

6

Core Strategy Summary

Midsomer Norton and Radstock



This is one of a series of 8 summary leaflets about the Core Strategy Spatial Options document. This leaflet summarises the options for Midsomer Norton and Radstock.

Before you comment pick up a copy of the full document or visit our website:
www.bathnes.gov.uk/corestrategy

The Council is preparing a new planning framework for Midsomer Norton and Radstock tackling the issues this area faces. The aim is to enhance the environment where we live, work and play. The Core Strategy will set the way future planning applications will be considered.

The main aim identified so far is to make the South of the district more self-contained in terms of housing, job opportunities, shops and social/leisure facilities, particularly encouraging more economic development to support local companies and help to create more jobs. Midsomer Norton and Radstock Town Centres will play an enhanced role as centres for their local communities and surrounding areas.

Emerging Spatial Vision for Midsomer Norton and Radstock

By 2026 Midsomer Norton and Radstock will continue to be the principal service centres and will have regained their importance as employment centres for their communities and the surrounding communities in the Somer Valley area.

Building on their unique heritage, the towns will have been regenerated and will be thriving, vibrant and distinctive centres. A growth in jobs will have been delivered with new development along with an improved range of social and cultural facilities, creating a more self contained hub.

Both towns have an attractive rural setting, providing good access to open countryside and a rich natural environment. Being closely linked, they will be realising their potential for high levels of walking and cycling, and will be well connected to Bristol and Bath, with good public transport.

Both towns are centres of long standing and strong communities, with the will to adapt to new opportunities such as being a centre for sustainable energy to follow on from former strengths in manufacturing and previously in coalmining.

Spatial Objectives – a summary

1. Create a modern and diverse economy to bring wider benefits to the Somer Valley, including supporting existing companies, encouraging new local businesses, and tapping into new low carbon opportunities.
2. Create a range of local employment opportunities including improving education and training opportunities.
3. Regenerate town centres, building on their distinctive identities, providing high quality retail environments with improved social and leisure facilities including the Town Park in Midsomer Norton.
4. Maintain and strengthen the landscape setting, environmental quality and green infrastructure, improving accessibility and distinctiveness.
5. Tackle local traffic congestion and out-commuting and improve the quality of public transport links.
6. Meet local housing needs, enabling people to live within and strengthen their local communities.

Spatial Options

Two options to achieve the vision and objectives above are considered through the Core Strategy. Both options work towards delivering most of the identified objectives. Both should also help to improve the town centre, and strengthen the role of employment and service centres. They also both include provision of the Town Park in Midsomer Norton to provide more leisure facilities and linking to the National Cycle Network.

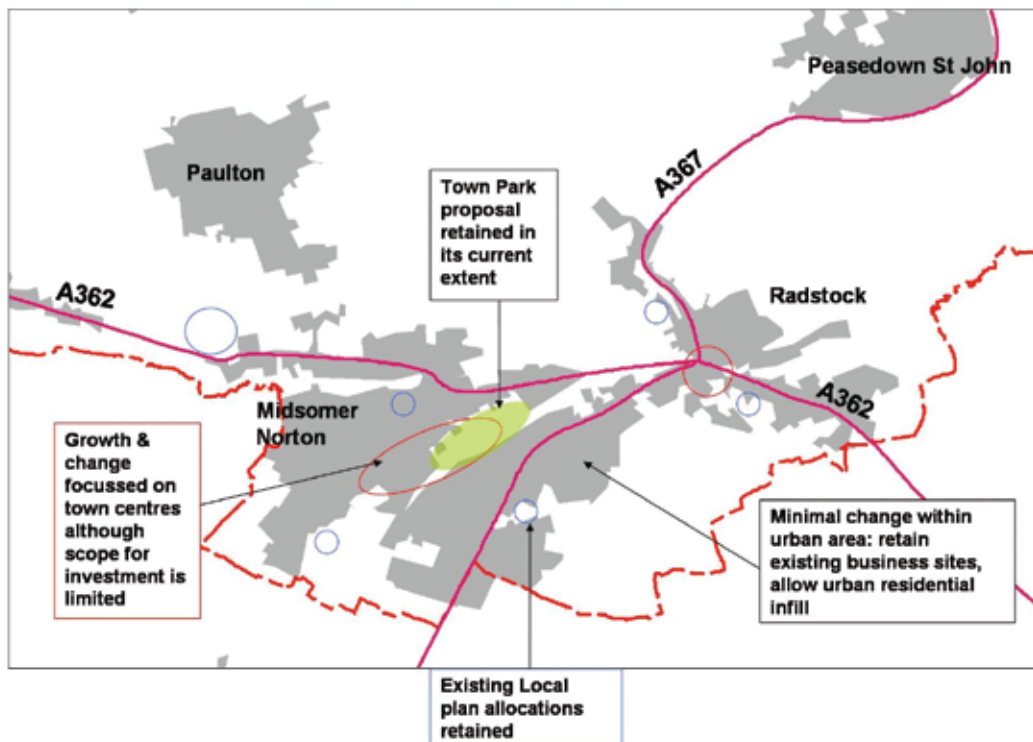
The main difference is the level and scale of development and how realistic it is that they will be delivered. Option 2 offers a more realistic way to improve employment opportunities and the Town Centre. **Therefore, Option 2 is the Council's preferred option.**

Option 1 (Complete existing commitment with limited new housing)

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) does not propose significant new development in this part of the district and this option broadly reflects that.

About 1,000 new homes are proposed. There are already about 900 new homes committed through the B&NES Local Plan and existing planning permissions, so only a few more new houses will be allowed through the Core Strategy. This would include limited housing provided on existing empty industrial sites. These sites would still be mainly used for employment purposes. This option could also provide around 1,050 new jobs largely from town centre improvements, but this depends on significant public sector support including regional funding.

Key Characteristics of Option 1 for Midsomer Norton and Radstock

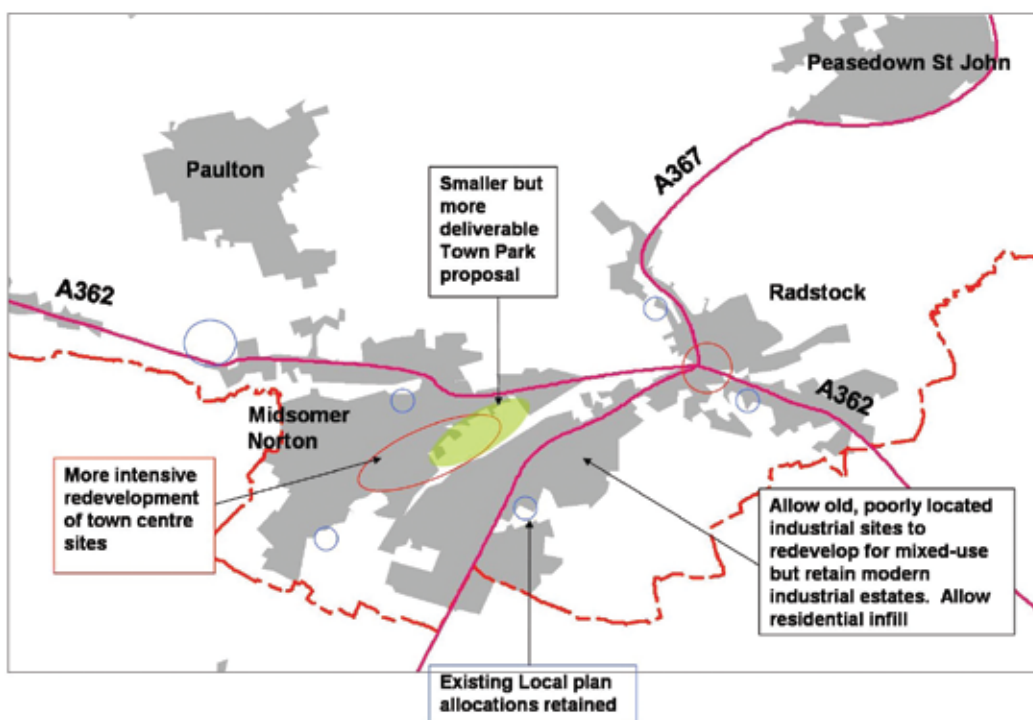


Option 2 Increased levels of development led by regeneration

This option proposes more housing than option 1, providing about 1,700 new homes. About 900 homes are already committed through the Local Plan and existing planning permissions. Therefore, about 800 additional homes will be allocated. This extra development will help to facilitate improvements in the town centres, as well as the delivery of mixed-use redevelopment of existing empty industrial sites. It also helps to provide more affordable housing.

This option could provide around 1,900 new jobs in the town centre and by encouraging new employment sites to come forward. However, it will still need good partnership working between the public and private sectors to work.

Key Characteristics of Option 2 for Midsomer Norton and Radstock



Strategic Sites

Both Midsomer Norton and Radstock town centres play crucial roles as the centres for their local communities and surrounding areas. They help to establish a strong network of settlements that make the South of the district more self-contained in terms of access to key services, jobs and shops.

Midsomer Norton Town Centre suggested Strategic Site Boundary

Copyright: Bluesky International



Previous consultations have identified the need to address economic viability and some of the longstanding structural problems with the town centres, such as road layouts and improvements to the public realm. These problems will not be resolved without planning and intervention, and without this, we are unlikely to attract the investment that is needed in these critical areas.

The allocation of these town centres as strategic sites will allow us to be more proactive in creating what's needed in both towns so they can improve, flourish and attract appropriate development.

Delivery / Infrastructure

Once the Strategic Sites are allocated through the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared to provide more detailed guidance. Regeneration Delivery Plans will also set out how the improvement to town centres can be implemented.

Radstock Town Centre suggested Strategic Site Boundary

Copyright: Bluesky International



Other summary leaflets in this series:

1. Vision, Objectives and Core Policies
2. Locational Options for the District
3. Bath
- 3a. New Neighbourhood in an urban extension to Bath
4. Keynsham
5. New Neighbourhood in an urban extension to South East Bristol
6. Midsomer Norton and Radstock
7. Rural Areas

Make your comments on the Core Strategy Spatial Options by 11 December 2009

www.bathnes.gov.uk/corestrategy

Planning Policy: telephone 01225 477548