

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET - CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

AGENDA - ISSUE 2: SOMER VALLEY

Day 6 (Wednesday 25th AM)

1. Is the planned increase in the number of jobs/housing consistent with the vision for the Somer Valley and justified for this location?
 - What does *more self reliant* mean in the Vision? Is this the same as *self containment* used for other spatial areas? How is this measured here?
 - Is greater self reliance an appropriate aim in relation to the jobs/homes balance in this area?
 - Given that many more homes than jobs are planned, how is this aspect of the Vision likely to be realised? Should it be less aspirational?
 - Would additional housing (above 2,700) significantly weaken self reliance/containment and worsen car-borne commuting? Would less housing better achieve the stated aims? What are the disadvantages of less than proposed?

Economic development

2. Are there reasonable prospects for delivering 1,000 net additional jobs as envisaged in SV1 3a? What is the timing for, and the potential impediments to, bringing forward the Old Mills allocation? As the Council is not seeking to cap jobs growth to 1,000 (BNES/10, 9.2.3) should this be made clear in the plan?

3. There is land available for around 2,500 jobs (BNES/10, 9.2.3). Accordingly there is more than enough land to accommodate what is proposed as well as an aspirational scale of job growth. How, therefore, is SV1 3 c (*protect land in existing business use*) justified in the context of national policy in PPS4? Should retention of existing employment land been based on future suitability, among other factors? (*Given BNES/10 9.4.2, there may be a mismatch between my reading of what the policy means and what the Council actually intends, as reflected in its approach to the Alcan site. The protection afforded to modern industrial estates/business parks seems reasonable, but the policy might prevent redevelopment of unused, unsuitable employment sites, particularly of smaller sites, without achieving any benefit.*)

Housing

4. Are the major commitments relied on for delivery likely to be achieved, bearing in mind the lack of development since being allocated in the Local Plan (eg Railway Land NR2, NR14, PAU 1 & 2)? What barriers to implementation remain to be overcome?

5. Are the constraints set out in SV1 4b justified/consistent with national policy and local circumstances?

- How would the requirement for an *employment benefit* work in practice? The Council refers to the Paulton Printing Factory and Alcan sites. How (broadly) does the scale of employment benefit equate with the employment lost? Does the Council consider that the Alcan proposal is consistent with SV1 4b? (*I note that the application - 11/01772 - is being reported to the Development Control Committee on 18 January 2012.*) Is the approach here likely to be able to be repeated on smaller employment sites?
- New paragraph 4.15a (PC62) indicates that local designations including the *Housing Development Boundary* (HDB) will be reviewed. How does this sit with the reference to the HDB in SV1 4a? Does a clear steer need to be given to the task of the Placemaking Plan in reviewing the HDB (eg the purpose of revision, the criteria to be applied)?
- The Council refers to the possible role of CIL in delivering the town park (BNES/10, 9.10.1). Many potential residential sites in the area might contribute to the Town Park if a CIL to this effect was in place. What are the Council's plan's for CIL? The SHLAA (sites MSN14A and B) assessed delivery of the town park only in relation to enabling development of adjoining land. Is the plan clear and justified in relation to delivery of the Park?
- Are the requirements in SV1 4b on further housing development likely to constrain delivery of the necessary additional housing proposed above existing commitments?

Simon Emerson
Inspector
12 January 2012