

Concept Statement for the Warminster Road MOD site September 2012

To be read in conjunction with the B&NES Local Plan, Draft Core Strategy, other relevant planning policies and the evidence base

The redevelopment of Bath's three MoD sites is a rare and challenging opportunity to create a series of new residential neighbourhoods in a unique World Heritage Site. It is an opportunity to boost housing supply within the city and to add to the evolution of Bath as a centre of innovative and progressive urban design.

Whilst the Council is seeking to make the best use of land in the city, it must also ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site are given proper consideration. Working with local communities and the development industry, the Council looks forward to achieving high quality residential areas that make efficient use of land, respond to the unique local context and integrate well with established neighbourhoods and communities.

Introduction

After a long and influential presence in the city, the Ministry of Defence is now leaving Bath. It has already begun to relocate staff to its site at Abbey Wood and will begin the disposal of its Foxhill, Warminster Road and Ensleigh sites in September 2012.

The Council's Draft Core Strategy has identified these sites as being critical to meeting the city's need for additional housing. The Council is committed to ensuring that the housing led redevelopment of these sites is of high quality and responds to the specific design and placemaking challenges that each presents. To help achieve this, the Council has been working in partnership

with the MoD, the Homes and Communities Agency and ATLAS to produce Concept Statements for each site. As part of this the Council has commissioned evidence that has informed our understanding of each site and has highlighted important issues to be considered and addressed by developers.

Purposes of Concept Statements

The purposes of the Concept Statements are to summarise the Council's analysis of the sites, describe the Council's vision for their redevelopment, and to set out the design principles that will need to be met in order to realize that vision. The statements have been prepared now to inform the sale of the sites and shape the formulation of development proposals.

Role and Status

The Concept Statements have been subject to public consultation and set out the Council's expectations for each site. Developers will need to respond to these and to the commissioned evidence, and will also be expected to engage with the public and the Planning Service in the formulation of their proposals for development.

The Concept Statements need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy.

The content of the Concept Statements will be used to inform the Council's forthcoming Placemaking Plan DPD and should be regarded as part of the preparation stage of that document. They will carry due weight as a material consideration in negotiations with developers and in the determination of planning applications.

The Council's Vision for Bath and North East Somerset

The Council has recently revised its vision for the kind of place that it wants Bath and North East Somerset to be, putting people first and communities at the heart of everything it does. It sees Bath and North East Somerset as a place:

- Where everyone fulfils their potential;
- With lively, active communities; and
- With unique places and beautiful surroundings.

The Council has set the following three objectives, which are intended to help fulfil this overall vision. This Concept Statement responds to these objectives.

- Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;
- Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live; and
- Building a stronger economy

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Introduction to the Warminster Road site

The site comprises 7.0 ha and occupies a highly prominent location between the Warminster Road (A36) and the Kennet and Avon Canal. The A36 is a key approach route to the city and provides the principal access to the site.

Figure 1 opposite shows the site and its immediate context.

At present the site contains a number of single storey office blocks with associated vehicular circulation and parking, plus undeveloped natural areas to the north and east.



Figure 1 – Aerial photograph showing the site and its immediate context.

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Site analysis

Achieving the most appropriate design approach will require detailed examination of the site context. Prospective developers will be expected to demonstrate, through character appraisal and a thorough understanding of the evidence base, how their proposed scheme responds to the site.

Figure 2 opposite illustrates the key constraints and opportunities already identified through the Council's initial analysis of the site. Key issues include:

- Critical location within the World Heritage Site;
- Sloping topography;
- Important views over, out of and into the site;
- Landscape and ecological value of the green canal corridor;
- Significant trees and grassland in the open area adjacent the canal corridor;

The available evidence base which supports this analysis is found at www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements

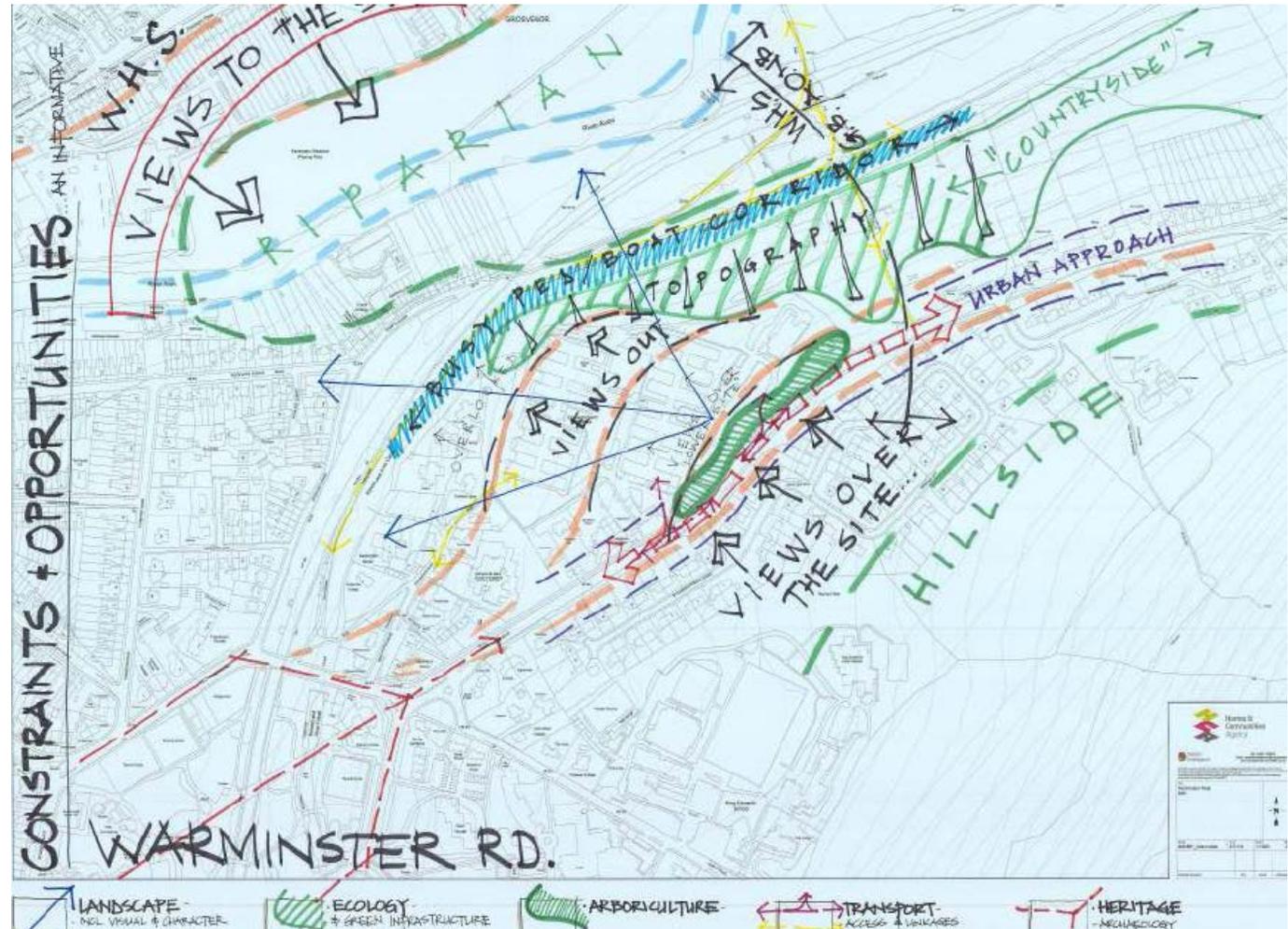


Figure 2: Initial analysis of key constraints and opportunities

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The Council's vision for the site

The Council's vision is for a bold, high density, low carbon development that will maximize the site's potential to accommodate new homes close to the city centre. This is one of the most visible sites in the city and demands a scheme that achieves the highest international standards of urban design and architecture.

The Council's vision is for a development that maximises the use of land whilst elegantly addressing the challenging topography of the site in the Bath tradition. The new development will enhance the character of Warminster Road as a key route into the city. It will also frame the green corridor adjacent to the canal and enhance the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitats within and immediately adjacent to the site. It will create new views and juxtapositions of buildings, which will enhance the richness and texture of this part of the city. The new development shall be a positive and distinctive addition to Bath, demonstrating innovation in building, construction and infrastructure design to achieve high levels of environmental performance that embrace low and zero carbon opportunities, whilst retaining a character and appearance that sits comfortably within the World Heritage Site.

It will be a new neighbourhood that is very well connected into its local context and nearby facilities, including the provision of new pedestrian and cycle bridges over the canal and railway, plus a high quality pedestrian/cycle network within and through the site.

Overall it will set a new high standard for residential led developments within the World Heritage Site.

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Key components of the development

The Council expects that the development will include the following key components:

- Approximately 100 new homes in a range of types and sizes, including 35% affordable housing;
- A new primary school (unless suitable alternative provision can be identified);
- Circa 0.35 ha of integrated formal open space;
- Circa 0.35 ha of natural open space, including structural landscaping;;
- Circa 0.07 ha of allotments;
- The access and internal circulation network will include pedestrian routes through the site, and include one main vehicular point of access and an emergency access from Warminster Road;
- An aspiration for new bridges over the canal and railway.
- A financial contribution to identified infrastructure.

Figure 4 - Concept Plan

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Design principles

This part of the Concept Statement sets out the Council's proposed design principles, which are intended to help prospective developers formulate scheme proposals that will realize the vision. These principles have been formulated with a view to securing high quality development. They are not, however, intended to stifle design creativity. If a prospective developer proposes an alternative approach, which would clearly meet or exceed the Council's aspirations for design quality, that approach will be considered on its merits. This qualification is intended to ensure that the design principles set out below do not preclude one-off exceptional design solutions.

These Design Principles need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy.

Developers will need to:

- Demonstrate how they have responded to the evidence base, and have addressed emerging and adopted planning policy.
- Reflect best practice as embodied in 'By Design', and achieve a 'good' standard as a minimum when assessed against 'Building for Life' criteria.
- Respond to the Council's aspiration to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 or above for all housing across the development site. A viability assessment that has considered the financial implications of development at Code 5 and above forms part of the Evidence Base for the MoD sites. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that this aspiration has been thoroughly considered. All homes should be Level 6/zero carbon in full if being delivered after 2016.

Layout

- The layout shall be pedestrian and cycle dominant, and provide convenient access to public transport adjacent to the site. A 'shared space' ethos for streets and spaces should prevail throughout the site.
- Streets and public spaces within the site must be safe and accessible for all, providing direct, well lit, routes through the site, and should be orientated to maximise public benefit and enjoyment of near and distant views across the site.
- The layout must respond positively to the fact that the site is highly visible from other parts of the city.
- The layout shall take full advantage of the sloping topography to create new views and juxtapositions and enhance the appearance of this part of the World Heritage Site.

Density and mix of uses

- The scheme proposals shall fully optimise opportunities to deliver a significant amount of new residential development on this site.
- The scheme shall include a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and include opportunities for self-build housing.
- There is an identified need to provide a 210 place school in the Central and North East part of Bath, and the MoD site alone generates the need for about 30 school places. Due to the lack of available alternative sites within reasonable proximity of the MoD Warminster Road site and the inadequate capacity to expand existing schools, there is a requirement for developers to provide sufficient land and to fund the construction of a 210 place school and associated facilities on the MoD Warminster Road site, unless alternative provision can be identified.

NB: Public consultation highlighted the potential of the MoD Warminster Road site to address existing space deficiencies at Bathwick St Mary Primary School, and to meet the wider primary education needs of this part of city. Developers will be expected to

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demonstrate that the delivery of these options has been explored. Possible options include:

- a 210 school on the Warminster Rd site;
 - transfer Bathwick St Mary's to MOD site and expand to 420 place school with the redevelopment of the existing Bathwick St Mary's site for residential purposes; or
 - keep Bathwick St. Mary's on existing site and provide 210 more places on the Warminster Road site either as a linked extension or a split site 420 place Bathwick St. Mary's.
- Small scale retail facilities should be sought
 - Whilst the emphasis shall be on supporting existing facilities and services in the wider neighbourhood, small scale retail facilities should be sought that do not impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres. Financial contributions will be sought to undertake environmental improvements to local centres in the vicinity.

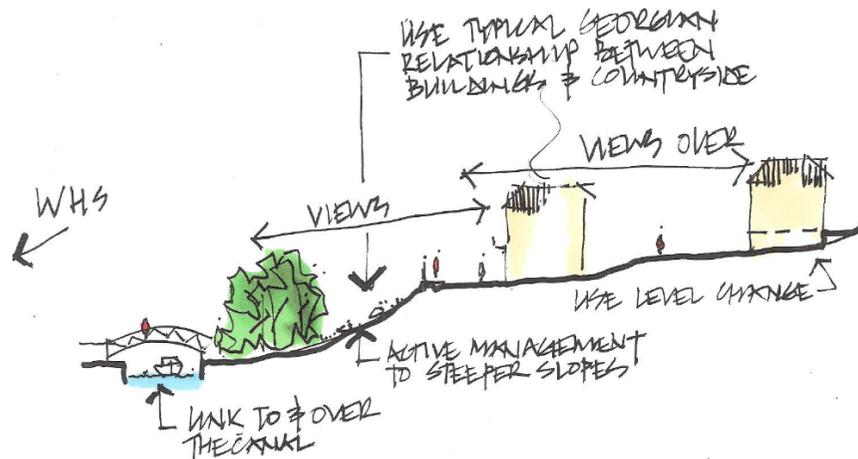


Figure 5 - Typical site section

Landscape and ecology

- The scheme will deliver high quality green infrastructure providing good opportunities for people to access, enjoy and utilise natural spaces. The natural areas adjacent to the existing developed part of the site should largely be retained as natural areas.
- The scheme will be expected to be based upon well integrated and multi-functional Green Infrastructure, providing development that is permeable for both people and wildlife, and which includes appropriate provision of public open space.
 - o Formal open space of 0.35 ha;
 - o Natural areas, including structural landscaping of 0.35 ha;
 - o Allotments 0.07 ha.

Note that in principle some of the required open space provision could be met in areas adjacent to the site, if this can be demonstrated to properly meet needs and secure the long term protection, management and enhancement of these adjacent areas.

- Formal, informal and doorstep play opportunities will be provided within distances appropriate for age and independent play. Play areas will be provided for through the provision of an integration of playable landscape and equipment. Playable spaces within the public realm shall provide additional opportunities for the local community to engage with the site and each other.
- Within and immediately adjacent to the site, development must safeguard and enhance the quality and connectivity of wildlife habitats, supporting and extending ecological diversity with particular reference to bat corridors.
- The developer will be expected to take steps to retain important trees on site and take opportunities to plant appropriate new trees within the site.

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Scale: height and massing

- The topography of the site will be a strong influence on the form and configuration of development.
- Given the proximity of the site, the scale (height and massing) of new buildings will need to be very carefully considered to avoid adverse visual impacts on the World Heritage Site. More detail on this issue is contained in the Evidence Base.
- Building and public realm elements must be detailed well to ensure a high quality environment for all, that befits the setting of the World Heritage Site, and ensures the development will endure into the future.

Appearance: details and materials

- Natural Bath stone ashlar or other appropriate high quality materials must be the dominant materials for the elevations of buildings throughout the development, having regard to the prominence of this site with the World Heritage Site.
- The development should incorporate either dark coloured natural slate or clay pantiles for roofs - or integrated photovoltaics, and timber or metal framed windows.

Use natural stone for paving and kerbs throughout the publicly accessible parts of the scheme.

Historic environment considerations

- Respond positively to Warminster Road's significance as a key route into the city.
- Development proposals must protect and enhance the setting of adjacent listed buildings.
- The scheme proposals must relate well to the geography and history of the city and to the lie of the land, and should emerge from a detailed contextual analysis.

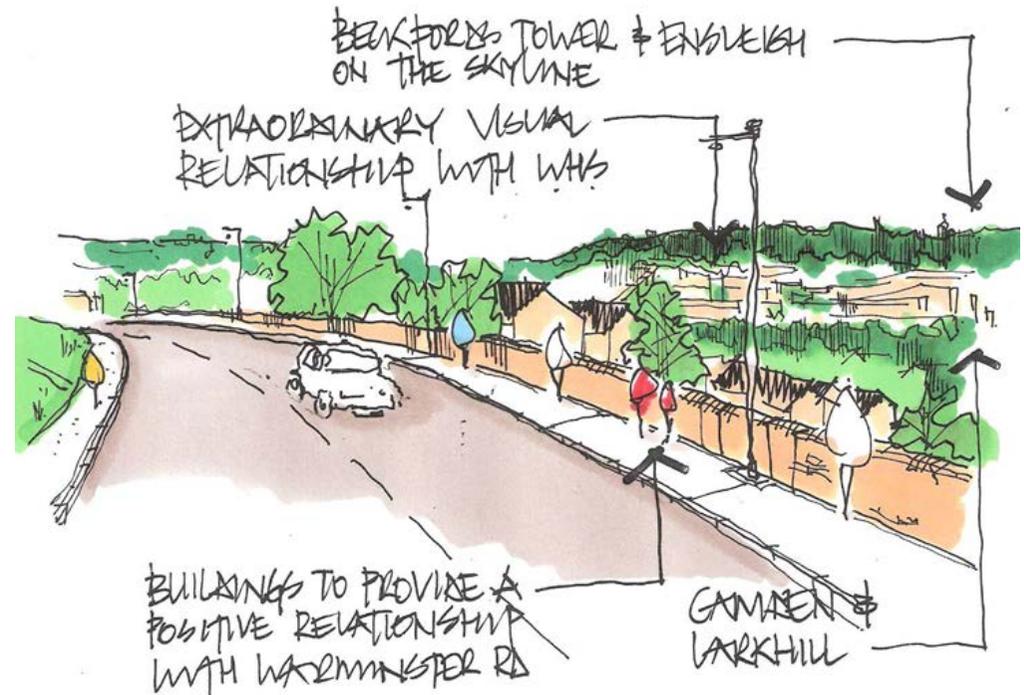


Figure 6 – Potential relationship with Warminster Road.

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Access and movement

- There shall be one main point of access from Warminster Road, together with an emergency access.
- Due to its close proximity to the city centre, this site lends itself to an access and movement strategy which is based on low car ownership and an emphasis on non-private car modes.
- Pedestrian and cycling permeability through to adjoining areas should be provided, including the provision of a new bridge over the canal towards the western edges of the site, and a bridge over the railway.

Environmental performance

- The scheme proposals shall include resource minimization strategies for energy and water, together with a waste reduction strategy.
- The Council's aspiration is to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 or above for all housing across the development site.
- An energy strategy should be produced that addresses the potential to reduce energy consumption through the use of high specification building fabric, passive and active solar technologies, and ground or air source heat pumps etc.
- The potential for energy efficient, high density development shall be fully exploited.
- The designs of individual homes shall facilitate home working in order to help reduce the need for residents to travel by car to work elsewhere.
- Development proposals will be encouraged to include on-site space for growing food, in the form of gardens and allotments.
- Development on this site will be encouraged to maximise the opportunities to create and inspire a low carbon environment and lifestyle.

- The designing in of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies is welcome.
- The new school needs to be zero carbon or as close to zero carbon as possible.
- Any commercial buildings on site are to be BREEAM rated and zero carbon by 2019.
- Street lighting should be designed according to best practice. It should seek to minimise visual clutter and use low energy, whilst enabling a safe and convivial night time environment. It should be designed to avoid detrimental environmental impact including light pollution (sky glow) and light spillage onto adjacent areas.

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Evidence Base

Evidence has been specifically commissioned to inform our understanding of the site and its context. It is not intended to be exhaustive in breadth or depth, but to highlight some of the important considerations relevant to informing the evolution of design proposals for the site.

The Evidence Base should be seen as complementary to adopted local and national planning policy, and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy. It must also be recognised that there are inevitable tensions between the different studies that have been commissioned. It is the role of the developer team to be responsive to the issues that have been identified, and to demonstrate a reasoned and iterative response. In highlighting important issues, the evidence base should not be misinterpreted as precluding development; rather they are highlighted to enable a design response to be made.

To enable realistic site values to be established and to ensure that appropriate development proposals are generated, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of this Evidence Base and the planning policy framework against which schemes will be judged.

The Evidence Base, interpreted as a whole also provides the context for the commissioning of further detailed studies that will support proposed development. These will be identified following early engagement with the Council's Planning Service. The Council's preliminary view is that an EIA will be required for this site.

The Evidence Base covers the following key issues. This will be supplemented by other evidence as and when it is produced.

- Landscape and Visual, including
 - Ecology and
 - Arboricultural considerations:
- Bats
- Energy and Sustainability Standards
- Transport Issues
- Historic Environment, including archaeology
- Infrastructure Requirements
- Schedule of consultation comments

A summary document is also available.

They are all accessible via the Council's website, see

www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements

Public Consultation comments on Draft Concept Statements

All comments received during the public consultation on the Draft Concept Statements are also available on the Council's website. This provides an important resource for future landowners and developers both in their assessment of the value of the sites, and in the formulation of their development proposals. Developers will also need to be aware of these comments in light of the detailed community engagement that they are expected to undertake (see the Council's Statement of Community Involvement) in accordance with the Localism Act 2012. This process will help to enable higher quality development proposals, as well as creating a smoother path through the planning process.

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The Process

This section of the Concept Statement summarises the process the Council expects applicants to engage in during the preparation of proposals and during the planning process. It outlines the resources it offers to applicants to enable the delivery of a managed planning process.

The Planning Service's offer to Applicants

As part of its commitment to enabling the delivery of a smooth planning process, Bath and North East Somerset Council's Planning Service offers a comprehensive end to end range of services to applicants. This includes:

- Pre-application 'Development Team' advice review
- Enabling access to the South West Design Review Panel
- Offering Planning Performance Agreements to applicants
- Providing advice on how to step up to the requirements of The Localism Act and to engage effectively with local communities by using the B&NES Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

The Planning Service will agree a framework of pre-application and application services with the applicant that is bespoke to the needs of the proposed development.

The Council's Expectation of Applicants

The Council will advise applicants to engage with the Planning Service from the outset. To help provide a quality of service:

- It expects applicants to conduct proposals through an agreed structured and accountable design development and planning process.
- It expects applicants to engage with local communities in shaping their proposals and demonstrate how its input has influenced proposals

For more information about the process of securing planning permission, and the Council's expectations of developer's engagement with local communities, visit <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>

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Planning obligations

This part of the Concept Statement sets out the potential planning obligations which the Council will expect prospective developers to enter into in order to secure the necessary supporting infrastructure.

- 35% affordable housing.
- Provision of a primary school on site (unless suitable alternative provision can be made).
- Financial contribution towards infrastructure.
- Provision of 0.35 ha of formal open space (and management and maintenance contribution).
- Provision of 0.35 ha of natural open space including structural landscaping;
- Provision of 0.07 ha of allotments.
- The aspiration for the provision of new bridges over the canal and railway for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Financial contribution to off-site Early Years provision
- Financial contribution toward Play Services
- Financial contribution to off-site Youth Services provision
- Current forecasts indicate that Secondary and Post 16 provision is projected to be sufficient, however pupil numbers will continue to be monitored and if there is projected to be a shortfall in available places in the future, a contribution to off-site Secondary and/or Post 16 provision will be required.
- Financial contribution towards provision of replacement employment provision to be allocated within the Bath area.

Further sources of information

(DETR and CABE 2000) *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice*.

(DETR and CABE 2001) *By Design - Better Places to Live by Design*.

(CABE 2006) *Design and access statements - How to write, read and use them*.

(CABE 2006) *The principles of inclusive design*.

(English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation 2007) *Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2*.

(DfT and DCLG 2007) *Manual for streets*.

(English Partnerships and Design for Homes 2006) *Car parking - What works where*.

Link to Council's Local Plan, Draft Core Strategy and evidence base:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningpolicy>

Further information on the Concept Statements

For further information please contact Planning Policy on 01225 477548 or email to planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

These Concept Statements can also be made available in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats.