
ANNEX A

LAND WEST OF TWERTON

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Background

- A1 Land west of Twerton provides an opportunity to provide for a mixed use sustainable urban extension to provide for up to 2,000 dwellings together with employment provision, open space and sustainable linkages to the city centre without serious conflict with the overall purpose of the Green Belt.
- A2. A description of the site is set out in the SoCG prepared in consultation with BANES whilst further details, including the masterplan proposals are set out in the document prepared by the Prince's Foundation and submitted at Annex 3 to our representations upon the Significant Proposed Changes consultation.
- A3. The characteristics of the site are summarised below.

Site Characteristics

- A4. A number of technical studies have been prepared in order to inform the masterplan approach to the proposals put forward by the Duchy of Cornwall in support of the identification of the site as a location for a new neighbourhood. Full details are set out in the Development Proposal Document prepared by the Prince's Foundation which accompanies the representations submitted in response to the submission draft Core Strategy in February 2011.

Landscape and Policy Designations

- A5. The site is located on the western edge of Bath. It is not within the Cotswold AONB or the World Heritage Site ("WHS"), although it is located within the Green Belt. The position in this regard is unchanged from the time the Council proposed the site as a 'Preferred Option'.

Sustainability and Connectivity

- A6. The site is located within 2km of the City Centre.
- A7. Public bus routes run along the A4, through neighbouring Twerton and connect to Bath, the University and beyond Bristol.

- A8. There are a number of existing Public Rights of Way that cross the site and a series of tunnels underneath the railway that allow access to the river valley and direct links with the Sustrans Bristol and Bath cycle path to the north. The site is at grade with all these sustainable connections with the City Centre and Bristol as informed by both the geography and the topography.

Archaeology

- A9. The extensive survey work undertaken to date has been agreed throughout with BANES and a number of field evaluations have been undertaken. The studies have identified the presence of some archaeological features which are limited to:

- The railway cutting; and
- Land within the plateau near the old quarry at Newton St Loe

- A10. The archaeological features can be recorded and excavated as part of the overall mitigation measures proposed for the site. Archaeology presents no constraint to the Masterplan proposals set out in the Foundation's Development Proposals Document (Feb 2011).

Ecology

- A11. The site is of limited ecological value, comprised mainly of monoculture arable fields.
- A12. The site is in excess of 5km from any European Designated Site and the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the 2009 draft Core Strategy (which included the site as the preferred location to provide for an urban extension) did not identify any likely significant effects on European Designated Sites.

Flood and Drainage

- A13. The site is not located within an area at risk from flooding and its development for a mixed use urban extension would not lead to an increased risk of flooding off-site.

- A14. The proposals in the Foundation's Development Proposals Document reflect the lack of ecological constraints but have been devised so as to enhance the ecological potential and biodiversity of the site.

Ground Conditions and Stability

- A15. The Arup report (CD4/ENV6) sets out an assessment of the slope, geology and stability conditions of the urban extension options, including land west of Twerton. It concludes that 50% of the site is unsuitable for development.
- A16. In contrast to the Arup report, the Buro Happold report (copy attached as Annex B) undertook a review of the Arup findings and concludes that:
- In contrast to the majority of the Bath area, the site west of Twerton is underlain by relatively stable geological strata.
 - Most of the site is suitable for development.
 - The on-site conditions that do limit the extent of development are:
 - Steeply sloping ground in the vicinity of Newton Brook
 - The railway cutting
 - As shown on the masterplan, neither of the above areas is proposed for development

Heritage of Urban Form

- A17. Bath is a World Heritage Site ("WHS"). The boundary as defined by UNESCO is shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map and follows the path of the former Bath City boundary as it was in 1986.
- A18. The site to the west of Twerton adjoins but is ultimately beyond the WHS boundary as defined in the Local Plan. In assessing the impact of an urban extension to the west/south west of Bath the RSS Panel concluded that such a proposal would not threaten the WHS (CD3/5, para 4.1.25-4.1.28).
- A19. Bath's World Heritage Status encompasses a mix of architectural styles, including Victorian, Georgian and post war suburban. The urban character of Bath is also largely defined by building on slopes.

- A20. Overall, the West of Twerton “option” which is in single ownership represents the most sustainable option in providing a mixed use urban extension adjoining the urban area of Bath as recognised by the Council in making this its ‘Preferred Option’.
