has been a valued and effective planning tool, checking the sprawl of Bristol, preventing settlements merging, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preserving the setting and special character of historic towns and assisting in urban regeneration. Both the government and the council attach great importance to the Green Belt and no strategic changes to accommodate large scale housing proposals are being put forward in this Plan. The current approach to new residential development in the Green Belt takes a variety of forms - villages could be insets, have settlement boundaries or be washed over by Green Belt.

What are the key issues?

1. Maintaining the importance and value of the Green Belt and preventing the sprawl of Bristol especially from large scale speculative housing proposals.
2. Should there be more opportunity for communities within the Green Belt to address their local housing and other needs?
3. The implications of the proposed expansion of Bristol Airport in terms of factors such as noise, surface transport, parking, built development and Green Belt changes.
4. The potential for considering the future of land parcels in the Green Belt now contained by the South Bristol Link Road.

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

- Through ensuring that the Green Belt and its boundaries are fit for purpose in the long-term. Consider minor changes such as a result of anomalies or existing built development.
- Consider the options relating to how settlements in the Green Belt are defined in the Local Plan (settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries, chapter x).
- Consider allocating sites and review boundaries in consultation with parishes/town councils for specific local needs and in exceptional circumstances.
- Consider the options for the expansion of the Airport in terms of the policy approach and amendments to Green Belt boundaries (Bristol Airport, chapter x).
- Consider local Green Belt changes in locations identified as making only a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. This include consideration of the land inside the South Bristol Link in conjunction with Bristol City.

What are the main issues affecting the Green Belt and how might the Local Plan address these?
6. Central Parishes
This area comprises the largely rural area in the south of the district lying outside the Green Belt. Much of the area is low lying floodplain. It contains a variety of villages of different sizes and characteristics, several of which have experienced significant growth pressures in recent years. There is currently further growth proposed in the JSP on the A38 to M5 corridor which will affect several existing communities.

What are the key issues?

1. The impact and location and alignment, phasing, delivery and implications on the wider network of the proposed new highway infrastructure proposed for the A38 to M5 corridor.
2. The form, location, design and proposed delivery of the Garden Village proposals at Banwell and Churchill.
3. The environmental implications of development on internationally-protected habitats and floodplain areas.
4. Further growth proposed through the Joint Spatial Plan. How will the individual character and environment of existing villages be protected?
5. Traffic congestion issues on several parts of the network such as through Yatton.
6. The potential to improve the distribution of secondary schools across North Somerset by considering a new school at Yatton.
7. To support local employment opportunities such as Thatchers.

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

• Identify the policies and allocations to guide the masterplanning and delivery of the strategic development locations, including new road corridors and public transport, housing, services, facilities and other infrastructure and phasing. This is discussed further in section 4: Garden Villages and new communities.
• Identify policies and allocations to deliver the housing requirement at sustainable locations. See section 3: Settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries.
• Consider policies and allocations to support local economic growth.
• Consider the allocation of a secondary school site at Yatton.

What do you think are the main issues affecting the Central Parishes and how might the Local Plan address these?

7. Mendip Hills
The southern edge of the district is in the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is an area of national landscape importance where planning policies ensure that the priority is to conserve, protect and where possible enhance the natural beauty.
What are the key issues?

1. The opportunity to address local needs, particularly affordable housing.
2. The role of tourism and pressures for holiday accommodation.
3. Increased pressures for recreation arising from the proposed new developments.
4. Issues raised through equestrian uses and stables.
5. The impact of the proposed new strategic development locations at Banwell and Churchill on views from and into the AONB.

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

- To reassess the policy context to ensure priority is given to the protection and enhancement of the AONB when considering proposals for development.
- To identify policies and allocations designed to avoid or mitigate the landscape impact of the strategic development locations on the AONB. This is discussed further in section 4: Garden Villages and new communities.
- To assess policies related to tourism, holiday accommodation and equestrian uses, and their impact on AONB objectives.

What do you think are the main issues affecting the Mendip Hills and how might the Local Plan address these?
3. Local Housing Growth

What is local housing growth?

The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) sets out that 1,000 new homes will need to be allocated in North Somerset to meet requirements for ‘non-strategic’ growth.

Non-strategic growth is any residential development under 500 dwellings. 500+ dwellings is the figure set by the JSP for strategic development and therefore anything less than this is considered as non-strategic. However, in practice it is likely that most non-strategic sites will be much smaller and distributed across the district. The objective is to identify locations where additional development would provide benefits without significant harm to, or loss of, built and natural assets.

Proportional growth will differ from place to place based on a number of factors including:

- The size of the existing settlement or village
- The capacity for delivering housing in a settlement based on existing constraints (i.e. flooding, landscape, heritage, ecology) and the availability of deliverable sites
- The level of sustainable access to key services and facilities as well as the scale and requirement for new infrastructure

Requirement for small sites.

Emerging national planning guidance also requires that at least 20% of all sites identified for housing in Local Plans are of 0.5 ha or less. This is to ensure a wider range of sites are provided in a variety of locations to give greater choice to those needing a new home and those wishing to build their own home. Typically a site of this size would deliver around 15-20 dwellings.

Smaller and medium size sites tend to be relatively easier to deliver. The provision of smaller sites should ensure that the delivery of new homes rises overall and delivery rates are more constant over the duration of the plan period.

Where will the non-strategic sites be?

The Issues and Options document does not propose specific sites for new development at this stage. An indication of the potential opportunities which may be available is undertaken through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). This is an assessment of sites within and surrounding towns and villages which have been submitted to the council through the call for sites process, or identified by local communities, and assessed in terms of their suitability.
These assessments are used to support plan preparation, allowing an understanding of the characteristics of land supply and opportunities available to assist land supply for housing and economic development.

The next stage of the Local Plan will identify potential sites using the HELAA and other evidence, taking account of the wider issues relating to settlement policy and the location of development to deliver a sustainable future pattern of development.
3.1 Settlement Hierarchy

What is a settlement hierarchy?

A settlement hierarchy is a way of categorising an area’s settlements to recognise their different roles and functions. A hierarchy groups together those settlements that have similar characteristics. At the top of the hierarchy are settlements that play a key role within the district, providing services used by a much wider catchment, having the best infrastructure (facilities and services) and which are well connected in terms of transport links. At the bottom of the hierarchy are settlements which have relatively few functions, less infrastructure and are more isolated in terms of transport links.

Identifying a hierarchy will help to determine what role each settlement can play in addressing the future housing needs of the district and the most sustainable way to distribute the non-strategic housing growth over the next plan period.

In considering where new development should be located, there is a need to balance the requirements of development against other factors such as sustainability and environmental impacts. Development should generally be accommodated in settlements where the need to travel can be reduced through good access to facilities and services and where it can be accommodated without significant adverse impacts.

What is the existing hierarchy?

The Core Strategy sets out the current settlement hierarchy within North Somerset through Policy CS14: Distribution of Housing. It states that:

- Weston-super-Mare will be the main focus for new residential development including the strategic allocations at Weston Villages.

- Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea are identified as locations for any additional housing growth either within or abutting the settlements.

- The Service Villages, which are listed in policy CS32, are identified as locations for small scale development of an appropriate scale either within or abutting the settlement boundary.

- Infill Villages are listed in Policy CS33 and are settlements where infilling may be acceptable within the settlement boundaries.

The Core Strategy introduced a flexible approach to sustainable development around towns and service villages. Policies CS28, CS31 and CS32 allow sites of a certain size (up to 75 dwellings at Weston, up to 50 dwellings at Clevedon, Portishead and Nailsea, and up to 25 dwellings at the Service Villages) to come forward adjacent to the settlement
boundary, providing the sites meet the requirements set out in the policies for each area.

Why does the existing hierarchy need to be reviewed?

The existing settlement hierarchy will need to be reviewed in the new Local Plan 2036. A review is needed because the Joint Spatial Plan provides a new housing requirement for the district up to 2036 which includes the identification of non-strategic sites to help deliver that target. It is therefore important to re-assess the role and function of all settlements in North Somerset to establish an up-to-date profile of their sustainability, capacity and constraints, particularly as some settlements may have changed since the Core Strategy hierarchy was originally conceived.

For example, there may be smaller settlements which may be able to contribute to sustainable development, but may not fit within the existing categories in the hierarchy, or larger settlements which are identified as being appropriate for housing growth under the existing strategy may no longer be suitable due to constraints such as floodplain.

The review of the settlement hierarchy and settlement boundaries will include villages in the Green Belt. Currently some villages are inset within the Green Belt, others are washed over but have a settlement boundary, whilst others have no settlement boundary and are regarded as countryside. A revised hierarchy could change this and alter the approach to small scale and infill development in some settlements.

What are the options for a new hierarchy?

Three potential options for reviewing the settlement hierarchy have been identified and the advantages and disadvantages of each option are set out below:
## Option 1 – Keep the existing hierarchy but re-assess the position of each settlement within the hierarchy

### Advantages:
- It allows for an updating and review of the settlement’s role and function in the hierarchy.
- The hierarchy is familiar to, and understood, by local communities.

### Disadvantages:
- Smaller settlements which may be able to contribute to sustainable development, but may not fit within the existing categories, may be overlooked.
- Larger settlements which are identified as being suitable for housing growth under the existing strategy may no longer be suitable and could be moved into a different category.
- Issuers around the treatment of settlements which may share services and facilities.

## Option 2 – An expanded hierarchy with an additional tier between Service and Infill villages.

### Advantages:
- A new tier creates an additional category for smaller service villages and larger infill villages which does not currently exist.
- An additional tier would allow for small scale growth in some of the smaller sustainable villages which would distribute the growth and reduce the pressure on town and particularly service villages.

### Disadvantages:
- This option assumes that residents in smaller villages can easily access services and facilities in neighbouring larger settlements which may not always be the case.
Option 3 – Growth based strategy. Group together settlements with capacity for housing sites with a tightly worded criteria-based policy to guide where development will go.

Advantages:
- Settlements are not constrained by being in a category and therefore allows for more flexibility in terms of looking for suitable sites.
- It reduces the possibility of smaller villages stagnating as the policy would allow appropriate levels of growth in smaller settlements.
- It allows for more choice of sites and it is not discounting settlements which could benefit from appropriate levels of growth.

Disadvantages:
- A risk that it could result in too much development at villages with limited facilities.
- Does not give communities certainty over how their settlement will develop over the plan period.
- It could result in over-development in smaller settlements rather than distributing growth more effectively.

We would like your views on which option for a revised settlement hierarchy you think is best for the new Local Plan?
3.2 Settlement Boundaries

What are settlement boundaries?
Settlement boundaries are a well-established planning tool for defining the edge of a town or village in order to direct development to those locations. They are sometimes referred to as ‘the village fence’.

The primary function of the settlement boundary is to prevent sprawl and concentrate development within settlements in a form which is appropriate to the scale and needs of that community. Settlement boundaries define the areas where housing policies apply. Land outside of settlement boundaries is classified as ‘countryside’ where different policies apply. Policies in the countryside tend be much more restrictive in terms of what sort of development is acceptable.

The settlement boundaries in North Somerset have been well established through a succession of Local Plans and are reviewed when new plans are prepared.

The Core Strategy removed some of the settlement boundaries of the smaller villages (Abbots Leigh, Blagdon, Clapton-in-Gordano, Failand, Kingston Seymour, Leigh Woods, Portbury, Redhill, Tickenham, Weston-in-Gordano) as their status in the settlement hierarchy changed from infill villages to become ‘countryside’. The Site Allocations Plan made some changes to existing settlement boundaries where specific issues had been raised.

Why do the existing boundaries need to be reviewed?
Apart from removing the settlement boundaries from some settlements through the Core Strategy and minor amendments made to some settlement boundaries through the Site Allocations Plan, the Council has not undertaken a wholesale review of settlement limits since the preparation of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (NSRLP) 2007.

The existing boundaries do not reflect and include new development that has been completed adjacent to settlements. The existing boundaries also contain some anomalies such as a result of changes over time. Additionally a review of the boundaries would be one mechanism for assessing how development needs up to 2036 would be addressed through the Local Plan.

The new Local Plan (2018-2036) presents an opportunity for a comprehensive review to reflect new development, planning consents, new allocations, and any identified anomalies. This includes reviewing settlements in the Green Belt to assess whether there are opportunities to allocate sites and review boundaries for specific local needs and in exceptional circumstances.
Which settlements will have their boundaries reviewed?

A review of the settlement boundaries will assess all settlements which have an existing boundary identified through the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. It will also assess settlements which do not currently have a settlement boundary but have been identified as potentially having a role in the settlement hierarchy and therefore may need a boundary to guide the level of growth within them.

Table 1 shows which settlements will be part of the settlement boundary review and their current status in the existing settlement hierarchy.

**Table 1: Settlements to be assessed through a settlement boundary review.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current position in hierarchy</th>
<th>Settlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>Weston-super-Mare, Portishead, Nailsea Clevedon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Village</td>
<td>Backwell, Banwell, Churchill, Congresbury, Easton-in-Gordano/Pill, Long Ashton, Winscombe, Wrington, Yatton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infill Village</td>
<td>Bleadon, Claverham, Cleeve, Dundry, Felton, Flax Bourton, Hutton, Kenn, Kewstoke, Locking, Sandford, Uphill, Winford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are the options for reviewing the settlement boundaries?

There are two options in terms of reviewing settlement boundaries in order to accommodate future housing needs which are set out below:
Option 1 – Include new allocations within the boundaries and retain policy allowing sites to come forward adjacent to boundary.

Advantages:
- It meets the government’s pro-growth agenda as it allocates sites plus incorporates flexibility for other sites to come forward.
- By allocating sites it is easier to demonstrate that the Local Plan meets the District’s housing target for non-strategic growth as set out in the Joint Spatial Plan.
- Allocating sites ensures plan-led distribution of housing and reduces the potential for speculative development.

Disadvantages:
- It does not give communities complete certainty over how their settlement will develop over the plan period.
- It could result in too much growth at villages.

Option 2 – Include new allocations within the boundaries but remove policy allowing sites to come forward adjacent to boundary (as per the current strategy)

Advantages:
- By allocating sites it is easier to demonstrate that the Local Plan meets the District’s housing target for non-strategic growth as set out in the Joint Spatial Plan.
- There is more certainty for local communities over where development will go during the plan period.
- By allocating sites for the non-strategic housing growth it is easier to plan for infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, road and public transport improvements.
- Allocating sites ensures plan-led distribution of housing and reduces the potential for speculative development.

Disadvantages:
- It reduces the flexibility for bringing new sites forward outside the plan-led process.
- Have to make more provision inside settlement boundaries for housing sites.

We would like your views on which option for revised settlement boundaries you think is best for the new Local Plan?
4. Garden villages and new communities

What is a garden village?
Garden villages are freestanding new settlements with their own distinct sense of identity, rather than extensions to existing built up areas. They will be of high quality, be attractive and well designed and provide their own community facilities.

What is proposed for North Somerset?
The Joint Spatial Plan identifies locations across the plan area which are proposed to accommodate a strategic scale of growth (defined as 500+ dwellings). These ‘strategic development locations’ (SDLs) are indicated diagrammatically on the Key Diagram and each has a policy broadly describing the general extent of the proposal and an indicative dwelling capacity. These areas are the locations for two new garden villages at Churchill and Banwell and new communities at Nailsea and Backwell.

The Joint Spatial Plan was accompanied by an evidence base which included templates for each of these locations. These identified the constraints, issues and opportunities associated with each site. This included information on factors such as flooding, ecology, heritage, services and facilities and transport and other infrastructure requirements.

The Local Plan 2036 must identify what sustainable development means for North Somerset in terms of its environmental, social and economic dimensions. For the garden villages and new communities this means carefully considering the potential impacts of new development and their mitigation such as in terms of landscape, ecology and flooding, and balancing these against potential opportunities and wider objectives, infrastructure delivery and the creation of attractive well-designed sustainable communities.

JSP Policy 5 – Place Shaping Principles of the Publication draft JSP provides a series of high level key principles intended to inform the development and delivery of high quality and sustainable places, and will inform Local Plan policy and the masterplanning framework. More specific principles were also included for each location.

A consultation to generate ideas and discussion about the four new communities took place from 22nd November 2017 to 10th January 2018. This and further technical work has informed the further planning of the locations.

A range of infrastructure will be needed to unlock the developments coming forward, including transport improvements, sustainable drainage, schools, health centres and...
other community facilities. The Local Plan will be supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan setting out and prioritising the infrastructure requirements and how they will be funded. This will build on the infrastructure planning and transport studies carried out for the JSP, including the Joint Transport Study and Options Appraisal Report identifying potential new transport routes and phasing.

Objectives of this Issues and Options consultation

Work prepared to support the JSP has already identified key constraints that apply to the SDL locations using a methodology applied to all strategic sites across the West of England. This led to the identification of general areas of search for the new development and an indication of overall development capacities.

The initial concept diagrams included in this Issues and Options document take this work forward developing the vision, principles and refining the form and potential location of the proposed developments. The plans presented are not final masterplans and do not represent site allocations at this stage. Instead they begin to express some of the principles and themes that are influencing the development proposals at this stage, and take into account responses from previous consultation and representations on the planning of the strategic sites. The Concept Diagram and alternative scenarios presented for each location are indicative at this stage. The point of this Issues and Options consultation phase is to explore potential options and encourage and stimulate further debate. We value your feedback on the plans and key issues that it raises.

At this stage the specific boundaries of the development are not confirmed as there are alternative choices around which land is included. The potential capacity of the locations will vary in relation to the extent of developable land identified and assumptions about densities.

Following this consultation, further masterplanning will be undertaken working with developers and landowners and taking into account responses to this consultation. This process will be informed by further evidence, and technical assessment of the options to deliver the strategic sites. This is expected to inform more specific land allocations at the next stage of the Local Plan in addition to more specific proposals for transport infrastructure.

Key aspects we wish to test at this stage include:

- The proposed vision for each location,
- The Concept Diagram and alternative scenarios,
- The integration of strategic transport schemes and other key infrastructure, and,
- The development principles identified for each location.
Transport corridor studies:

Plans A and B below are taken from the Joint Spatial Plan – Emerging Findings of Transport Technical Studies (June 2018) and present scheme development at this time. They are emerging from an options assessment process and take into account a variety of delivery factors. The schemes are identified with the purpose of facilitating growth at the four strategic development locations identified through the JSP and will be explored through this Issues and Options consultation.

The plans do not represent specific alignments and are purposely diagrammatic in nature. They are intended to signal options at this stage of the process that will be taken forward for further assessment including the identification of corridor options and eventually, proposals for specific, safeguarded alignments.

Nailsea and Backwell Transport Schemes

In the context of supporting the strategic development locations at Nailsea and Backwell the emerging findings are suggesting the infrastructure could be delivered in a phased manner in step with housing build out. The first phase proposes focusing on developing Nailsea & Backwell railway station as a transport hub with cycle & pedestrian links from the strategic development locations [MM] and MetroBus services from the station to join the existing MetroBus infrastructure at Long Ashton Park & Ride [E6]. The first phase also proposes a new highway link from the railway station to the A370 near Farleigh [E3]. This link offers congestion relief to Backwell Crossroads.

The second phase suggests further cycle and pedestrian links to the railway station [MM], car park expansion at the station, and improvements to the existing highway networks to the M5 at Junctions 19 and 20 [N1 & W10]. The second phase also suggests a new highway link between Hanham Way (Queens Road) and the B3130 [W4]. This link offers congestion relief to the Stone-edge Batch junction. The third phase suggests further improvements to the existing highway network towards Junctions 19 and 20. This includes a new highway link between B3130 and Junction 20 [W5]. This link offers congestion relief to the existing roundabouts within Clevedon. Finally a fourth phase suggests a highway link [W3], within the Nailsea SDL, to join to the earlier proposed highway link from the railway station to A370 near Farleigh [E3].
Plan A: Clevedon to Bristol Transport Schemes
Banwell and Churchill Transport Schemes

In the context of supporting the SDLs at Banwell and Churchill emerging proposals suggest:

The Banwell Bypass which is assumed to be the alignment already reserved in the development plan, a highway link from the Banwell Bypass to the A38 (two potential alignments are emerging, shown red & green), a number of potential connecting highway links, shown in orange and a possible additional junction on the M5. This proposal offers congestion relief to the existing J21 at Weston-super-Mare as well as accommodating the Banwell and Churchill strategic development locations.

Plan B: M5 to A38 Transport Schemes

Employment potential at the SDLs

Potential employment locations are generally identified within each of the Concept Diagrams and with principles for each location. Policy 7 of the Publication Draft JSP included a land area for employment for each location to further test through the local planning process. The potential for employment development at these locations will be further investigated aligned to more detailed masterplanning with the objective of allocating specific sites for business development.
4.1 Banwell Garden Village
What does the JSP propose?

The JSP proposes a new garden village of approximately 1,900 dwellings and 5ha employment land (Policy 7.5).

Context

Banwell suffers from significant traffic congestion within the historic centre. The new development supports the delivery of the Banwell Bypass which will lead to environmental improvements within the existing village. The proposed location lies generally to the north west of Banwell on land outside the floodplain. The area is sensitive in ecological terms, particularly in relation to greater and lesser horseshoe bat habitat.

Critical issues raised through the consultation

Whilst many of the issues raised related the principle of developing in this location which will be addressed through the JSP some of the detailed points raised in the 'generating ideas' consultation were as follows:

- Some local support for the delivery of the Banwell Bypass but still concerns about the local traffic implications associated with, for example, a new M5 J21a and increased airport traffic.
- Concerns about impact on the Mendip Hills AONB.
- There was more support for a separate settlement than it being linked to Banwell. Enhancements to Banwell’s centre were also favoured. Leisure recreation and open space were cited as important considerations.

Proposed vision for the Banwell Garden Village

By 2036, Banwell Garden Village will be a thriving new community a short distance away from Weston-super-Mare offering a range of new homes, business, and other uses. Its character will draw upon the semi-rural setting blending sensitively within the landscape to the north of the Mendip Hills AONB. New business space will be provided with good access to the M5 offering an attractive industrial/distribution opportunity, and WSM will provide a focus for employment opportunities, including the nearby Junction 21 Enterprise Area. The Banwell Bypass will alleviate existing local roads, including West Street in Banwell and the centre will benefit from an improved environment, enhancing the attractiveness, vitality and viability of the historic village.

How the principles are developing

Design principles in the evolving masterplan seek to achieve the following outcomes:
• Creation of a new garden village which embraces best practice and innovative approaches to placemaking including technological advances, to maximise the quality and effectiveness of development.
• The design and feel will be compact with its own character and sense of identity emphasising the rolling landscape and setting at the foot of the Mendip Hills.
• The village will be physically separated from the motorway and Banwell with its own local centre and primary schools.
• There will be good connections with Banwell sharing some services and facilities, ideally enhancing facilities in Banwell and creating new ones in the new village.
• The proposed development will be delivered in accordance with garden village principles, with a high quality of green infrastructure surrounding the village, and ambitious design.
• Outdoor recreation space and sporting facilities will be engrained in the master planning to provide the opportunity to embrace healthier lifestyles. The green gap between Banwell and the new bypass could be used for outdoor sport and recreation which can be shared by the new development and existing residents in Banwell.
• A local centre will be required as a focal point and consideration will need to be given to how existing provision in Banwell can be enhanced and shared between the two settlements.
• The new development is to be well connected to Weston and Banwell with frequent bus services and off-road cycle access.
• Housing development should embrace a range of sizes tenures and affordability and should make efficient use of land. Housing densities should be higher at the local centre and accessible locations and should reduce to the east where the development meets the lower lying land. A loose edge on this eastern fringe will be required. Housing on the western edge should be designed to minimise any impacts from the M5 including noise and visual impact.
• Development will largely occupy the south facing slopes of Woollers Hill, maximising solar gain within the development.
• New residents will be encouraged to lead community engagement to help shape a vibrant sociable neighbourhood.
• Land will be allocated for employment uses taking advantage of the proposed new motorway junction. The Concept Diagram indicates a potential general location for this.
• Development will be phased in relation to the delivery of the Banwell Bypass and other local road improvements including at Wolvershill Road.
• Addressing any impacts on floodplain outside of the development and embedding sustainable drainage will be essential for the development. Surface water will be managed on-site through a variety of attenuation measures and planned as an integral part of the green infrastructure strategy.
• Ecological issues to be addressed both through on-site measures and as part of a more strategic solution including the potential to link to offsite mitigation indicated through section ‘Environmental and Ecological Mitigation’ on page 72.
• Development layout, form and design should respect the setting of the Mendip Hills AONB.
Potential for employment development

The JSP identified an indicative requirement for 5ha of employment land subject to further testing through the Local Plan 2036. The generating ideas consultation raised the potential opportunity to develop employment close to the motorway and early ideas for this include distribution business use. There is potential for the employment land use to occupy land between the garden village and the motorway to the west of Summer Lane with good access to the strategic road network including future schemes set out in this document.
We would be interested in your thoughts on additional employment at the Banwell development including the type and possible location.

Alternative scenarios

The alternatives outlined at this stage are intended to stimulate discussion on the possible options identified at this stage for accommodating the strategic growth. At this stage these may not be exhaustive as further options may arise following consultation.

1. Further development to the north up to and beyond Silver Moor Lane – this area would extend the strategic development further north at Woolvers Hill and closer to the Wolverhill Road bridge over the M5. This area is outside of the flood plain.

2. Development between the proposed Banwell Bypass and Banwell Village – responses to the previous consultation emphasised the importance of maintaining an open gap between the new and existing development. This land could have a role to play in supporting the development of the strategic site e.g. in terms of providing other land uses that retain the open nature of the area. However development within remains an option and could avoid having to extend development to the north as indicated in Option 1.
4.2 Mendip Spring (Churchill) Garden Village

What does the JSP propose?

The JSP proposes a new garden village of around 2675 dwellings to 2036 and 7.4ha employment land (Policy 7.6).

Context

The broad location lies outside the Green Belt and floodplain and to the north of the Mendip Hills AONB. It lies along the proposed new highway corridor between the proposed M5 21a and A38. The new Sandford and Churchill Bypass could define the outer edge of the new development as indicated in the Concept Diagram. The site is ecologically sensitive in terms of the need to mitigate for greater and lesser horseshoe bat habitat.

Critical issues raised through consultation

There was significant objections raised through the previous consultation events about the scale of development and the appropriateness of the form of development proposed. Strategic issues such as the principle of the development in this general location will be addressed through the JSP examination process.

The key local issues related to:

- The impact of increased traffic such as from the airport on local roads and adverse impact on existing communities.
- The impact of the proposed development on a rural area, including the impact on AONB, loss of valued landscapes and wildlife habitats and flooding implications.
- Concerns about jobs, services and infrastructure, including public transport needed to support the proposals.

Proposed vision for Mendip Spring Garden Village

By 2036, Mendip Spring Garden Village will be a thriving new community forming one of a cluster of settlements including Churchill and Langford around Windmill Hill. Its character reflecting the local context including materials and styles reflecting the local vernacular. Green spaces will be extensive and have various functions supporting wildlife and a quality environment for people. New business space will be provided with good access to the strategic road network and new transport infrastructure will alleviate existing local roads and junctions. Opportunities to walk or cycle to the Strawberry Line and other locations will be available and recreational routes will be link to the surrounding countryside. Local historic features will be referenced in the
new development including the historic deer park, and the layout of development will safeguard existing heritage features.

How the principles are developing

Design principles in the evolving masterplan seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Creation of a new garden village which embraces best practice and innovative approaches to placemaking including technological advances, to maximise the quality and effectiveness of development.
- The design and character will be deeply rooted in the rural locality with cues taken from the surrounding landscape, local heritage assets, including the conservation area at Lower Langford and historic Churchill. There is potential to create a new Conservation Area in this location taking in the Churchill Front Street Area and immediate surrounding land that would contribute to the areas character and appearance.
- The village will be physically separated from Langford and Churchill and is not proposed to extend beyond the pylon corridor or Common Lane to the west.
- It will include its own primary schools, market square/village green and local centre which will serve the wider area.
- It will be developed along garden village principles with a high quality of green infrastructure throughout and surrounding the village, and exemplary design quality.
- A woodland corridor will be created to the south of the development which links existing woodland features, frames the southern edge of development and permeates into the heart of the village linking with the village green. The design of the woodland and surrounded space will take its inspiration from the former historic deer park in this area.
- A key driver for the form and layout will be a network of walking and cycling routes across the village, to Langford and Churchill, the secondary school, Strawberry Line and other services and facilities further afield.
- New residents will be encouraged to lead community engagement to help shape a vibrant sociable neighbourhood. A centrally located meeting place will be delivered early in the development.
- Land will be allocated for employment uses with good access to the Sandford and Churchill Bypass. This could incorporate the existing industrial site off Stock Lane.
- Outdoor recreation space and leisure facilities will be engraied in the master planning to provide the opportunity to embrace healthier lifestyles. There will be improved access to Windmill Hill for leisure and recreation and the creation of extensive ecological area(s) and recreation use in vicinity of Strawberry Line. A circular cycle path/footway around the village will be investigated.
- Churchill Rhyne and other existing watercourses will be integrated into the green infrastructure network as part of a wider sustainable drainage solution along with additional water storage areas. These areas will be beneficial for wildlife and the environment but also people having recreational and amenity value.
• The form, layout and design will respect the setting of the Mendip Hills AONB. The developments position to the north of Windmill Hill minimises any visual impact from the AONB.

• Housing areas will be rural in character and provide a range of sizes tenures and affordability, with higher densities around the local centre. Layouts will be informal reflecting the rural setting, and a loose boundary to the west should be created as the development addresses the landscape to the west.

• Improvements in Langford will follow the completion of the new road, the local community will be asked to make suggestions and proposals.

• The setting of historic Churchill will be protected and enhanced. A new conservation area is proposed covering Front Street, Churchill Green and the Grade 1 Listed church.
Alternative scenarios

DRAFT for Executive Committee 26 June 2018

Mendip Spring Garden Village

Key features

1. Potential employment connected to Sandford and Churchill Bypass and existing industrial site on Stock Lane.
2. Potential to set existing water corridors within green corridors.
3. Village Green located close to historic Churchill Park Farm. Focal point for a wider green network.
4. Sandford and Churchill Bypass to form outer edge of development and opportunity to take traffic from existing roads.
5. Higher density housing around mixed use local centre.
6. Lower density fringe of development on western side opening out to countryside beyond.
7. Windmill Hill - key landscape feature forming part of a corridor of open space and opportunity for recreational use.
8. Potential for Strategic Gap between Langford and new development with good links across.
9. Strategic cycle and pedestrian link to the Strawberry Lane with onward access to Yatton Station.
10. The setting of heritage features are safeguarded including around Churchill Green and Front Street.
11. A mixed use local centre with a range of services and facilities.
12. Strategic ecological/environmental mitigation potential. Specific approach and location to be confirmed.

Alternative Scenarios (AS)

1. Further development to the north towards Stock Lane.
2. Further development to the west towards Common Lane.
3. Possible new highway connection between new road [4 on the Concept Diagram] and Churchill Gate junction.

Concept Diagram explanation

The plans presented are not final masterplans and do not represent site allocations or a preferred policy position. Instead they begin to express some of the principles and themes that are influencing the development proposals at this stage, and take into account engagement undertaken to date. The Concept Diagram and alternative scenarios presented for each location are indicative at this stage, and prepared for the purposes of the Local Plan Issues and Options consultation. Following this consultation further investigation and testing of options will take place to inform the next stage of the Local Plan taking into account responses to this consultation.
The alternatives outlined at this stage are intended to stimulate discussion on the possible options identified at this stage for accommodating the strategic growth. At this stage these may not be exhaustive as further options may arise following consultation.

1. Further development to the north towards Stock Lane – there is potential to extend the development towards Stock Lane on land outside of the flood plain.

2. Further development west towards Stock Lane – there is also potential to extend towards Stock Lane however heritage features may provide some constrain on potential.

3. Possible new highway connection to Churchill Gate junction – this option is currently identified as a possible new road link. It would relate closely to the new strategic development but its requirement is not yet confirmed.
4.3 Backwell Garden Village

What does the JSP propose?

The JSP proposes an extension to Backwell village for approximately 700 dwellings (Policy 7.4).

Context

The proposed location is to the west of Backwell on land located outside the Green Belt. The development would need to be sensitively designed to integrate with the village and be appropriate for its rural setting. A development of this scale would require a new primary school, but most other local services and facilities would be found in the existing village centre. Transport improvements are essential to support delivery of the site in the context of the wider transport network which includes improved accessibility to Bristol and the wider principal road network. There is a need for improved accessibility to the rail station. This is an ecologically sensitive area particularly in relation to greater and lesser horseshoe bats and appropriate strategic mitigation will be required. Development will need to respect the settings of historic Chelvey and the West Town Conservation Area.

Critical issues raised through consultation

Consultation responses on the JSP and ‘generating ideas’ were extremely critical of the proposed development location. Many of the strategic issues including the principle of development in this location will be addressed through the JSP examination. This included the following concerns:

- Impact on existing road network and resulting congestion. Despite Metrobus, development will encourage more traffic which will transfer congestion to Long Ashton bypass and edge of Bristol.
- Concern about lack of existing services and facilities in the village to support the level of growth proposed.

Proposed vision for development

Backwell will remain an attractive and vibrant village set on the edge of the Green Belt. A modified road network will facilitate expansion of the village and relieve pressure on Backwell Crossroads and Station Road and allow environmental improvements within the village. There will be improved access to the rail station and
opportunities for walking and cycling. The new development will respect the setting of heritage features including the setting of nearby Chelvey.

**Guiding principles**

Design principles in the evolving masterplan seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Development to be well-related into the existing village.
- New Station Road – A370 link to be delivered in advance of development commencing coupled with modifications to Station Road.
- Design to safeguard and enhance existing heritage assets including the rural setting of West Town Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. Key plots and hedgerows to be retained to safeguard the open setting.
- The setting of Grove Farm including views from the main elevation should be protected and the form of development in the immediate vicinity of the complex should respect its historic nature.
- Design and materials applied to new buildings surrounding Grove Farm should reference the historic palette and styles with a lower density to create a historic core to the development.
- Retention of historic hedgerows will help preserve the character of the area, and the reinstatement of historic orchards within the new development should be investigated. These are shown indicatively on the Concept Diagram.
- Historic field names should be considered for application within the new development to contribute to the historic value of the site.
- Development form and layout to developed taking into account views to and from Chelvey to the northwest of the development.
- Strategic ecological habitat mitigation to be delivered including onsite features and links to wider strategic mitigation.
- Surface water will be managed effectively including potential for on or near site attenuation, and using a catchment based approach to managing water.
- Green infrastructure will feature as a key element of the development linking through and surrounding development and offering a soft transition to surrounding countryside on the western side. This will be interconnected and multifunctional having ecological, recreational, and environmental benefits.
- Cycle and pedestrian links will be made into Backwell from the new development providing access to the station. New and improved routes will also be located to facilitate views to surrounding landmarks including St Bridgets Church in Chelvey.
- Station Road will be improved with a new access to the A370 helping to address congestion at Backwell Crossroads.
- A new primary school will form a focal point within the development located to offer safe and convenient walking routes to surrounding development.

See combined Nailsea and Backwell Concept Diagram in Nailsea section.
Alternative scenarios

The alternatives outlined at this stage are intended to stimulate discussion on the possible options identified at this stage for accommodating the strategic growth. At this stage these may not be exhaustive as further options may arise following consultation.

1. Further development towards Chelvey Lane at Backwell – there is potential to extend the development closer to this route however it may impact upon the open setting of this part of Backwell.
4.4 Nailsea

What does the JSP propose?

The JSP proposes development generally to the south west of Nailsea to accommodate about 2575 dwellings and 10.5ha employment (Policy 7.6).

Context

Nailsea is a town with a good range of services and facilities and a rail station to the south. In recent years the population of the town has reduced, meaning that existing facilities and services have some existing capacity for growth. The proposed development is located generally to the south west of the town on land outside the Green Belt and floodplain. The growth proposed requires significant highway infrastructure to be delivered across the wider Nailsea/Backwell area. The site is ecologically sensitive in terms of the need to mitigate for greater and lesser horseshoe bat habitat.

Critical issues raised through consultation

Significant concerns were raised through the consultation regarding the principle of development, including its scale and proposed location. These strategic issues will be addressed through the JSP examination.

Local issues raised included:

- Detrimental environmental impact of new roads on Backwell Lake and environs, the Local Nature Reserve, impact on the strategic gap and concerns regarding proposed link to Clevedon across SSSI and impact on existing local roads.
- Poor location in relation to services, facilities and jobs.
- Environmental impact and flooding issues.

Proposed vision for development

By 2036, Nailsea will have expanded to the southwest, enhancing the mix and type of residential accommodation and balancing the demographic profile. New development will be sensitive to the semi-rural context and provide some higher density development close to new services and facilities and the rail station. Opportunities for new business will be provided with good access to Bristol and Weston-super-Mare including by public transport. A retained gap will be in place to protect the separate identity of Nailsea and Backwell that will accommodate attractive and convenient walking and cycling routes to the station.
How the principles are developing

Design principles in the evolving masterplan seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- The development of a well-integrated urban extension to the south-west of Nailsea which embraces best practice and innovative approaches to placemaking including technological advances, to maximise the quality and effectiveness of development.
- The design will create distinctive urban and suburban neighbourhoods with a new mixed-use local centre with complements services in the town centre.
- The design and layout will be rooted in the natural and historic landscape with design cues taken from the area’s historic coal mining heritage. Opportunity to embed the location of former local pits and routes of tramways should be investigated.
- A new highway between Hanham Way and Station Road is integral to the design and layout of the development and this will connect to an onward route to provide a direct access to the A370 beyond Backwell to Bristol.
- A high quality direct fast bus service should link the new development, town centre, railway station and Bristol.
- Direct off-road cycle and pedestrian access to the train station will be required from areas within cycling and walking distance.
- Cycle and pedestrian links to the schools, the local centre and existing facilities in the town will also be required.
- Housing will embrace a range of sizes tenures and affordability. Efficient use of land will be required with higher densities expected in proximity to the railway station, to the local centre and on the bus route.
- A strategic gap between Nailsea and Backwell will be maintained – but may need to review the current extent. A revised gap is integral to the Concept Diagram although Alternative Scenario 3 would retain the current designated form.
- High quality green infrastructure will be established throughout and surrounding the development incorporating and enhancing existing natural features and are likely to have a role in managing surface water.
- Development is to be phased in step with a package of transport infrastructure.
- Existing watercourses will become part of the Green Infrastructure and sustainable drainage solution along with additional water storage areas.
- Effective mitigation of ecological issues is central to the development to protect and enhance the nearby sensitive wildlife resource.
Key features

1. Employment development well connected to new highway link (4) and close to Nailsea and Backwell station.
2. Retention of a Strategic Gap between Nailsea and Backwell with Backwell Lake set within.
3. Multifunctional and interconnected green corridors across development linking to wider countryside.
4. New highway (Package 4) running through development between Hinxham Way and Station Road.
5. Higher density housing around mixed use local centre.
6. Lower density fringe of development on western side opening out to open countryside.
7. Retention and safeguarding of existing designated wildlife areas to west.
8. Cycle and pedestrian links between new development and rail station.
9. Potential new access onto A370 into Backwell SDL (specific alignment to be identified).
10. The setting of key heritage features is safeguarded including around Groves Farm and Cheley.
11. A mixed use local centre with a range of services and facilities.
12. Potential reinstatement of historic orchards (specific location to be confirmed through detailed masterplanning).

Alternative Scenarios (AS)

1. New distributor road on outer edge of new development.
2. Expansion of development further west of Nailsea towards and beyond Netherton Wood Lane.
3. Retention of existing Strategic Gap up to Youngwood Farm as existing.
4. Further development towards Cheley Road at Backwell.
Alternative scenarios

The alternatives outlined at this stage are intended to stimulate discussion on the possible options identified at this stage for accommodating the strategic growth. At this stage these may not be exhaustive as further options may arise following consultation.

1. New highway route on outer edge of new development – the main Concept Diagram indicates this route running through the development. However an alternative may be to route this around the development that may address any amenity issues associated with running the route through. This will be further investigated through more detailed masterplanning.

2. Expansion of development further west including and potentially beyond Netherton Wood Lane – this alternative is potentially more problematic in terms of environment impact but there is considered to be some potential outside of the flood plain.

3. Retention of existing Strategic Gap up to Youngwood Lane – the Concept Diagram shows potential development taking up part of the Strategic gap broadly up to Youngwood Lane, whilst retaining some gap between Backwell and Nailsea. Alternative the existing gap could be retained but this is likely to require further development to the west (alternative 2).
5. Urban Living

What is meant by ‘urban living’?

New thinking about planning urban areas to make them places people want to live, work and socialise is changing the way higher density developments are regarded and new trends are emerging in the types of housing which could be provided in our towns. This ‘Urban Living’ is a central plank of the Joint Spatial Strategy. It commands a high degree of public support and is a highly sustainable element of the strategy. The JSP includes 1,000 additional units to come from urban living predominantly in Weston-super-Mare over and above the sites allocated in the Sites Allocation Plan. Issues and options for two key locations within Weston-super-Mare are identified below.

What is the existing approach to density?

The Core Strategy currently states residential density will primarily be determined by local character and good quality design. It sets a target density across North Somerset of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) although this may be higher at highly accessible locations and less in sensitive locations or where lower density is positively encouraged. Neither the Core Strategy or the Development Management Policies specify precisely where high or low-density locations are located or what is high or low density.

Why does the existing approach need to be reviewed?

Consultation on the new NPPF places great emphasis on efficient use of land. It states that plans should include ‘the use of minimum density standards for town centres and locations well served by public transport’ and that these should seek ‘a significant uplift’ in average residential densities. Increasing the amount of housing in towns has numerous benefits. It reduces the amount of green field land needed on the edge of settlements or in the countryside. It aids regeneration by reusing brownfield land. It helps to increase the number of people living in town centres encouraging footfall and vitality. Service and infrastructure costs can be less, as long as they are planned for in advance. It supports public transport use and reduces the need to travel by car.

Estimating capacity

Work has been undertaken to assess the capacity from sites in Weston-super-Mare and to assess the likelihood of sites being developed. The table below sets out the main findings.
The analysis shows that it is feasible to meet the additional 1,000 JSP urban living capacity assuming there is an uplift in density requirements and that changes of use to residential from some of the existing buildings are encouraged. Further capacity to deliver up to c1,500 units come from the sites included in the ‘requires intervention’ category. The Local Plan will need to assess which if any should be allocated and what measures will be needed to ensure delivery of these more complex sites. Further sites were also assessed which were considered to have potential but were unlikely in the plan period.

The emerging strategy
The emerging strategy aims to maximise the potential from all land in the urban areas, it involves:

- Developing on brownfield land and underused land within existing towns
- Making the most of sustainable locations (especially near public transport hubs)
- Optimising densities by significantly increasing densities on sites in Weston town centre and near both Weston and Worle Parkway railway stations but also looking to increase densities on larger sites elsewhere in the town.
- Balancing efficient and effective use of land with aspirations for placemaking and responding to the surrounding context.

What are the options for increasing urban living?
The potential options for increasing housing in towns are set out below. They are not mutually exclusive and elements from each could become part of the final approach.
Option 1 – Set different minimum densities for the towns and villages

Advantages:
- Easy to apply
- Reflects the urban/rural nature of North Somerset.

Disadvantages:
- Minimum would need to be set fairly low to ensure sensitive sites are not overdeveloped.
- May not deliver the uplift in housing required in the towns.
- It does not differentiate areas in towns which are close to transport hubs or services.

Option 2 – Set minimum densities on allocated sites.

Advantages:
- Would reflect a more realistic approach on what could be delivered on specific sites whereas a more generic approach could encourage development at the minimum
- Able to reflect the sites’ characteristics and context.
- Allows for more certainty about how many units will be delivered therefore aid infrastructure planning.

Disadvantages:
- May not be fully aware of all the issues at the time of allocation.
- Large windfall sites would not be covered.
- May need to build in some flexibility into the policy to reflect unforeseen or changed circumstances.
### Option 3 – Define areas around transport hubs and service centres where higher densities would apply

**Advantages:**
- It directs the highest density development to the most sustainable locations
- Can set varying densities within a town
- Compliant with current government thinking.

**Disadvantages:**
- Does not necessarily correlate with where development sites are located
- May need to build in flexibility to ensure specific site characteristics and context are considered.

### Option 4 – Intervention through master planning at specific locations.

**Advantages:**
- Would help to deliver high density neighbourhoods with their own character which have a mix of uses, where people aspire to live, work and spend their leisure time.
- Would help ensure delivery on specific sites.
- Would provide better guidance and certainty about what would be permitted
- Better access to funding initiatives
- Easier to plan for infrastructure, such as schools, health facilities, road and public transport improvements.

**Disadvantages:**
- Resource intensive
- Risk associated with development and return on investment

What are your views on the proposed options for increasing urban living?
Increasing urban living in Weston Town Centre and the A370 corridor

Two areas of focus for increasing urban living in Weston-super-Mare are the town centre and the A370 corridor extending from the town centre to Flowerdown bridge near the Hutton Moor leisure centre.

They are viewed by North Somerset Council as key zones that would benefit from higher residential densities and associated investments in infrastructure and the public realm to regenerate the wider area.

**Weston Town Centre**

The approach to Weston town centre is set out in the Weston Town Centre Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted in 2017. This provided a masterplan framework for the Town Centre based on the following overarching principles:

- To significantly increase the number of people living, working and making use of the services and cultural offer in the town centre.
- To improve the quality of the offer and positively change perceptions about how and when people use the town centre.
- Kick-start regeneration by making direct interventions and taking a supporting and enabling approach to delivery of growth in the town centre.

The Weston Town Centre Regeneration SPD also set out a number of key priorities, a number of which have already been achieved including:

- Planning applications are underway for over 600 new homes on brownfield sites in the town centre
- An independent Design Review Forum has been established to provide advice and guidance to developers and applicants to improve quality of proposals
- A review of town centre Conservation Areas is currently underway. The results will provide updated character appraisals, management plans and design guidance for the Conservation Area/s
- The town centre has Heritage Action Zone status (the only one in the South West which brings support and potential grant from Historic England to be used to support the restoration and protection of heritage buildings
- Public realm enhancement schemes at Station road and Alexandra Parade have secured grant funding, designs are currently being drawn up to improve the visual appearance of these areas, as well as make improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and access to the seafront.
- Enhancements to the Italian Gardens to create a contemporary events space, the area has seen significantly greater footfall since completion
- Work is underway to identify a new primary school site to serve the growing town centre population

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We would welcome views on the following:

- Are the principles and priorities set out in the SPD still the right ones for the town centre?
- What other steps could be taken to deliver and accelerate town centre regeneration?

**A370 corridor**

The A370 corridor includes a number of sites which are currently unused or under used. It is characterised by a mixture of low density retail and commercial uses, with small areas of relatively high density housing and the Hans Price Academy. The Hutton Moor leisure centre is located here and the Council is seeking to expand this provision with the addition of flagship facilities including a leisure pool. The area as a whole is dominated by the A370 highway which is an important link into the town centre but which can act as a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movements.

Proposals for development here are mostly at a relatively early stage. An overarching framework masterplan would help to ensure coordination of proposals, good quality design and a planned approach to infrastructure and public realm improvements.

The following are some of the issues that have been identified that a masterplan framework should address.

- The need to make more efficient use of land particularly car parking and poor-quality premises
- Ensuring the delivery of high quality, high density development on existing and new housing allocations
- Ensuring a better customer experience for residents using the retail outlets and collection services
- Better permeability for cars, pedestrians and cyclists within the retail park area which can become heavily congested at certain times
- Environmental improvements along the A370.
- Ensuring the safeguarding of a primary school site close to the town centre and possibly an additional school site dependent on housing numbers
- Maximising the opportunities for sport and recreation on sites well located to residential areas, including flagship leisure provision at Hutton Moor or other agreed location.
- Understanding the future requirements of existing businesses including where expansion or relocation may be needed
- Better connectivity to the town centre, railway stations and other areas of Weston, along with improved provision of public transport

We would like your thoughts on the following questions:
Do you have any views on the opportunities and challenges of achieving good quality urban densification within this area?

Do you agree that the list above sets out the main issues for the future development of the area in question?

Are there any key issues or opportunities that have been missed?
6. Employment

Context
The National Planning Policy Framework identifies economic growth as one of three key dimensions of sustainable development. Planning has to perform a number of roles including ‘contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure’.

North Somerset economy
The economy of North Somerset operates within a wider Functional Economic Market Area that covers the West of England area as identified through the Economic Development Needs Assessment. Within North Somerset there is both out-commuting to Bristol and a Weston-super-Mare Travel to Work Area.

The North Somerset Economic Plan identifies the range of businesses in the area.

‘Located in some of North Somerset’s towns and villages are world leading high-technology manufacturers making everything from aircraft parts to plasma screens and subsea control systems. Alongside them are makers of more traditional products originating from the natural produce of rich farmland. These are turned into world leading brands of cheese, cider and yogurt among many others. Similarly business services provide quality employment, supporting the wider regional economy which includes Bristol and Bath. North Somerset also complements the region’s strengths in creative media with growing numbers of businesses working in all aspects of this dynamic sector.’

Joint Spatial Plan
Policy 4 The Employment Land Requirement of the JSP Publication Draft sets out a strategic planning policy direction for employment across the West of England. This identifies the overall scale of employment change over the period to 2036 of 82,500 additional jobs and sets out a high level strategy for the distribution of new business growth.

For North Somerset this identifies Weston-super-Mare town centre, and Junction 21 Enterprise Area and growth opportunities at Bristol Airport and the Port. The policy also indicates the role the SDLs might play in supporting employment growth and initial ideas and proposals for this are included within this consultation document in section ‘Garden Villages and New Communities’.
Role of new Local Plan

The Local Plan will provide the detailed policy framework to guide business development to 2036, including both specific policies to safeguard business land, guide new development, and identify new sites to support business growth in line with national objectives. This will include identifying opportunities for existing businesses to expand and relocate and policy to manage these requirements across towns, villages and the countryside.

To inform the new Local Plan, an Employment Land Review (ELR) has been prepared to assess the current supply of employment land against future demand to identify any gaps in supply that the Local Plan will need to address. This includes both quantitative gaps but also qualitative particularly addressing local economic issues present in North Somerset.

The study was based upon the period 2016 to 2036 and assumed that current employment allocations would be maintained. The overall conclusion on that basis was that North Somerset has sufficient land supply to meet future demand for business growth, but there were issues around delivery of employment development to meet the aspirations of North Somerset Council for the local economy, the threat of loss of employment land, the appropriateness of specific locations and localised issues. The importance of retaining a relative surplus of employment land was identified as essential given the strong economic potential in North Somerset going forward over the plan period.

The ELR includes a series of recommendations:

- Protect allocated employment sites – any currently allocated sites in the Site Allocations Plan that remain undeveloped should be rolled forward into the Local Plan taking into account findings from the ELR.
- Protect existing employment sites
- Review existing employment policy for Weston-super-Mare
- Consider additional employment sites at the Port, Airport and on sites closer to Bristol to capitalise on opportunities provided by infrastructure investment and the economic growth prospects of Bristol
- Consider proactive initiatives to support business growth
- Ongoing monitoring of economic issues in order to allow planning framework to respond to market signals.

These recommendations will be considered through the Local Plan process and appropriate policy formulated.

The Local Plan will revisit relevant employment policy in the current Development Plan including Policy SA4 of the Site Allocations Plan to identify a new suite of employment allocations and other policy to stimulate economic growth. There may also be potential for area based strategies and policies where there may be specific objectives and aspirations around economic growth. For example, in some locations there may
be cause to consider consolidation, re-locating a number of dispersed employment sites into a smaller number of larger allocations that enable intensification of use, easy access to key transport routes and staff travel to work.

Employment-led strategy at Weston-super-Mare

The Core Strategy requires that housing development is “employment-led” in order to improve self-containment and reduce out-commuting. In practice this is applied at Weston-super-Mare through a requirement on large housing sites to ensure the delivery of 1.5 jobs per home.

The policy has seen an improvement in the delivery of employment in Weston-super-Mare, particularly within the Junction 21 Enterprise Area. However there are concerns that the requirements are too onerous, putting housing delivery at risk and potentially acting as a deterrent to lower density commercial developments because they are not perceived as delivering enough jobs. There are also questions as to how North Somerset can respond appropriately to the changing nature of the economy and employment, for example the forecast growth of various economic sectors, the increasing trend for working from home and the rise of serviced and managed workspace and owner occupier-led development.

North Somerset Council continues to believe that a strong emphasis on the delivery of employment is important to the future economic prosperity of Weston-super-Mare, but recognises the need for the policy to be reviewed to ensure it is robust, deliverable and effective.

We would welcome views on the questions below, in particular from those operating or wanting to operate businesses in the town:

- Do you agree that the delivery of employment and employment premises remain important to Weston-super-Mare?
- What do you think are the needs of current and future businesses that might want to operate in the town? What sort of premises and infrastructure do businesses need?
- What would help to attract more businesses to invest and grow here?
- What role do you think that residential developers should play in helping to deliver employment? Should the specific link between housing and employment be maintained?
- How else can the Local Plan help to maintain and increase employment growth associated to Weston-super-Mare?

Bristol Airport and Royal Portbury Dock

The Airport and Port are identified as strategic employment locations in North Somerset and maximising their role is a key objective.

Options for airport expansion are set out in the section below. These may include potential for additional employment land subject to further testing.
At the Port, the focus will be on ensuring the most efficient use of the existing port area, but also considering any opportunities to support business growth associated with the Port. The latter could include making allowances for additional land supply in and around Portishead to meet demand for high growth businesses including those linked to port activities. If there are specific additional needs associated with the Port the Local Plan process will need to consider the land use implications and future aspirations of the Port over the plan period.
7. Bristol Airport

Why is the Airport important?
Bristol Airport is a major employment location, with around 3,400 jobs on-site. It offers national and international connections for both work and leisure, including tourism. It supports an estimated 15,000 jobs across the South West and South Wales and generates £1.3 billion for the regional economy.

What is the existing policy?
Planning permission was granted in 2011 to facilitate the growth of air traffic to 10 million passengers per annum (mppa). Local planning policy encourages the optimum use of the existing developed area north of the runway. The remainder of the site is within the Green Belt. Development there is largely inappropriate and only permissible in very special circumstances, though some operational buildings can be constructed under permitted development rights. Restrictions on car parking and night flying limit the environmental impacts of growth.

Why does the existing policy need to be reviewed?
The Airport wants to double permitted air traffic to 20 mppa by the 2040s. In the short-term it seeks a relaxation of existing limits to allow for growth to 12 mppa. Its longer-term ambitions for growth will be set out in a new Airport Master Plan. Through the JSP, North Somerset Council recognises the existence of additional growth opportunities at the Airport but many detailed local issues remain to be resolved.

What are the options for a new policy?
Four potential options for a new policy for Bristol Airport in the new Local Plan have been identified. The advantages and disadvantages of each are set out below:
Option 1 – Retain the existing policy.

Option 2 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt.

Option 3 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt and safeguard land for future expansion.

Option 4 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt and allocate land for expansion now and in the future.
Option 1 – Retain the existing policy.

Advantages:
- Most of the Airport – except the developed area on the north side – would remain in the Green Belt. Within the inset area, airport-related development would be supported, subject to resolving issues surrounding emissions, landscape and surface access. The tighter degree of control elsewhere within the Airport would incentivise best use of the developed area.

Disadvantages:
- The Green Belt would still surround the Airport on all sides and include the airfield. This would place a limit to future expansion and provide less flexibility in the use of Airport land than the other options. Most forms of development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt, meaning that very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated for anything going beyond permitted development rights. These restrictions would limit the extent to which the Airport could contribute to economic growth and would not make provision for longer-term aspirations.

Option 2 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt.

Note: The area mapped for this is based on the 2011 permission plus additional land sought if passenger numbers increase to 12 mppa. This illustrates the proposals of the imminent planning application but without prejudice to any decision to be made on that application.

Advantages:
- Airport-related development would be supported throughout the Airport area, subject to resolving issues surrounding emissions, landscape and surface access. This would allow greater flexibility in how new development comes forward.

Disadvantages:
- Some Green Belt – the existing Airport operational and related land – would be lost, though it would be covered by a new policy restricting development to that which is airport-related.
- The Green Belt would still surround the Airport on all sides, placing a limit to future expansion. Most forms of development here would be inappropriate, meaning that very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated. This would limit the extent to which the Airport could contribute to economic growth and would not make provision for longer-term aspirations.
Option 3 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt and safeguard land for future expansion.

**Note:** The area mapped for this is based on early work by the Airport on meeting future demand. Detailed boundaries could be refined through further work.

**Advantages:**

- Room for the Airport to grow would be reserved now, ready for use in the 2030s. The Local Plan would establish the acceptability of growth in principle and indicate a direction for physical expansion, allowing long-term planning to proceed with more certainty. It would still provide for the planning system to mitigate, as far as is practical, the impacts on local communities and the environment.
- Airport-related development would be supported throughout the Airport area, subject to resolving issues surrounding emissions, landscape and surface access. Additional land to the north-west would be removed from the Green Belt and designated as ‘safeguarded land’. This would be reserved for the future expansion of the Airport but would only be released for this purpose through a subsequent review of the Local Plan after 2020.
- That subsequent review would consider what uses the land should accommodate but would not need to re-visit the Green Belt status of the land. Besides uses directly related to the operation of the Airport, there could be scope for other employment uses that would benefit from a connection to the airfield, such as aircraft maintenance. It is not intended to allow general employment development that does not need to be located at the Airport and which would add unnecessarily to in-commuting.

**Disadvantages:**

- Some Green Belt – the existing Airport operational and related land plus the safeguarded land – would be lost, though the existing Airport would be covered by a new policy restricting development to that which is airport-related; compensatory improvements to landscaping could also form part of any future development.
- Uncertainty would remain until the subsequent review detailed what uses the safeguarded land should accommodate. Green Belt could be lost unnecessarily if the uses that eventually emerge on the safeguarded land are not demonstrably airport-related. However, the intention would be a safeguarding policy worded to minimise this risk.
Option 4 – Remove Airport area from the Green Belt and allocate land for expansion now and in the future.

Advantages:

- Room for the Airport to grow would be reserved now, ready for use in the 2030s. The Local Plan would establish the acceptability of growth in principle and indicate a direction for physical expansion, allowing long-term planning to proceed with more certainty. It would still provide for the planning system to mitigate, as far as is practical, the impacts on local communities and the environment.
- Airport-related development would be supported throughout the extended Airport area, subject to resolving issues surrounding emissions, landscape and surface access. Additional land to the north-west would be removed from the Green Belt and allocated under this policy. Use of the land would be restricted to airport-related development but this could come forward at any time.
- The range of acceptable uses would be defined now rather than through a subsequent review. Besides uses directly related to the operation of the Airport, there could be scope for other employment uses that would benefit from a connection to the airfield, such as aircraft maintenance. It is not intended to allow general employment development that does not need to be located at the Airport and which would add unnecessarily to in-commuting.

Disadvantages:

- Some Green Belt – the existing Airport operational and related land plus the new allocation – would be lost, though a new policy would restrict development to that which is airport-related; compensatory improvements to landscaping could also form part of any future development.
- Allocating land ahead of a proven need could lead to it being built over prematurely rather than retained in open uses, reducing future flexibility. Green Belt could be lost unnecessarily if the uses that eventually emerge on the additional land are not demonstrably airport-related. However, the intention would be an airport policy worded to minimise this risk.
- Much work is needed on key aspects, including the surface access arrangements for a higher number of passengers. It might not be sound to suggest that an allocation is deliverable until that further work is done and an acceptable solution is demonstrated.

What are your thoughts on the four proposed options for a Bristol Airport policy in the new Local Plan 2036? Do you have a preferred option?

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8. Transport

What are the main transport issues facing North Somerset to 2036?

There are many transport issues and challenges facing the district and wider West of England area over the plan period until 2036. A Joint Transport Study (JTS) was undertaken to accompany the Joint Spatial Plan and recommend how to address both current transport challenges and the forecasted growth set out in the JSP. The findings and recommendations included in the JTS were advisory; and a Joint Local Transport Plan is currently being prepared that takes account of these findings, builds upon them and formalises the work that was previously carried out.

Some of the transport issues facing North Somerset include:

- **Growth in housing and employment:** The proposed growth in the JSP presents the challenge of having to mitigate for increasing demand on the transport network but is also an opportunity to attract funding and start reversing the historic under-investment in transport to implement improvements that tackle existing issues and create more resilient and attractive places to live and work.

- **Congestion:** Congestion is currently costing the West of England area an estimated £300m a year, forecast to rise to £500m in 2026 and £800m by 2036 unless significant action is taken. There are heavy flows on roads connecting towns and high car use in rural areas reflects the limited travel choices. Local areas experience significant challenges when there are issues on the Strategic Road Network, such as when the M5 is closed due to incidents and traffic is diverted onto local roads. This causes widespread congestion and long traffic delays due to a lack of suitable alternative routes.

- **Encouraging public transport use:** Whilst the number of passengers has increased public transport use is low compared to other regions; only one in ten people travel to work in this way and rail represents only 2% of total work trips in the West of England.

- **Public Health issues:** Car dependency leading to inactive lifestyles and poor air quality as a result of congested roads are two major factors impacting on public health.

- **Climate change:** Road transport is one of the largest sources of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions, which are contributing to climate change. This, in turn, is impacting on the resilience and standard of the transport network.

- **Shift in behaviour:** Travel patterns are changing more than they have in decades. During the past 40 years there has been a gradual decline in the number of trips per person, with a 6% reduction since 2007. Fewer journeys are being made per person for commuting, business and shopping. The huge rise in internet shopping, more flexible working patterns and use of telecommunications software for meetings are some of the reasons for our changing mobility patterns.

- **Transport revolution:** We may be at the tipping point of a revolution in transport as emerging technologies and innovation (including ‘driverless’ vehicles and
smartphone capability assisting in providing multi-modal, seamless journeys) will change how we choose to travel in future.

- **Regeneration of our towns:** Progress has already been made on town centre generation with transport improvements a key enabler. What transport measures are needed to continue supporting W-s-M and the emerging visions for the other main towns?
- **Port and Airport:** The accessibility and growth of international and regional gateways is linked with economic growth and maintaining good transport links will be key to unlocking that growth.
- **Employment locations and regional growth corridors:** The Strategic Road Network (SRN) is vital to economic success and so the challenge will be maintaining both its function and access to it from the local network (see HE research [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/highways-england-supporting-growth](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/highways-england-supporting-growth)).
- **Strategic connections and resilience:** Within the local road network certain routes have strategic importance such as the A38 corridor and there are B roads that provide critical links for freight and commercial transport. The resilience of these corridors needs to be maintained as development pressures increase traffic volumes and demand.
- **Tourism:** Transporting tourists into and around North Somerset can be a challenge alongside daily commuter movements but certain transport improvements if done well can help to create a different and more varied offer – e.g. Coastal Path, strategic routes, cycle hire and other quality facility offers.

How will the Local Plan address these challenges?

- **Tackle congestion,** by focussing on offering greater travel choice. This will include making walking and cycling (‘active modes of travel’) the natural choice for shorter journey’s through the provision of safe, attractive useable networks.
- **Encourage public transport use** by providing realistic and attractive alternatives to the private car through continuing to improve the local bus and rail networks. Community transport services and dial-a-ride have role in connecting rural communities. Consideration of bus/coach parking and depot space locations to ensure resilience and mitigation of Hinkley impacts.
- **Improve air quality and respond to climate change.** The switch to electric vehicles and the reduced need to own vehicles will see gradual reductions in levels of nitrogen dioxide, particulates and carbon dioxide. Policies which require Electric Vehicle Charging Points and car clubs in new developments will support this approach. Cleaner public transport policies could also be considered.
- **Support new technologies:** Technological advances and innovation will have a role to play in how we use transport in the future. Changes could offer benefits including reduced road collisions, more reliable journeys, improved air quality, reduced travel costs, better informed journey decision making, and returning highway space back to people. We will work with developers and providers to progress and embrace advances where they can bring benefits to North Somerset.
Identify schemes that support tourism such as the coastal cycle routes which can become tourist attractions in their own right, along with schemes to improve or create new routes to connect and penetrate existing tourism hotspots.

A number of Major Schemes (schemes costing over £10m which are unaffordable from existing, regular funding sources) have also been identified which play a critical role in supporting delivery of the Joint Spatial Plan. The technical work for these schemes is being progressed alongside the policy provision through the Joint Local Transport Plan. The key components of the transport vision include:

- Behaviour change
- Strategic cycle routes
- Bus network
- Metrobus
- Mass Transit
- Park and Ride
- Rail
- Road network

**Transport options for the Strategic Development Locations in North Somerset.**
Options have been identified to mitigate the strategic impacts on the transport network of the new housing proposed in the Strategic Development Locations at Nailsea, Backwell, Banwell and Churchill. These options are discussed in Section 4 of this plan.

**Rail**
Policies will be needed to continue to safeguard the delivery of major rail schemes such as re-establishing passenger services to Portishead and improvements to infrastructure at other stations in the district.

**The Bristol South West Economic Link Transport Study (BSWEL).**
The Bristol South West Economic Link transport study is focussed along the A38 corridor from Bristol to Somerset and across to the M5 via the A368/A371. Building on the Joint Transport Study vision the intervention options comprise a new strategic road connection between the M5 at a new Junction 21A and Langford, improvements on the route between Langford and Bristol Airport, and a major upgrade to the route between the Airport and South Bristol. The study is also looking at mass transit opportunities between the existing rail network, Bristol and Bristol Airport.

**Park and Ride – south Bristol**
Options are being considered for a proposed Park and Ride facility with up to 550 spaces to serve the A38 (south corridor). Four potential sites shown below A - D are located around the A38/South Bristol Link roundabout. Further details of these options can be found in the, ‘Joint Spatial Plan – Emerging Findings of Transport Technical Studies’ (June 2018) document as they form part of a wider strategic ring of Park and Ride sites. These options will be progressed through the Joint Local Transport Plan.
Weston-super-Mare
The Urban Living allocations in the JSP include an additional 1,000 dwellings in Weston-super-Mare, on top of existing allocations for the ‘Weston villages’ (5,800 dwellings) which will result in increased traffic flows and congestion in the town. The aim of the transport programme is to mitigate the impacts of the additional developments through encouraging use of public transport within Weston-super-Mare, and intercepting car trips into the town at a Park & Ride site, improving the bus network and developing proposals for a metrobus route.

How will the transport objectives be delivered?
The North Somerset Local Plan 2036 and the Joint Local Transport Plan will be complimentary documents that will set the policy context to deliver their shared objectives. Funding for transport schemes is likely to be through a combination of developer contributions and central government grants. By working together with West of England partners we will make a clearer and stronger case for reversing the historical under-investment in transport in this region and secure the infrastructure needed for a thriving economy and places where people want to live.
9. Potential new policy areas

What are the existing planning policies?

Core Strategy
The Core Strategy currently sets the strategic context for planning in North Somerset up to 2026 and was fully adopted in January 2017. This document will be superseded by the Joint Spatial Plan. The high level policies within the Core Strategy will be reassessed through the Local Plan 2036.

Development Management Policies
Development management policies are the detailed policies used when assessing a range of planning applications and development proposals. They cover a range of issues including design, density, housing, transport, economy, historic environment, development in the countryside, community uses, tourism, green infrastructure and protection of green space and town centre and retailing.

The existing Development Management Policies Plan was adopted in July 2016 and the policies are generally up-to-date and can be carried forward into the Local Plan 2036. Some of these policies may need to be reviewed and updated if national guidance or local circumstances have changed.

Site Allocations Plan
The Site Allocations Plan was adopted in April 2018. Despite being very recently adopted a number of the policies in this plan will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect the new housing and employment requirement set out in the Joint Spatial Plan.

What new policies will be needed in the Local Plan 2036

In this section we set out specific areas of policy, which we are seeking your views on at this stage in the consultation. This is because we are intending to introduce new policies or new approaches to existing policies to respond to changes in planning legislation, national guidance or changing local circumstances.

Self-Build Policy
The self-build and custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) requires authorities to hold a register of persons seeking to acquire land to build their own homes and to give suitable development permissions in respect of enough serviced plots to meet the demand for self-build as evidenced by the number of persons on an authority’s self-build register. North Somerset Council established its self-build and custom housebuilding register in October 2017.

North Somerset’s development plan currently encourages self-build under Policy DM34: Housing Type and mix, however there is no specific policy that seeks to deliver permissioned and serviced plots for self-builders to meet an evidenced demand.
We will therefore explore options for facilitating self-build as a means of housing delivery. This could be through the allocation of housing sites specifically for self-build plots, requiring a proportion of self-build plots on residential schemes of a certain size, or a combination of both.

Are there any other options for how the Local Plan can deliver self-build and custom housing schemes?

**Affordable Housing**

Within the current development plan policy CS16: Affordable Housing seeks 30% of all housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more to be affordable housing and an off site contribution on sites between 5-9 units. However, there have been a number of changes to affordable housing guidance at a national and regional level which would require us to review our existing policy approach.

Firstly, a Written Ministerial Statement was published in November 2015, which states that affordable housing contributions should not be requested on sites of 10 dwellings or less. Therefore North Somerset Council have been seeking affordable housing on sites of 11 or more dwellings. Secondly, Policy 3: The Affordable Housing Target in the draft Joint Spatial Plan identifies a minimum target of 35% affordable housing to be delivered on sites of 5 dwellings or more, and thirdly the draft NPPF includes changes to the definitions of affordable housing, including the introduction of entry level exception sites. The new Local Plan will have to review its affordable housing policies to reflect these changes.

Do you have any views on the review of affordable housing policies?

**Woodland Neighbourhoods.**

Parts of the Green Belt are home to groups of residential properties in a woodland setting such as Cadbury Camp Lane and West Hill. These are not villages, they have few, if any, services and are not included in the settlement hierarchy. Issues often arise concerning extensions to properties in these ‘Woodland Neighbourhoods’ particularly in assessing what is disproportionate. Often the housing is secluded and within large grounds. Large extensions often have little impact on the Green Belt. Within these areas it is proposed that a more relaxed approach to larger extensions be applied.

Do you have any views on our intended approach to Woodland Neighbourhoods?

**Health Impact Assessments**

The impact of development on human health and wellbeing is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) recognises that supporting the health, social and cultural wellbeing of communities is part of the social role of planning in delivering sustainable development.
Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) give valuable information not only about potential effects of proposed development on health, but also how to manage them. They provide the opportunity to change the design of a proposed development to protect and improve health. Health Impacts Assessments are currently required through policy CS26: Supporting Healthy Living and the provision of healthcare facilities on all ‘large-scale developments in the district’.

It is proposed to have a specific policy on HIAs in the Local Plan 2036 which provides more detail on exactly when HIAs will be required and what will be expected as part of the HIA process. A more detailed policy will give better clarity to applicants at the start of the planning application process in terms of what would be required as part of the application and will result in health impacts being considered at the start of the process.

Do you have any views on our intended approach to Health Impact Assessments?

**Climate Change**

Tackling climate change is a long-standing priority in the UK, which is reflected in the Climate Change Act 2008. This sets out legally binding carbon reduction targets.

The Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions and adopted a carbon reduction target in April 2018, of 50% reduction in emissions by 2035 (from a 2014 baseline). Given the scale of development in North Somerset over the plan period 2018 – 2036, planning policies will need to demonstrate how they contribute to meeting this target. Development should demonstrate a commitment to reducing emissions, including minimising energy demand through good design, utilising renewable and low carbon forms of energy generation.

As a result of this requirement, we need to update and upgrade our current climate change policies.

Adopted Core Strategy policies CS1 and CS2 are the principal policies relating to climate change in the Core Strategy. The first is an overarching policy to address a range of issues relating to climate change and the second is the policy to specifically address sustainability in new construction. It is proposed that these policies are merged in the Local Plan. There will be other distinct policies which relate to climate change, including sustainable travel, flood risk policies and those relating to green infrastructure and biodiversity.

The Joint Spatial Plan sets the aspiration to deliver an efficient low carbon economy. The aspiration is to minimise energy demand and maximise the use of renewable energy, where viable meeting all demands for heat and power without increasing carbon emissions. The four West of England authorities have commissioned a study to assess the potential for development to be built to a zero-carbon standard. It will set out the viability of reaching different carbon reduction measures now and in future years for different development types. This technical report will be available to inform the climate change policy of the draft version of the Local Plan.
The new draft climate change policy will also include measures to address climate change adaptation, such as requirements to prevent overheating. Other policies such as flood risk, biodiversity and green infrastructure which contribute to climate change adaptation will be covered within the plan.

We would like to gain views on how new development should meet a given carbon reduction requirement. Feedback on the following is sought:

**Should new policy aspire to net zero carbon new development?**

**Should new policy aspire to new development that is energy-positive, where more energy is generated than is consumed?**

**Should new policy require a significant increase in the use of renewable and low-carbon energy generation? (currently 10% for 1-9 dwellings and 15% for 10 and more dwellings)**

**Where new policy sets a % reduction in carbon emissions, if it is deemed this cannot be met on-site, should policy introduce a mechanism to collect off-site carbon-emission payments?**

**Flood Risk**

National policy requires many developments in areas at higher risk of flooding to demonstrate wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk. These benefits might include, for example, urban regeneration. Such developments must in any case be safe for their lifetime and not increase flood risk elsewhere. The issue for the new Local Plan is how ‘wider sustainability benefits’ are understood in the light of local objectives. Much of Clevedon, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare in principle at risk from tidal flooding is in practice protected by flood defences. These towns therefore have the potential to contribute significantly to delivering the Urban Living agenda.

The new Local Plan could be explicit that the development of urban sites within areas benefitting from defences is normally a wider sustainability benefit to the community that outweighs flood risk. There could be localised reasons why this rule would not apply, such as site-specific problems with drainage. Currently the balancing of benefits against risk is done on a case-by-case basis with very limited policy support. The regeneration argument is strongest for sites in the older parts of the towns but there are many infill sites in the newer parts that would not be approved under the existing policy. This is not because the development would be unsafe but because there is no explicit policy support for it to be allowed within a higher risk flood zone.

Some villages are also within areas benefitting from defences but it is not proposed to extend the new approach beyond the towns. Smaller settlements are not so high a priority for development or for the maintenance and improvement of flood defences,
which in view of climate change could require significant investment to maintain the current standard of protection. In such areas, the frequency of flooding may therefore increase and it would not be appropriate to encourage development.

_Do you have any views on our intended approach to flood risk?_

**Development on previously developed land in the countryside**

The current policy approach supports the redevelopment of previously-developed land in the countryside for economic development, but is silent on the approach to take to other uses, including residential. It is suggested that this support in principle for economic uses will be retained, and also to extend this to community facilities such as schools and community halls where well related to settlements in order to enhance access for rural communities. Should this principle be extended to residential development? One approach would be to support rural housing on sites in close proximity to nearby settlements but only where other uses have been sought first and have been ruled out, and where the new housing provision could function sustainably in the context of the wider area.

_Do you have any views on our intended approach to development on previously developed land in the countryside? What type of sites may be suitable for residential redevelopment?_

**Holiday accommodation in the countryside**

Planning policies have traditionally tried to restrict residential development in isolated locations in the countryside which are considered unsustainable. This has included restricting, through the use of planning conditions, the change of use of holiday accommodation to residential use. However, permitted development rights introduced in 2015 now allow the change of use of agricultural buildings to residential use resulting in more flexibility in the planning system in terms of the conversion and re-use of isolated rural buildings in the countryside. The new Local Plan will need to address this issue through a review of policies DM45: The conversion or re-use of rural buildings to residential use and DM57: Conversion, reuse and new build for visitor accommodation in the countryside.

_Do you have any views on the conversion of holiday accommodation to residential use in the countryside? What approach should future policies take?_

**Minerals**

The new Local Plan will cover minerals. There will need to be a review of existing minerals policies including development management policies such as DM14 on mineral working (including limestone and on-shore oil and gas) for example.
There will also be a need to review the required level of provision of crushed rock for North Somerset. The existing level of provision to 2026 is set out in policy CS8 of the adopted Core Strategy; the new Local Plan will need to determine the level of provision to 2036.

In reviewing the level of provision, the council is likely to need to liaise with South Gloucestershire Council, because limestone quarries in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire together produce primary crushed rock aggregate which go towards meeting the level of provision for the West of England (WoE).

Do you have any views on our approach to minerals?

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

The use of electric vehicles is a key measure in reducing emissions and the provision of infrastructure to facilitate and stimulate this change is essential. Growth in the uptake of plug in vehicles is growing significantly and it is important that developers recognise and respond to this change.

Paragraph 35 of the NPPF states that plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people and suggests a number of means to achieve this. The incorporation of facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles is noted as one means of achieving this.

The North Somerset Local Plan 2036 seeks to support the use of sustainable forms of transport, this includes the use of electric vehicles. In order to support the use of such vehicles the necessary infrastructure will need to be put in place. We are considering the inclusion of specific standards for the requirement of electric vehicle charging points. This includes:

- Investigating the need to set specific standards to allow people to charge their vehicles at home and when they travel to a destination.
- Considering what percentage of the requirement is to be fully operational and what capacity should be built in to allow for future provision to be easily made fully operational in the future.

What are your views on our proposed policy approach to Electric Vehicle Charging Points?

**Green Infrastructure**

The Joint Spatial Plan emphasises the importance of the green infrastructure network in term of delivering multiple benefits for people, the environment and place-making. The West of England authorities are jointly preparing a Green Infrastructure Plan to co-ordinate the approach to strategic issues and identify best practice for inclusion in Local Plans. This will include the investigation of the use of a Natural Capital approach which seeks to identify the stock of natural assets such as parks and gardens which...
provide benefits to people, identify their financial value and quantify their benefits over time.

**Environmental, and ecological mitigation:** At the Strategic Development Locations mitigation may be required to ensure surface water is effectively managed, and wider ecological impacts are suitably addressed. There is an opportunity through the Local Plan to address these issues comprehensively. This could take the form of a strategic solution to catchment based water management, habitat creation for wildlife, and recreational benefits that can facilitate the delivery of all of the strategic sites in North Somerset.

The potential exists to create a broad ecological zone linking existing key habitats in North Somerset and provide a connected network of habitats linked to sites of ecological importance. This would also link with opportunities for leisure, recreation and environmental education. One potential opportunity would be in the vicinity of the Strawberry Line generally between Churchill and Congresbury, and linking habitats between the levels and the Mendip Hills.

**What are your views on our proposed approach to Green Infrastructure?**

**Other policy areas**

**Are there any other policy areas you feel need to be considered – either new policies, or amendments to an existing policy?**