

# Bath Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan

## 1. Introduction - Treasure and Transform

The City of Bath is an important sub regional employment hub situated in one of the most productive sub regions in the UK. However its economy is in relative decline. Its future success is undermined by an over reliance on public sector and tourism related jobs. The result is an economy that is performing relatively poorly in comparison to the rest of the West of England. It is characterised by relatively low wages, low average GVA per employee and a low rate of economic growth.

To create a sustainable economic future, Bath needs a more competitive and productive economy. For this to happen, it needs to be an environment where businesses thrive, where new jobs are created in higher value sectors such as creative industries, ICT and low carbon industries, and where there is a reversal in the out commute of higher value added employees from the district each day.

Our vision is for Bath to be the “**City of Ideas**”. It will be a place where world class academia, high tech manufacturing, creative industries and training academies meet to develop new ideas that lead to jobs growth. This will be done by treasuring the City’s heritage and transforming it into a more vibrant, economically successful place where people want to live, work and play.

The Economic Strategy for B&NES highlights how important the right office accommodation is to support Bath’s sustainable economic growth. It needs an appropriate range of premises and sites which are attractive to the skilled resident population to work from in the city. Modern business space and facilities are also essential if the city is to attract and retain businesses in target sectors and build on its economic strengths.

Delivery of these premises needs to happen without damaging the core values of the City and within a definable timescale to meet occupier, investor and developer needs.

The purpose of this ERDP is to identify sites within the city which could help support Bath’s sustainable economic growth and deliver the type of smart growth that will help the City to thrive. Preparation of this ERDP has been completed in the context of the Core Strategy. The Placemaking Plan will take forward the strategic planning approach provided by the Core Strategy and take into consideration the economic objectives of the council outlined here.

## 2. Bath’s economic context

As part of the West of England sub-region, Bath has a good reputation for the quality of life it offers. Bath’s standing as one of England’s most liveable cities attracts visitors and new residents to the best of urban and rural life.

Bath is well known as an international tourism destination, thanks to its cultural and built heritage, thermal springs and landscape setting, encapsulated in its designation as a World Heritage Site. It has large areas of green space, with an attractive river and canal wrapping around a walkable city centre. Tourism is worth approximately £350m to the local economy and helps to support the city's extensive retail offer and role as a regional retail destination.

Bath is one of the most important places of learning in the South West. In 2008/9 there were just under 21,600 students attending the two Higher Education institutions of the University of Bath and Bath Spa University. Thanks in large part to the role of the two universities, Bath has long been a place of learning, innovation and creativity, with particular strengths in the creative arts and engineering and technology. Pioneering work and knowledge has often 'spun out' and driven what are now successful and significant employers.

Bath is a principle location for other public sector activities, with high levels of employment in education and public administration. The Ministry of Defence occupies three sites in and around Bath, employing approximately 1,800 people.

Bath lies on the London-West Country mainline railway with frequent services to London, the Midlands and the North of England. The centre of Bath is 9.5 miles from the M4. Bristol International airport is only 18 miles away although direct public transport links have yet to be established.

### **3. Targets and Trajectories**

B&NES ambition for smart growth is to focus on growing Bath's most productive sectors of the economy. This means actively targeting growth in the following sectors:

- Business services
- Financial services
- Creative industries
- ICT
- Environmental Technologies

Support will continue to be given to ensure that the economic contribution of the tourism and retail sectors to the local economy is maintained and that Bath continues to be regarded as an international tourism destination and regional shopping centre.

To deliver sustainable economic growth B&NES needs to create an additional 8,700 jobs of which 5,700 (65.5%) are targeted for the city of Bath. Bath is at the economic heart of the district and needs to be positioned at the centre of the knowledge economy. There is significant demand: businesses are attracted to a location with available and appropriate workspace, a highly

skilled workforce, environmental quality and a proactive attitude to innovation and enterprise.

To achieve these ambitions the ERDP sites in Bath should:

- Bring forward choice of development sites in Bath to deliver the scale, form and amount of floor space needed for sustainable economic growth;
- Deliver key employment sites to allow creation of an additional 5,700 jobs;
- Focus growth in key business sectors that can deliver above average GVA growth;
- Promote investment in the infrastructure necessary to ensure that optimum use can be made of key brownfield development sites;
- Demonstrate the ability to respond to changing market conditions swiftly

A sustainable economic future for Bath can only be secured if there is a rebalancing of jobs from the current dependency on the public sector to a more diverse, resilient private sector comprising businesses which are prepared to invest to achieve growth.

#### **4. Achieving the Vision through the Bath City of Ideas**

There is a clear vision to deliver the ambitions for Bath. The Council sees the economic future for Bath as a 'City of Ideas'. The creative and knowledge based sectors currently perform a significant role in the local economy and have sub regional and national profiles. Bath also has world class Universities and a skills profile to make the most of these assets.

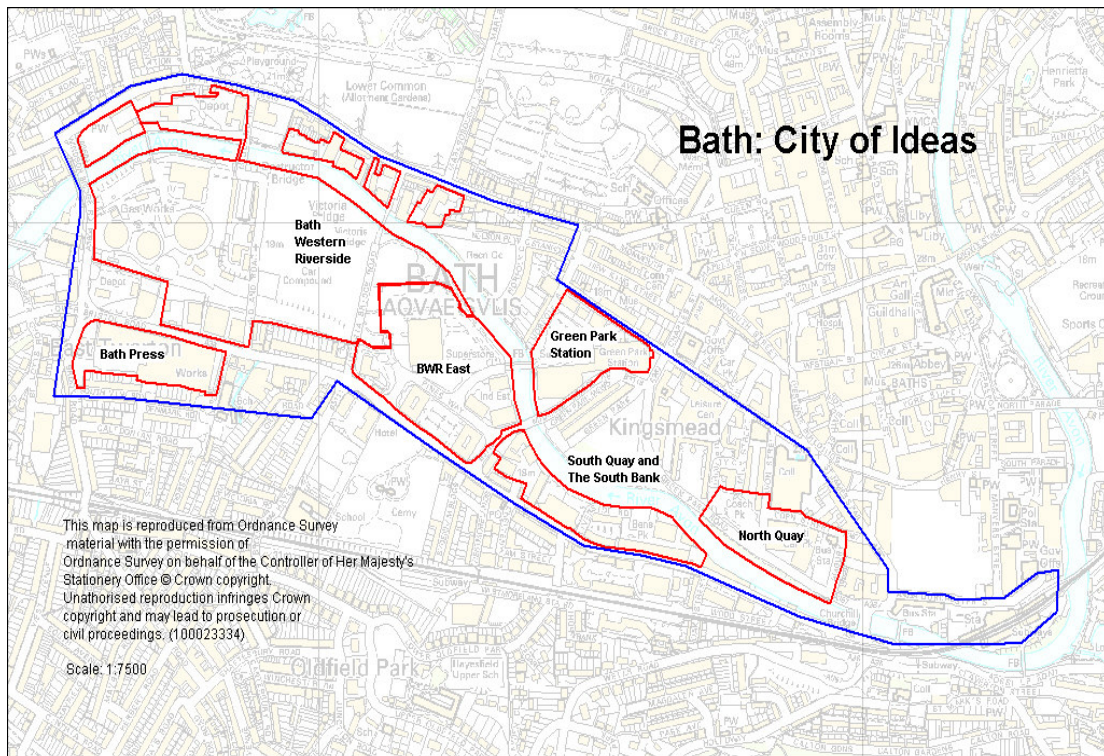
Bath has a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring these strengths together and build a world class collaborative and interdisciplinary workspace in the centre of Bath. The key components of this could be:

- A venue for Continuing Professional Development in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematical) subjects
- An Innovation centre hosting 100 high tech, high growth companies
- The HQ of an innovation company
- Major high tech publishing industry business HQ
- Knowledge Hub for ICT, microelectronics, smart grid sectors
- Manufacturing skills academy

Delivering the City of Ideas could result in a nationally significant public/private partnership, which creates new ideas, spin outs and high growth companies. There are three key elements that the ERDPs will deliver in making the City of Ideas a reality:

- Securing investment that promotes clustering of key growth sectors delivering modern space alongside academic and training facilities.
- Improving the environment of the River Avon, transforming it into a leisure and vastly improved visual resource.

- Reinforcing the historic core, one of Bath's key strengths, to create spaces where people are encouraged to linger and meet in streets where the cafes and restaurants spill out onto the pavement.



#### 4b. Bath World Heritage Site

The inscription of Bath as a World Heritage Site confirms the city's heritage as being of outstanding global significance. Individual developments, of whatever scale, could have a significant impact upon the universal values of the Site. It is therefore essential to ensure that World Heritage values are properly considered in development proposals. Developments will identify how they will impact upon the Outstanding Universal Values for which the site was inscribed. These values and other considerations are outlined in the WHS Management Plan (2010-2016).

The UNESCO Mission Report (2009) indicated that high quality contemporary architectural styles are a desirable method of creating new buildings in Bath by adding a new layer of quality to complement the existing excellence. The inclusion of contemporary architectural styles in the WHS will require careful treatment to respond to the feeling of relative architectural uniformity created by widespread use of local stone, relative uniformity of building heights and the visual dominance of the Georgian building stock.

## 5. Issues and Constraints

In delivering our ambitions, we are aware that there are a number of issues and constraints which need to be overcome. We will tackle these alongside bringing forward the key development sites:

- **Transport capacity** - Bath experiences traffic congestion during peak rush hour periods, so the effect of new developments needs to be considered carefully. Traffic demand for trips in the Bath area is expected to increase between 2006 and 2031

An effective transport network is required to ensure business productivity is maintained and improved, communities and workers can move more easily around and air quality is improved. Practically congestion provides a challenge in developing sites; the development capacity of the key sites is restricted by being unable to access them effectively. The Bath Package is a collection of interventions and developments designed to create additional capacity and free up development sites (as well as getting people around in a more cost effective, cleaner, quicker manner that contributes to enhancing the World Heritage Site). Delivering the package will be an essential component of delivering the City of Ideas.

- **Office Demand** - The analysis of the property market, market research and surveys all confirm the need to create an office quarter or quarters in central locations in Bath to meet the demand for office space arising from the growth targets. Most of the sites identified in the ERDPs will be brought forward as mixed use developments.
- **Lack of conference facilities** - To attract the business we want it is important that Bath delivers a 500-seat capacity, flexible conference and events space potentially linked to a hotel.
- **Low carbon** - The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy sets targets for carbon reductions and in the way that the Council supports development in the area. Sites brought forward should contribute to delivering the Council's carbon reduction targets
- **Floodplain development** - For future development to be possible in the Bath river corridor a number of recognised sites have to address any potential risk associated with flooding to ensure compliance with national policy and the sustainability of any new development. By enabling a strategic approach to compensatory storage the Council will ensure that individual sites are not left undeveloped because of flood risk and that regeneration objectives are met by sites adjacent to the River.
- **Public Realm** - The Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Bath City Centre entitled 'Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath' is our vision to transform Bath's streets, public spaces and riverside into one of the world's most beautiful and attractive urban centres. It aims to make Bath the UK's 'most walkable' city and bring back its 18<sup>th</sup> century reputation of being a city that has world-class architecture, street layout and design. The

council has recognised that improving the public realm for the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be a key factor in encouraging economic growth, health and well-being.

- **Parking** - There is a total capacity of 9,266 publicly available car parking spaces serving Bath city centre. The Parking Strategy proposes the loss of 1,334 city centre spaces and provision of an additional 2,532 additional car parking spaces in the park and ride sites, leading to net increase of 1,198 spaces serving the city centre.

Many of the potential development sites identified in the Bath ERDP are currently surface or multi-storey parking. These sites have a combined capacity of 2,054 spaces. Delivery of the proposed park and ride to the east of Bath and the proposed expansions of Newbridge and Odd Down underpin the Council's ability to release those car park sites for development. It is anticipated that 1,552 of the spaces will be retained (at Charlotte Street or Avon Street) as part of any development proposals.

- **Avon Act** - The Avon Act imposes restrictions on development within specified zones around the centre of Bath to safeguard the hot springs which flow under the city of Bath. The Act will be a consideration for future development in the city. Major development sites will need to be co-ordinated to ensure there is not more than one major risk to the springs at any time. Any delays are likely to have a more significant impact than were the sites to lie outside the Avon Act area if the delay results in an overlap with delivery of another site.
- **Existing business uses** - A number of the sites identified have current business uses already operating on them. A relocations process and timetable will ensure the Council is able to offer sufficient and timely support to businesses which are being relocated to enable new development. This process will include a resource plan considering both revenue implications such as officer time and capital implications such as compensation payments.

## 6. Development Sites

The Development Sites are divided into two distinct areas: Bath City Riverside and Twerton Riverside.

## **BATH CITY RIVERSIDE**

Bath City Riverside includes a range of development sites totalling over 40ha along the river corridor to the south and west of the existing city centre within the draft Core Strategy Central Area. Realising the development potential of Bath City Riverside is key to achieving a more productive and competitive economy in Bath & North East Somerset and delivering the Vision for Bath as a creative and knowledge-based “City of Ideas”.

- **Cornmarket/Cattlemarket/Hilton/Podium** – (Annex 1) Located at the eastern end of Bath City Riverside adjacent to the main shopping area, the site offers the opportunity to reinforce the existing retail offer in the northern half of the city centre, forging stronger links with Broad Street and Walcot Street.

The site has the potential to provide:

- a net increase of up to 4,000sqm of retail space to consolidate the existing onsite provision.
  - approximately 8,000sqm of new and refurbished hotel accommodation creating 120 new bedrooms
  - around 250 new jobs
- **Manvers Street** (Annex 2) - Situated adjacent to the Bath Spa railway station and bus station, the site is ideally located to create a new business quarter on the edge of the city centre focussed on the development of new “grade A” office space with ancillary retail, restaurant and bar facilities and residential development adjoining the river.

The site has the potential to provide:

- up to 17,000sqm of new office space
- in the order of 2,000sqm of retail, restaurants and bars
- approximately 2,300sqm of residential accommodation
- up to 1,000 new jobs

To realise the site’s development potential will require the relocation of the existing Police Station and Post Office Sorting Office. It is anticipated that development will come forward in phases within an overall masterplan.

- **North Quay** (Annex 3) - A key development site on the south west edge of the central area providing the opportunity to connect the city centre to the river through local traffic management and the creation of high quality urban squares.

Convenient access to the railway station and bus station provides the opportunity to create a high quality commercial quarter focussed on an “innovation hub”, bringing together business and the city’s universities as

the principal element of a mixed use scheme containing restaurants, bars, cafes and residential accommodation.

The site has the potential to provide:

- up to 31,000sqm of high quality office and knowledge based employment space
- 3,000sqm of restaurants, bars and cafes
- approximately 7,000sqm of residential accommodation
- in the region of 1800 new jobs

To realise the site's development potential will require the replacement of the existing Avon Street car park through the Bath Car Parking Strategy and relocation of the Coach Park.

- **South Quays & The South Bank** (Annex 4) - A prominent series of sites on the south bank of the River Avon adjacent to the city centre. Current uses are a low density mix of industrial, office and commercial uses, which, in the main, present an unattractive outlook to the river.

An overall redevelopment scheme could realise a high density mixed use scheme providing an attractive, accessible river frontage and public space incorporating modern offices and creative space, associated bars, restaurants and cultural/creative shared space together with riverside housing.

The site has the potential to provide:

- up to 23,000sqm of modern offices
- approximately 5,500sqm of creative office, workspace and linked facilities
- 1,500sqm of cafes, bars and restaurants
- 9,000sqm of residential accommodation
- around 1,400 new jobs

Capable of being developed in a number of separate phases any scheme would be required to provide a new pedestrian footbridge link to North Quay and the city.

- **Green Park Station** – (Annex 5) A “gateway” site to an enlarged city centre the site is currently home to the Green Park Market and successful Farmer's Market. It has the potential to become a vibrant new retail and leisure destination, which makes full use of the former Green Park Station and provides a mix of retail and leisure uses, a new hotel and conference facility and residential apartments.

The site has the potential to provide:

- significant retail space

- at least 3,000sqm of bars, restaurants, cafes and health & well being uses
  - 20,000sqm of hotel and conference facilities
  - approximately 7,500sqm of residential accommodation
  - up to 700 jobs
- **Bath Western Riverside East** (Annex 6) - A key longer term development site which can provide a high quality commercially led link between the new Bath Western Riverside residential quarter to the west and Green Park Station and the city centre to the east. The new employment facilities can be complimented by the development of new leisure facilities along the site's river frontage.

The site is capable of accommodation:

- new retail facilities
- up to 47,000sqm of modern office and live/work space
- extensive riverside leisure facilities
- 26,000sqm of residential accommodation
- around 2,800 new jobs

## **TWERTON RIVERSIDE**

Running along the river corridor to the west of the city and Bath Western Riverside, Twerton Riverside is formed by a range of brownfield sites totalling approximately 10ha. The area houses a number of redundant, tired and old-fashioned industrial buildings alongside recently converted office space and student accommodation.

The area requires a comprehensive approach to future development which provides a higher quality environment and street scene on this main route into the city, improves access to and along the river and a balance of uses which complements and supports the regeneration of Bath City Riverside.

- **Bath Press** – (Annex 7) A vacant industrial complex adjoining the main Lower Bristol Road and Lower Oldfield Park residential area. There are extensive outdated industrial buildings requiring clearance and remediation as well as local sensitivity relating to some of the building facades.

The site provides an opportunity to create a mixed use development including retail, significant employment and new housing, delivering:

- out of centre retail space which compliments the existing city centre retail offer
- up to 5,000sqm of office and creative business space
- residential accommodation providing an interface with adjoining housing
- in the region of 220 jobs

- **Stable Yard Area** (Annex 8) - A partly vacant industrial area adjoining the river immediately to the west of Bath Western Riverside. A comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the area would provide an opportunity to deliver a higher quality built environment and more attractive street scene on a busy transport junction as well as an improved river aspect.

The site could deliver:

- out of centre retail space which compliments and reinforces the city's retail offer
- up to 7,000sqm of residential accommodation to compliment the adjoining BWR residential quarter
- approximately 300 jobs

Realisation of the site's potential will require the relocation of a number of existing occupiers.

- **Carrs Mill Area** (Annex 9) - A mixed use area containing refurbished and new build offices together with partly vacant dilapidated industrial buildings and other commercial uses. There is a need to pursue a mixture of refurbishment, consolidation and redevelopment of existing buildings to make optimum use of these constrained sites with the emphasis on reinforcing surrounding office uses and taking advantage of the river frontage and outlook.

Taken together the sites have the potential to deliver:

- up to 14,000sqm of additional office accommodation
- approximately 700 jobs