

BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED AT THE GREEN BELT HEARING SESSION ON 26.01.12****1.0 Introduction**

1.1 At the hearing session (issue 3) on 26/1/12 on the Green Belt the Inspector agreed that in response to issues raised by objectors the Council should respond in writing to the following issues that were raised:

- Clarify reference made in paragraph 6.64 of BNES/9 to a review of the Green Belt Inset boundaries in the Placemaking Plan and the settlements to which this applies
- In light of the above whether land being promoted by Crest for release from the Green Belt for development at Saltford and J.S. Bloor at south west Keynsham should be dealt with as part of the detailed review of Green Belt Inset boundaries

2.0 Review of Green Belt Inset boundaries

2.1 In Annex 1 of BNES/9 a change was suggested to paragraph 6.64 of the Submission Core Strategy to clarify that Green Belt Inset boundaries will be reviewed through the Placemaking Plan and Neighbourhood Planning and, in accordance with PPG2, they will only be altered if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. This wording change is also set out in the schedule of rolling changes to the draft Core Strategy for consideration by the Inspector (CD6/E2.1).

2.2 The rationale behind the reference to Green Belt Inset boundaries being reviewed is set out in paragraphs 8.4.1 to 8.4.3 of BNES/9 and is not repeated here.

2.3 The review of Inset boundaries would relate to all settlements that are excluded from the Green Belt and for which Inset boundaries are defined. These settlements are:

- Keynsham
- Saltford
- Farmborough
- Whitchurch
- Batheaston
- Bathampton
- Bathford

2.4 In seeking to demonstrate exceptional circumstances to alter Green Belt boundaries the Council will need to consider whether circumstances have changed significantly since the Inset boundaries were last defined in the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan, adopted 2007 (CD5/1). Without prejudging the outcomes of this review process the Council considers that there has been little change in circumstances and therefore, it is unlikely that the Inset boundaries will be altered. This is also reflected in the distribution of additional housing

provision set out in the spatial strategy. The Council considers that the provision of around 30 dwellings at each of the villages that meet the RA1 criteria will yield around 250 dwellings without the need to amend Green Belt Inset boundaries. This reflects the results of on-going work with the Parish Councils during the preparation of the Core Strategy. It should be noted that exceptional circumstances could be demonstrated through Neighbourhood Planning, given the opportunity communities have to promote and plan for a greater level of development than set out in the Core Strategy (see draft NPPF (CD2/27), paragraph 50).

- 2.5 Therefore, the Core Strategy does not rely upon or envisage Green Belt Inset boundaries being altered to release land for the purposes of development to meet the strategic housing requirement.

3.0 Land at Manor Road, Saltford

- 3.1 Mr and Mrs Hawkes (as landowners) and Crest Homes are promoting the removal of 3.6 ha of land at Manor Road, Saltford from the Green Belt for development of 80-100 dwellings to help meet the strategic housing requirement. In the Council's view this would be a significant land release from the Green Belt and exceptional circumstances as required by PPG2 have not been demonstrated to alter the Inset boundary.

- 3.2 The scale of development proposed in the representation is significantly greater than that envisaged for villages that meet the criteria of Policy RA1 (Saltford currently meets the criteria of Policy RA1). Therefore, even if exceptional circumstances could be demonstrated, a development of this scale would conflict with the spatial strategy. The key reasons as to why the development being proposed does not form part of the spatial strategy for the District are:

- In accordance with national policy the strategy focuses most development on the District's urban areas of city of Bath and the towns – only limited development is directed towards the rural areas
- Additional development at Saltford of the scale proposed would not serve to reduce the need to travel as residents in the village commute to work principally in Bath and Bristol and travel to use services and facilities in Keynsham and the two cities
- Green Belt land in this location serves the purposes set out in PPG2. The strategic review of the Green Belt set out in the West of England Joint Study Area Second Report (CD3/16) and Buchanan & Partners Strategic Green Belt Review (CD3/17) notes that this area strongly or very strongly serves four of the five purposes

4.0 Land at south west Keynsham

- 4.1 It is also considered that land being promoted by J.S. Bloor at south west Keynsham would be a significant release of land from the Green Belt contrary to the spatial strategy for both the District and Keynsham. The spatial strategy for Keynsham already provides for significant levels of additional housing and employment development at the town. As outlined at the hearing session on issue 2 (Keynsham sub-matter), having already released significant land

from the Green Belt in the Local Plan, the Core Strategy seeks to focus new development on more sustainable, primarily brownfield sites and seeks to address the high level of out-commuting from the town by achieving a better match between the types of jobs and resident workforce profile in the town.