

Frequently Asked Questions

A new Local Plan for Bath & North East Somerset up to 2036 Issues & Options Consultation (Winter 2017)

22 November 2017 - 10th January 2018

1. What is the new Local Plan?

A Local Plan is a statutory document principally about the use and development of land. The new Local Plan for Bath & North East Somerset will include a strategy to guide development, site allocations (including strategic development locations and smaller sites) to meet development requirements as well as district-wide Development Management policies for determining planning applications.

It is being produced alongside the **West of England Joint Spatial Plan**, which will provide a new strategic planning context for all four West of England Districts. Both plans cover the period 2016-2036. **See Question 12 below.**

2. Why are we preparing a new Local Plan?

The Core Strategy (2014) includes a commitment to an early review of the housing requirement. This review is being undertaken through the West of England Joint Spatial Plan. This also provides an opportunity to formally combine the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan into one Local Plan. Once adopted, the Local Plan 2016-2036 will replace the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan. Until then the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan will be used for determining planning applications.

In summary:

- the Joint Spatial Plan provides the development targets (e.g. the number of new homes) and the broad location of new development for the preparation of the Local Plan
- the Local Plan will need to take account of changed local circumstances since the Core Strategy was adopted and new national policy and legislation including changes that may arise from the 2017 Housing White Paper.
- in order to deliver the Joint Spatial Plan the Local Plan will encompass a development strategy to establish where development should be located and how this should be aligned with infrastructure
- the Local Plan will include a suite of district-wide Development Management policies for determining planning applications

3. What is the timetable for preparing the Local Plan?

The process for preparing a Local Plan and the currently anticipated programme to adoption of the Local Plan are summarised below.

Preparation Stage	Programme
Issues & Options/Preferred Options	November 2017 – May 2018
Draft Plan	Autumn 2018
Examination	Spring 2019
Adoption	Autumn 2019

4. What is the Options stage?

The purpose of the options stage is to facilitate and encourage discussion and comment around the key issues facing B&NES and to test possible solutions/options to address these issues. To help focus discussion the options consultation is being divided into phases. The first phase (comprising two periods of consultation) will be a discussion around options and the second phase will be consultation on the preferred approach.

The Options stage will enable reasonable alternatives to be tested and will inform the preparation of a Draft Local Plan. The Draft Plan will set out the proposed site allocations and policies.

As the Options stage represents a very early stage of plan-making and does not set out policies or proposals it will not be used in the determination of planning applications.

5. What is the scope of the first Issues and Options consultation?

The first Issues and Options document focuses on four main areas:

1. **Vision & Priorities** – outlining the key challenges facing B&NES and spatial priorities that the Local Plan should address
2. **Strategy** – within the context of the Joint Spatial Plan starting the conversation about where development should be located in B&NES
3. **Strategic Development Locations** – The JSP identifies the very large development locations at North Keynsham and Whitchurch and the options consultation sets out more detailed options

4. **Student accommodation** – 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 strategy for Bath

A second Options consultation will be undertaken during Spring 2018 and it is envisaged this will cover issues principally related to Development Management policies that require review.

6. Will there be any opportunities to discuss the options with officers?

We will be holding a number of staffed exhibitions throughout the District during November and December (details below), which members of the public are welcome to attend and discuss issues with officers.

Venue	Date
Somer Valley The Board Room, Bath College Somer Valley Campus, Radstock	Tuesday 28th November (3pm - 8pm)
Whitchurch United Reform Church Hall	Thursday 30th November (3pm - 8pm)
Keynsham Civic Centre Community Space	Monday 4th December (3pm - 8pm)
Bath Brunswick Room, The Guildhall	Friday 8th December (3pm - 8pm)
Bath Brunswick Room, The Guildhall	Monday 11th December (3pm - 8pm)

7. Where can I see the consultation documents?

All consultation documents, background evidence and on-line consultation portal will be available on the Council's Local Plan webpage during the consultation period commencing on 22nd November <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan>

The Options document can also be viewed at the following locations during opening hours:

- Council offices
 - The One Stop Shop, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JG
 - The Hollies, Midsomer Norton, Bath, BA3 2DP

- Civic Centre One Stop Shop, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 1LA
- At all public libraries in the District, including the mobile libraries
- At the drop-in sessions

8. How can I make comments on the Options document?

The Options document includes a series of numbered questions to stimulate discussion and help guide your response to the issues raised and options presented.

You are strongly encouraged to make your comments on-line using the consultation portal on the Council's website: www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan . Alternatively you can:

- email your completed comments form to Local_Plan2@Bathnes.gov.uk
- send your completed form or comments in a letter to Planning Policy, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath BA1 1JG.

Please note that all comments will be made publically available.

9. What will happen to my comments?

Once the consultation has ended all comments received will be processed and analysed. The key issues arising from the comments will then inform the development of the plan.

10. Will there be other opportunities to engage in the Plan preparation process

The Council will work closely with the local community and other stakeholders through the various stages of the preparation process up to the Draft Plan stage. There will be two more documents published during the Issues & Options/ Preferred Options stage (see Question 4 above).

At Draft Plan stage the Council will publish its final draft of the Local Plan. It will be subject to formal consultation prior to submission for Examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

11. How will I be kept informed about the next stages?

If you have responded to this consultation and have opted to have your contact details added to our mailing list you will automatically be kept informed of the next stages. You can request to have your contact details added or removed at any time.

12. Can I still comment on the policies and proposals in the West of England Joint Spatial Plan?

The final draft of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) is published for comment between 22nd November 2017 and 10th January 2018. This is taking place in parallel with the consultation on the B&NES Local Plan Options but please note these are two separate consultations.

The JSP sets out the overall approach and location of new development and will guide the review of each of the Council's own local plans. If you wish to participate in the JSP Examination you will need to make comments on the JSP - Publication version.

For more information and to comment on the Joint Spatial Plan - Publication version please visit www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk

For further information on the new Local Plan and to make comments on the Options document, visit www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan