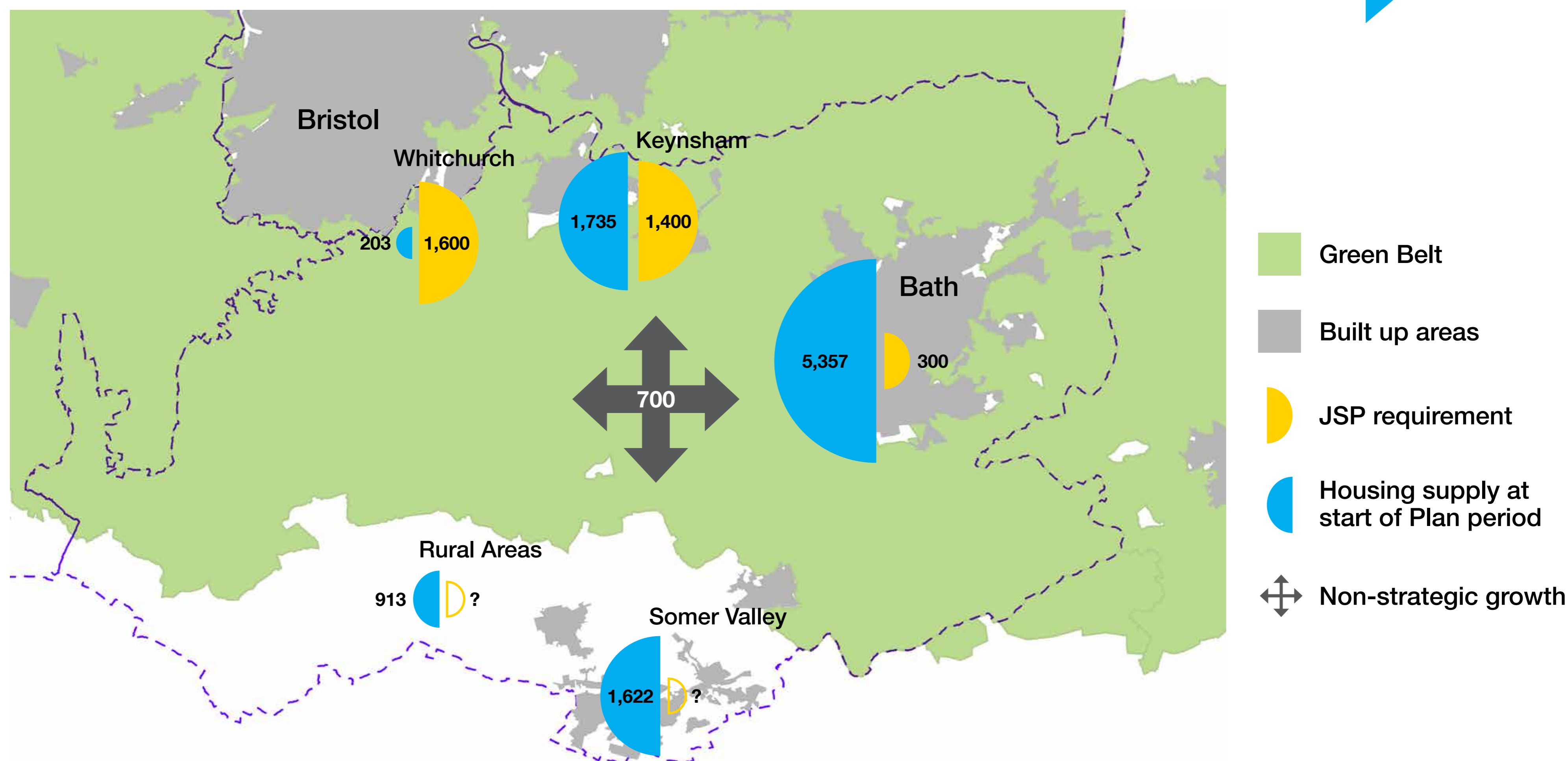


Somer Valley and Rural Areas



Non-strategic growth

The Local Plan has a key role in establishing how the ‘non-strategic’ growth of 700 dwellings can be delivered in Bath and North East Somerset.

The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) defines ‘non-strategic growth’ as sites over 10 homes and below 500 homes to be delivered through Local Plans.

The ‘non-strategic’ growth dwelling figure has yet to be tested through the JSP examination and the amount and distribution set out in the Options document may be subject to change.

Locational options

It is becoming increasingly evident that for some primary schools there is no projected spare capacity or scope for expansion within the current school site to provide the further school places that would arise from future development proposals. This means careful consideration over the location of the 700 homes and whether further residential development should be encouraged at settlements where no reasonable prospect of access to a primary school is guaranteed.

The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) provides the starting point for establishing the suitability of potential development sites. In identifying the locational options, the following were also assessed:

- Access to services and facilities
- Primary school capacity
- Public transport accessibility
- Impact on environmental assets

Two options are suggested for how non-strategic growth could be accommodated on land outside the Green Belt. Also outlined is a third option that includes potential areas within the Green Belt if ‘exceptional circumstances’ are demonstrated. The key elements of each option are summarised on the following boards.

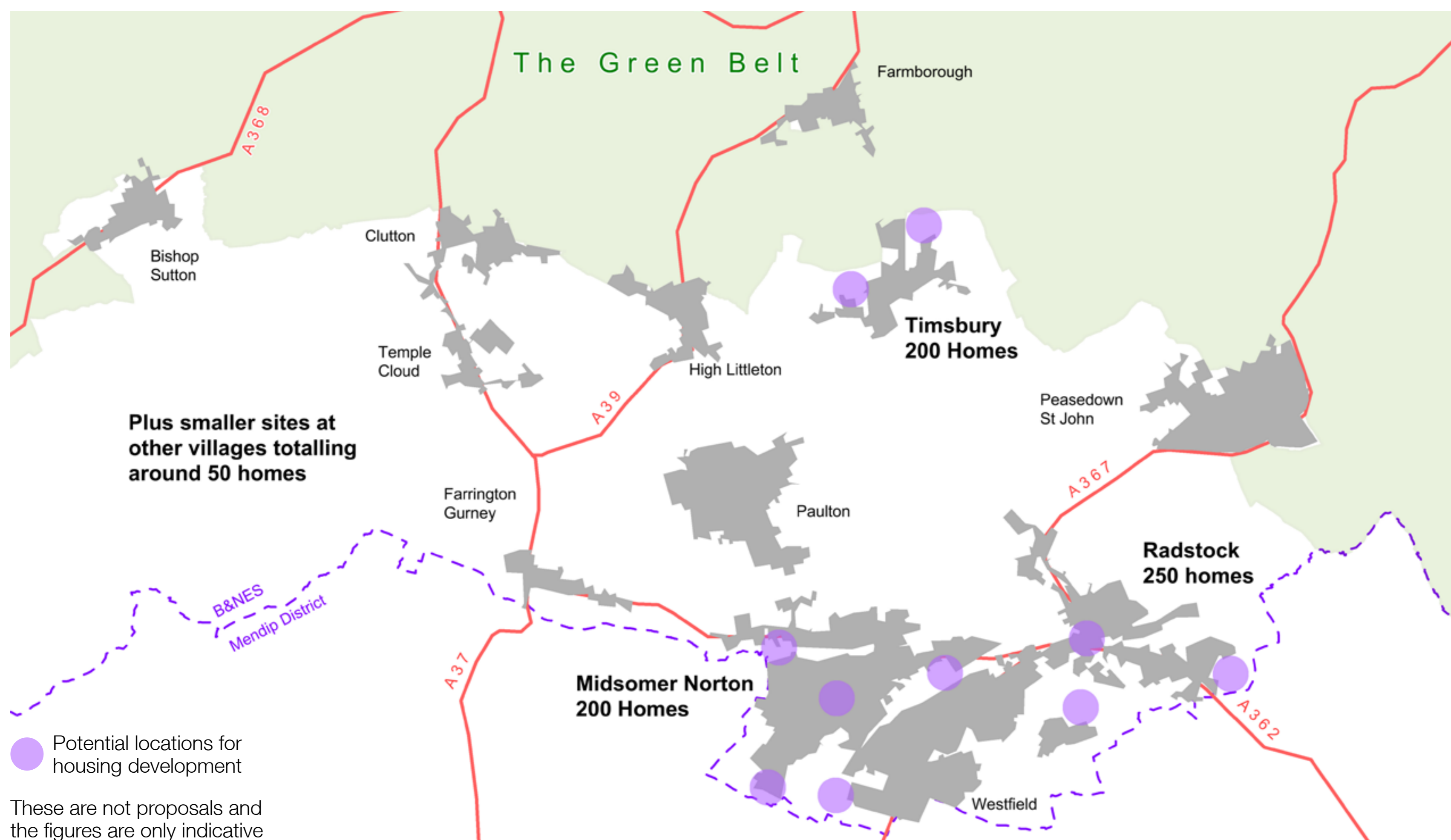
Next steps

Dependent on the outcome of the JSP examination, and the feedback from the consultation on the Options, the preferred approach for ‘non-strategic’ growth will need to be underpinned by further work before sites are allocated in the Draft Local Plan. This will include site capacity as well as whether and how the identified issues can be mitigated and/or addressed.



Somer Valley and Rural Areas

Option 1: focussed approach avoiding the Green Belt



About this option

Under this option all 'non-strategic' growth is focussed at a few key locations outside the Green Belt, in the south of the District. These could act as the focal points for future housing development.

The image indicates the potential distribution of development under this scenario focussing on locations at Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury but also allowing a limited number of dwellings (50) to be accommodated in other non-Green Belt villages during the Plan period. These villages/locations will need to be specified in the Draft Local Plan, due to be published next year. This will be subject to further assessment work, including discussions with the Parish Councils.

The benefits of this approach are that it could help to facilitate investment in infrastructure - such as schools, health facilities or open space. However the impact of these levels of growth on a settlement could be relatively significant.

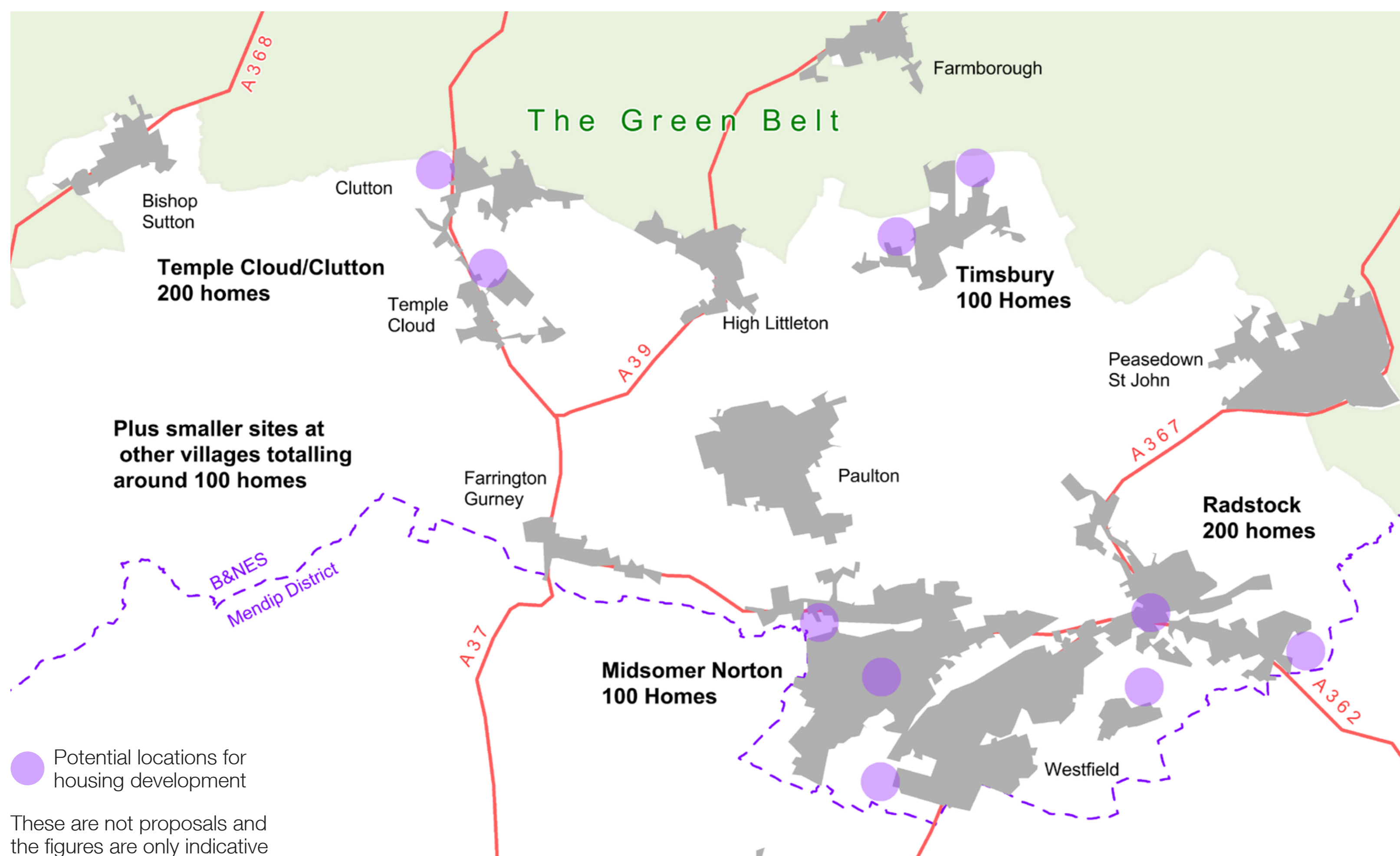
Key considerations

By directing growth to these locations, the following issues will need further consideration:

- Suitable mitigation to address landscape, ecological and heritage matters.
- Flood risk issues (surface water).
- Delivery of the level of housing proposed at Midsomer Norton is dependent on planning permission being granted for the proposed primary school at Silver Street.
- Safe routes to primary schools will need to be created as appropriate.
- Transport, highways and access issues including: the potential increased traffic level and congestion through junction of B3355/High Street/Station Road and A362/Radstock Road in Midsomer Norton; for Radstock, the cumulative impact of development on A362 and A367; and for Timsbury, increased traffic levels on the Hayeswood Road/North Road (B3115) through Timsbury and other rural areas.
- Health facilities would require improvement particularly for Midsomer Norton/Westfield and, if considered necessary, Timsbury.

Somer Valley and Rural Areas

Option 2: more dispersed approach avoiding the Green Belt



About this option

This approach would distribute the ‘non-strategic’ growth across a wider (but still limited) range of settlements. This would result in fewer dwellings at each location. The findings of the analysis indicate that in addition to locations identified under Option 1 (Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury), and still taking into account the primary school issue, there may be some potential for further growth at Clutton and Temple Cloud. Under this option, a greater number of dwellings (100) would also be allowed in other non-Green Belt villages during the Plan period.

Key considerations

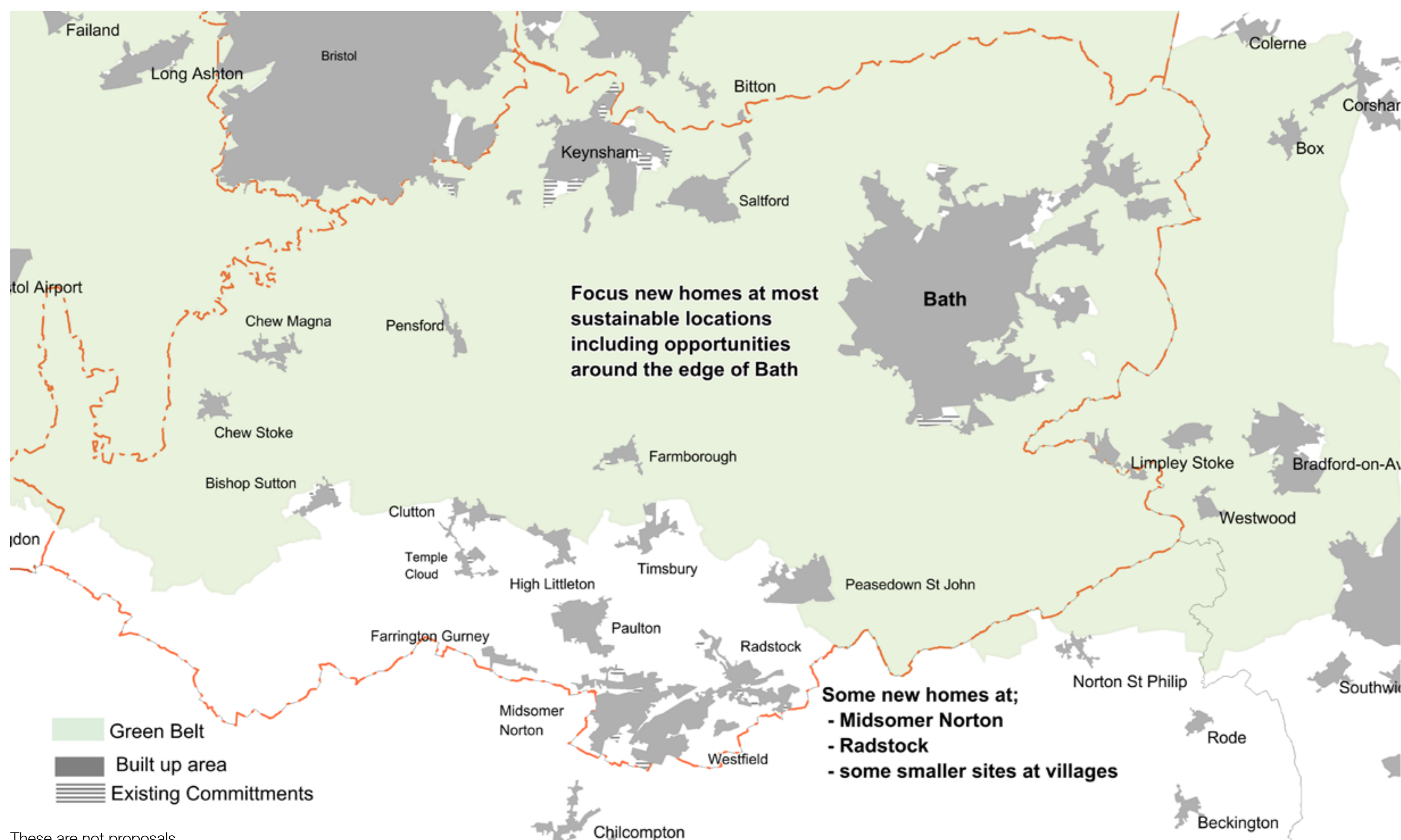
The impacts and issues identified in relation to Option 1 will also apply to this option, albeit there would be a lower level of growth directed to Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury resulting in less pressure on infrastructure and services/facilities in these settlements.

The impacts and issues associated with development at Temple Cloud and Clutton are summarised as follows:

- Suitable mitigation to address landscape, ecological and heritage matters.
- Limited local facilities but access to bus services along A37 corridor to other centres.
- Further investigation is needed to ensure there is sufficient primary school capacity at Clutton and Cameley school to accommodate the required additional school places or ascertain whether there are other feasible options.
- Safe routes to primary schools will need to be created as appropriate.
- Cumulative effect in developing sites may unacceptably increase traffic levels on the A37 with a resultant impact on air quality, especially relevant in the newly declared Farrington Gurney and Temple Cloud Air Quality Management Areas.

Somer Valley and Rural Areas

Other options considered



These are not proposals

Combination of locations within and outside the Green Belt

If the amount of development at the locations identified in the two options proposed is undeliverable or found to be unsustainable, and if exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, the Draft Local Plan would identify land to be removed from the Green Belt and allocated as sites for development.

This approach would only be considered once all other non-Green Belt options had been fully explored and would focus on the most sustainable locations, including suitable opportunities around Bath and the more sustainable Green Belt settlements. Crucially, it will also be dependent on primary school capacity. The map above illustrates such an approach.

The Council would need to be able to demonstrate that directing development to these locations would clearly outweigh potential harm to the Green Belt. Given that sustainable and suitable non-Green Belt options would need to be fully utilised first, the scale of any development that would be directed to Green Belt locations is not known at this stage.

Rural Areas

There will be a separate Rural Areas chapter in the Draft Local Plan that addresses additional housing provision required. This will include both the allocation of specific sites (in accordance with the preferred strategy as discussed) and a review of Housing Development Boundaries for villages. This will be undertaken within the context of a review of sites already allocated in the Rural Areas chapter of the Placemaking Plan:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/placemakingplan

This will also address other issues, including identifying designated Local Green Space (LGS). Should communities across the District (including as represented by Parish Councils) wish to propose additional green spaces that are 'demonstrably special' to the local community for designation as an LGS, there is an opportunity for them to do so through responding to the Options document and/or the Draft Local Plan.