

Housing and economic land availability assessment site information: part 1, winter 2017

Introduction

This document is published as a background paper to the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan 2016-2036 **Issues and Options** consultation, winter 2017. This represents the first phase of the Issues and Options consultation (Phase 1a) and covers four broad areas:

1. Vision & Priorities – outlining the key challenges facing B&NES and the spatial priorities that the Local Plan should address
2. Strategy – within the context of the Joint Spatial Plan starting the conversation about possible alternative approaches to providing additional homes over and above those being provided in strategic development locations
3. Strategic Development Locations – presenting the emerging proposed approach to development at the strategic development locations at North Keynsham and Whitchurch and raising key questions & issues for discussion
4. University issues – as a key element of housing need, initial consideration of university expansion and possible approaches to providing student accommodation that will need to be considered within the context of the other development pressures and the spatial strategy for Bath.

Purpose & Scope of HELAA information

The purpose of the housing and economic land availability assessment (HELAA) is to identify land which is potentially suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses over the plan period 2016-2036. The HELAA forms an important element of the evidence base supporting plan-making. It consists of two broad elements: land identification and land assessment. The level of detail in the assessment is proportionate to both the stage of development of the Local Plan, and the likelihood that a site is a realistic candidate for development. Therefore, published HELAA information will evolve and become more detailed and comprehensive as the Local Plan progresses through its preparation.

Preparation of the new Local Plan is at an early stage (Issues & Options 1a). Therefore, this iteration of the assessment is limited to a list of identified sites and current policy constraints that are applicable to each site.

In order to ensure that the Local Plan is informed by a comprehensive picture of land that is available for development and to ensure all reasonable alternatives are tested through the Local Plan preparation, the Council undertook a call for sites exercise from January to March 2017. The sites that are

included in this iteration are those assessed in the strategic housing land availability assessment published in 2013 and the sites submitted as part of the Local Plan call for sites or the Joint Spatial Plan.

Inclusion of a site in HELAA at this stage does not imply that the site is either suitable or unsuitable for development and does not confer upon it any planning status. The sites are listed, mapped and published at this stage so that those responding to the Local Plan Options consultation can gain an understanding of the sites put forward for consideration.

Next Steps

As referenced above the HELAA will be further developed alongside the preparation of the Local Plan. This is consistent with the approach recommended in the Planning Practice Guidance which makes it clear that assessments of site suitability should be informed by, amongst other things, emerging planning policy. Sites will be subject to more detailed assessment, as appropriate, as the Local Plan progresses. It is anticipated that the next iteration of HELAA information will be published to support the Local Plan **Preferred Options** document. The information published will include the Council's conclusions from the site suitability, availability and achievability assessments. Other sites not already identified at this stage may also be included as part of the next iteration of the HELAA, in order to support the development of the Local Plan.