

From: Andrew Wait
Sent: 06 December 2017 11:14
To: Local Plan
Subject: North Keynsham

I am generally in favour of this development. It is in an area which would benefit from redevelopment and does not have the blight of new housing that more built up parts of Keynsham have already endured.

I have a few comments that I hope will be helpful.

The Marina: I have been against the idea of a leisure facility in this development.

However, I believe there is an opportunity to help with affordable housing by increasing the number of houseboats on the river and in this lagoon. This can be achieved by using the space where the marina is proposed and turning it into a little canal system where there could be maybe 50 moorings for houseboats. This would help with the flooding problem and create extra affordable homes on the flood plane.

There is already a little community of houseboats surviving on the River Avon by the boatyard. This community is stable and works with the environment. To increase the number of houseboats would allow for more cheaper housing which Keynsham desperately needs.

What is undesirable are leisure crafts travelling along the River Avon disrupting and destroying the delicate environments and habitats by and in the river by increasing traffic and pollution. This is a recorded site for dragon flies in particular.

The Road System: The road by Waitrose should be part of the network. I am concerned about Avon Mill Lane, in particular the old bridge which supports the railway. With the current one way system in the High Street, there is already a back up of traffic here and this can only get worse with the new development. A solution needs to be found to make Avon Mill Lane a two carriage way road i.e. one lane in each direction.

All the building in Keynsham will increase the road traffic on the A4, particularly into Bristol. I have not seen any plan to improve this road?

Cycle Paths: I am a keen cyclist and whilst welcoming an increase in the number of cycle paths. I think it important that when considering commuter cycling rather than leisure, there are direct routes into Bristol and Bath from Keynsham. The route to Bath is fine along to Saltford, joining the path at the Bird in Hand. the only problem there is the lack disabled access. When cycling to Bristol, the railway path isn't ideal as it goes via Staple Hill and Mangotsfield which isn't much benefit for commuters who want to go to the city centre or South Bristol. A path parallel to the Keynsham Bypass would be brilliant and help the people living on the new North Keynsham site. With a few further minor improvements, there would be a safe route straight into Central Bristol and some routes to South Bristol.

I hope these comments have been helpful, I attended the consultation at The Space in Keynsham.

Andrew Wait.

-----Original Message-----

From: Terence John Walker

Sent: 07 January 2018 10:26

To: Local Plan

Subject: Local Plan.

Dear Team.

I would like to see the large number of empty properties updated and brought back into use. Also green field sites and the green belt should not be used for development as we have plenty of brownfield sites that could be used.

Regards.

T.J. Walker.

Sent from my iPad

From: Robin Campbell [mailto:wellowparishcouncil@gmail.com]
Sent: 09 January 2018 19:07
To: Planning Policy
Subject: B&NES Local Plan 2016-2036 - Issues and Options Consultation

Dear Sirs,

B&NES Local Plan 2016-2036 - Issues and Options Consultation

In response to the options for non-strategic growth in the B&NES Local Plan 2016-2036 Issues and Options Consultation, Wellow Parish Council would like no further development to be permitted in our area until the issue of road traffic and transport infrastructure is thoroughly investigated.

Option 1 would appear to be the way forward due to the fact that some of the necessary infrastructure is already in place. However, extra development around Radstock and Midsomer Norton would bring even more traffic onto the already congested A367 and combined with the proposed Sulis Down and Peasedown St John development proposals would have an unacceptable strain on the network of roads in the area.

Option 2 also appears to be a reasonable way forward but again would depend on a detailed analysis of the transport links and consequences for increased vehicle traffic to avoid impacting villages within the Green Belt.

Option 3 is not considered to be a good solution due to the lack of public transport in many villages, hence an over-reliance on cars and therefore increased traffic on unsuitable roads in rural areas.

Yours sincerely

Robin Campbell
Clerk to Wellow Parish Council
01373 834900

WHITCHURCH VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

- 8 JAN 2018

BANES PRESENTATION OF THE JOINT SPACIAL PLAN REGARDING PROPOSALS FOR WHITCHURCH VILLAGE

Please use this form to make observation on the above proposal.

Name: RICHARD SAGE (EX PARISH COUNCILLOR)
Address: 9, CHURCH LANE WHITCHURCH BS14 0HA
E-mail address: sage200@btinternet.com .

COMMENTS

on attached sheet
(Comments in conjunction with
Barnie Jones [REDACTED])

If you wish to take the form home to fill in, please return it to:
Whitchurch Village Action Group, C/O Whitchurch Parish Council, Community Centre Office,
Bristol Road, Whitchurch Village, Bristol BS14 0PT

Joint Spacial Plan for Whitchurch Village.

01 Dec 2017

Key Issues you can raise in your response. To be submitted before 10Jan 2018

The purpose of this letter is to register my objection and total opposition to the proposed Whitchurch Urban Extension.

It is very important that the green belt area adjacent to Church Lane boundary is listed Nationally. Church Lane has already been enveloped by 'Windways' and 'Staunton Fields' residential developments. These have helped increase the traffic congestion causing increased noise, pollution and access problems.

Another development will impair the countryside views and destroy the Natural Beauty of Church Lane and the approach to the historic St. Nicholas Church. I hope this proposal will be rejected and allow the residents and visitors in Church Lane to enjoy the Rural environment to which it is accustomed.

The proposal breaches the Councils own policy of protecting the Green belt and is the worst location for an urban extension to Bristol on sustainable transport grounds. If Urban Extensions are needed then other, more sustainable options, exist.

The proposal of a South Bristol Ring Road would be massively damaging to our community, would increase pollution, noise and promote unsustainable travel and would not alleviate the additional traffic caused by 3500 additional houses at Whitchurch Village. The road would damage the environment of the historic Maes Knoll archaeological site. It would be grossly costly to implement and in practical terms unlikely to be completed.

From: Tanya Whittle
Sent: 02 January 2018 16:10
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Local Plan - Issues & Options 2016-2036

Local Plan – Issues & Options 2016-2036

I object to the local plan for the proposal of 1500-2500 houses and object to the proposal of the link road.

People living and working in Whitchurch Village have overwhelmingly voted for the Green Belt to be retained. In paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework it clearly states that housing targets should not override constraints within the area. Our constraints are the Green Belt and flooding. Also the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt.

The infrastructure is limited, poor road links, no shops, little employment, no post office, doctors, and bank. Bus services are poor and not directed to areas of employment. Whitchurch Village has already been built on significantly.

Long Ashton was rejected because locals 'valued their green belt'. Were we ignored?

Bristol has brownfield sites at the now abandoned Area at Templemeads and at the old Lloyds Bank and Norwich Union Building. These should be used for Bristol's housing needs, perfect for employment. People can live and work in the city and so reduce car use, pollution, and provide a sustainable and enjoyable location.

With regards to the link Road, The South Bristol Ring road phase 3 (Keynsham to Whitchurch) was dropped after public objection so the South Bristol road (supposed to be a dual carriageway) became the South Bristol Link Road (Single carriage way). This would indicate that we were listened to. Just because the name has change doesn't mean people's views have changed. It was objected and should not even be proposed again.

B&NES proposal is unclear and not a suitable location for a link road. The diagram is unclear where the road ends as there is a grey box covering this area but it looks like it will come out onto Stoneberry Road as this is the only opening for it. The proposed road would cut through farmers' fields so cattle would not be able to roam. It would cut through adjoining fields to Lyons Court Farm which is dated 13th century and is the second oldest surviving building in Whitchurch. To suggest putting a link road in the adjoining fields would have impact on this building. Quoted from bathnes.gov.uk link on the site **“Development around Whitchurch Village near Lyons Court Farm and land below Maes Knoll and Wansdyke would impact on the significance of these heritage assets. They are of national importance as scheduled monuments.” What's changed?**

It would also be very close to residential houses so noise/air pollution levels would be dreadful. If the proposed road does come out onto Stoneberry Road, it's a 20mph zone and there is a Primary School on this road. The pavement has been slightly widened for the children to come out as the pavements are very small meaning the road is narrower at this point. The road is congested with parked cars at school times. This would become a rat run and a potentially a dangerous road. (Assumption as again unclear) from Stoneberry Road you

would then head onto Whitchurch Lane which is also a 20mph zone at points and has speed bumps. This road is already congested and houses are very close to the road. Noise and air pollution levels would be alarming. Also with this route artic Lorries would not be able to use this road.

The roads are congested. The suggested link road will only increase traffic movement through the village and also through our neighbouring village of Pensford.

Conclusion: Whitchurch has no suitable place for a Ring/Link Road to run through it. With no infrastructure for a new road, 1500-2500 houses cannot be built in Whitchurch Village. Leave the Village as a Village, leave our Green Belt to be enjoyed by agriculture, adults, children, dog walkers and most importantly nature and a village open space.

Hope we are listened to.

Regards,

Tanya Whittle.

From: Roy Williams
Sent: 08 January 2018 23:27
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Proposed New Local Plan 2016-2036

I see on the Local Plan proposal 2016-2036 that Roy Wilkins retained piece of land is on there for consultation for proposed housing development.

The reference is WELL3.

I also see Derek Barratt's paddock is on there, Ref. WELL4

I have been assured by letter and e-mail over the past couple of years that there is no intention of moving the Housing Boundary on the parcel of land to the north of Manor Close your Ref. WELL3. Or in addition that of WELL4 on the other side of Farm Lane.

I am firmly opposed to any further housing development on the land to the North of Manor Close, Wellow.

Refs. Well3 & that of Well4 LPCFS2017/JSP on the proposed Local Plan.

This land is on Green Belt and outside the Housing Development Boundary.

Farm Lane and Bath Hill is very narrow and would not support any further traffic. Farm Lane is single track highway with nowhere to pass.

It is very dangerous for horse riders and pedestrians when they meet traffic in this area as visibility is poor around the bends, that have high walls and banks each side.

This land WELL3 is adjacent to Manor Barn (Grade 2) and Manor Farm Barn (Historic Interest).

Planning permission was only granted on those barns back in the 90's subject to this adjacent land WELL3, being landscaped and not to be built on. This should not be changed.

This land is also subject to a free flowing water course from a spring on the land above. This causes flooding of adjacent properties, right down the hill to the Manor House, if not kept under control. The owner of this land has never bothered to control this water course and it has always been down to myself to keep the water course clear to stop flooding.

The owner of this land (WELL3) lives miles away in East Grinstead and has never bothered with any upkeep of it. He is only interested in developing it for pure profit.

Myself and my neighbour at Manor Farm have always maintained it including keeping the footpath clear that separates my land from that of WELL3.

In addition there is another footpath across this land that has never been officially moved.

This land is also a haven for wildlife, such as bats, birds, including woodpeckers, slow worms and badgers. It should not be destroyed and be kept in the Green Belt for the benefit of all the villagers and visitors, walking in that area.

Regards

Roy Williams

10 January 2018

Simon de Beer
Policy & Environment Manager
Planning Policy
Bath & North East Somerset Council
PO Box 5006
Bath
BA1 1JG

Spatial Planning
Economic Development and
Planning
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Dear Simon

**Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan 2016-2036
Issues & Options Consultation (Winter 2017)**

Thank you for consulting Wiltshire Council on the above document.

As this runs in parallel with the consultation on the 'West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) Publication Document' and this document forms the strategic policy context for your plan, reference is made to the JSP and similar points have also been submitted in response to its consultation.

Wiltshire Council has been involved in the preparation of the JSP, which seeks to address strategic cross boundary planning matters and continues to be so. The overarching Vision and Strategic Priorities are supported, which will help inform the Local Plan. Our continued engagement will become increasingly important as proposals are shaped within the emerging Local Plan in the context of the JSP.

The period for your plan is consistent with the review of our Local Plan, which involves joint working with Swindon Borough Council, and looks forward to 2036. The initial public consultation ended last month and a draft non-statutory Joint Spatial Framework will be published for comment later this year.

Respective strategic housing market assessments of need for Wiltshire and the West of England have been developed alongside each other and so provide a consistent basis for plan making. In particular, each assessment recognises the influence of the Bath housing market over West Wiltshire in aspects such as commuting and migration. There is agreement on the treatment of the overlapping boundaries of the Housing Market Areas (HMAs) in current and emerging Local Plans. Estimates of objectively assessed need for Wiltshire's Housing Market Areas, like the JSP, take account of employment, commuting and long-term migration trends. In developing our plans, the aim is to ensure they meet fully the objectively assessed needs in accordance with national policy.

The effectiveness of the JSP could, however, be improved by greater clarity about housing delivery within the Bath Housing Market Area (HMA), and:

- express housing requirements for the Bath Unitary Authority as requirements for the Bath HMA and Wider Bristol HMA; and

- make explicit reference to the need to keep housing land supply under close review in the Bath HMA and for the Local Plan to develop contingencies, including the release of green belt designated land to ensure sufficient supply of homes.

Wiltshire Council's main concern is to assure the demand for homes in Bath is met as much as possible within the Bath HMA. The evidence already shows significant scales of commuting to the City from rural areas including Mendip and West Wiltshire. Failing to meet Bath's needs for new dwellings would inevitably increase these levels. Air quality problems in Bradford on Avon are already serious largely because of traffic congestion in the town. The plan notes Bath & North East Somerset's average earnings to house price ratio as high as 10.5. The same ratio was 10.8 in Bradford on Avon in 2011 and it had risen to 13.8 in 2016. Falling short of housing targets for the Bath HMA will further exacerbate local affordability issues and environmentally harmful patterns of commuting.

At various points, the JSP refers to housing targets and maintaining a deliverable housing land supply. Paragraph 5 on page 19 refers to assessments of five year housing land supply based on a requirement of 102,200 dwellings, which is for the plan area. Paragraph 14 refers to demonstrating a supply in a unitary area. It would be more consistent with current national policy for the JSP to refer consistently to the need for each authority to maintain a deliverable five year land supply for each of the plan's two HMAs.

Whilst Wiltshire Council recognises that effective planning requires sensible housing market areas to follow the administrative boundary between the West of England and Wiltshire; not least because there are different plans there seems much less justification to do the same within the JSP area. Indeed, to do so would seem to negate the benefit of joint working and the purpose of a having a joint plan. It would seem more appropriate, led by the evidence, for a housing requirement for the Bath Unitary Area to be divided between requirements for the Bath HMA and Wider Bristol HMA.

The two strategic development locations proposed in Bath & North East Somerset would help meet housing needs arising in the Wider Bristol HMA. Locations for strategic contingencies provide flexibility for the same HMA not Bath. In the Bath HMA, the allowances made for additional homes for small site windfall, 'non-strategic growth' and 'urban living' (as set out in the Issues and Options consultation) indicate a much stronger dependence for the Bath HMA on existing commitments and current plan allocations and therefore possibly less flexibility.

The JSP looks to accommodate more than 82,000 jobs looking to 2036. Policy 4 identifies a number of strategic employment locations but there is no indication or expectation as to what scales of employment growth are anticipated or are possible in different parts of the JSP area. This reinforces the need to have sufficient housing supply locally.

A possible lack of flexibility in housing land supply within the Bath HMA alongside significant economic growth could therefore lead potentially to an imbalance between local housing demand and supply, exacerbating the concerns outlined above.

There is a justification therefore to be reassured that the plan will be effective and have a supply of homes for the Bath HMA capable of being delivered. It is considered that it would be prudent to keep housing land supply under close review, for the Local Plan to identify contingencies, and for the JSP to refer to the need to do so.

In our view, the consequences of failing to meet housing needs locally, such as those described above, would demonstrate exceptional circumstances justifying removal of land from green belt designation. In particular, the principle set out in Paragraph 16 of the JSP in this respect for Bath should be reviewed. Given the strategic role of green belt, the JSP should also therefore refer to this particular contingency being available within the Bath HMA.

With regard to the transportation matters raised in the consultation document, we have the following more detailed comments to make, which are set out against the specific consultation questions.

Q1. It is suggested that the following words are added to the third bullet point under 'Transport & Infrastructure':

- Difficulties of providing infrastructure capacity and service enhancements to cope with increasing population and commuting levels.

Q2. It is suggested that the following amendments are made to the spatial priority 6 'Deliver well connected places by sustainable means of transport':

- Help to manage congestion through the location and form of development, and through the use of appropriate demand management measures.
- In conjunction with strategic plans/initiatives/partners/stakeholders covering the wider area facilitate enhanced accessibility to and within the District, including rural areas.

Q5b. It may not be just site allocations and infrastructure that can have cross boundary implications. For example, measures to address climate change and air quality issues (e.g. the previous proposal to restrict non-local HGVs from using the A36 through Bath because of air quality issues), can also have cross boundary implications. Therefore, these types of issues / measures should be subject to consideration with relevant bodies such as neighbouring local authorities and transport providers.

Q18a. The walking and cycling corridor from Bath to Bradford on Avon along the Kennet & Avon Canal is a particularly important route that is in need of improvement, both for commuting and for encouraging tourism. It would also be desirable if the Bath cycle hire network aimed to eventually expand along this corridor (including connections to Freshford and Avoncliff Rail Stations) to Bradford on Avon.

Q18b. As set out in the West of England Joint Transport Study - Final Report (October 2017), financial (demand management) measures should play a part in encouraging and supporting the greater use of sustainable transport modes including public transport.

In the development of any new P&R facility to the east of Bath, while this could help reduce trips in Bath itself, it may increase trips in western Wiltshire. To help minimise this risk:

- P&R charges should be at an appropriate level against relevant bus and rail options (i.e. so as not to encourage a significant number of trip reassignments from bus/rail to P&R).
- P&R charges should be based on a per car basis and not a per person basis (i.e. to encourage car sharing).
- P&R parking management should encourage car sharers (e.g. by allocating adequate car share spaces in convenient locations in the car parks).

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our comments.

Yours sincerely



Georgina Clampitt-Dix
Head of Spatial Planning
Economic Development and Planning
Wiltshire Council



The Woodland
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Telephone
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Woodland Trust Submission Bath and North East Somerset Issues and Options – Consultation Response

As the UK's leading woodland conservation charity, the Woodland Trust's vision is for a UK rich in native woods and trees, for people and wildlife. We work to protect, restore and create native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future. We manage over 1,250 sites, including over 200 sites in the South West, and have 500,000 members and supporters.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the 'issues and options' stage of the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan and are pleased to be working with you in the area.

The Woodland Trust believes it is essential to consider, at this early stage of reviewing the local plan, the protection of woods and trees, particularly irreplaceable ancient woodland and any opportunities for woodland creation. This is important in the context of the high level of housing growth and infrastructure development that will be taking place in Bath and North East Somerset.

We have submitted a formal response to the West of England Joint Spatial Plan which emphasises the importance of protecting trees and woodland creation and these must be carried through to delivery via the West of England Joint Green Infrastructure Plan and through each constituent Local Authority's Local Plan.

Critical Issues:

We strongly welcome the inclusion of Health, Climate Change, and the protection and enhancement of the environment in the critical issues section of the Local Plan.

Spatial Priorities:

We note that these critical issues have been carried through to the section on spatial priorities and therefore strongly welcome the references to: resilience to protecting and enhancing our natural environment and providing green infrastructure; climate change, resilience, prevention and mitigation of impacts and; promotion of health and wellbeing.

Protecting our Natural environment:

Ancient woods are irreplaceable. They are our richest terrestrial wildlife habitats, with complex ecological communities that have developed over centuries, and contain a high proportion of rare and threatened species, many of which are dependent on the particular conditions that this habitat affords. For this reason, ancient woods are reservoirs of biodiversity, but because the resource is limited and highly fragmented, they and their associated wildlife are particularly vulnerable.

Their long continuity and lack of disturbance means ancient woods are often also living history books, preserving archaeological features and evidence of past land use, from earthworks to charcoal pits. They are also places of great aesthetic appeal, making them attractive for recreation and the many benefits this can bring in terms of health and well being.

With only 2.4% of the land area in Great Britain covered by ancient woodland, it is essential that no more of this finite resource is lost through development pressure or mismanagement. This means that ancient woodland must be protected absolutely from permanent clearance, but also that it must be protected from damaging effects of adjacent and nearby land-use that could threaten the integrity of the habitat and survival of its special characteristics.

The Woodland Trust would therefore like to see the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan make explicit reference to the protection of ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees outside woods, by stating that development affecting ancient woodland should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

A recent good example from Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan includes the following wording in Policy DM10:

The Council will protect and ensure the care of trees and increase canopy cover in the interests of amenity and biodiversity by:

- a. making Tree Preservation Orders;
- b. in relation to applications for works to trees, only granting consent for felling, topping, lopping or uprooting if a sound arboricultural reason is provided;
- c. adhering to the principles of BS3998 'Tree work – Recommendations' 2010 for established tree management options (including soil care and tree felling);
- d. refusing planning permission for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and
- e. encouraging tree planting to help achieve a target of 22% canopy cover by 2050. Applications for development should retain existing trees and hedgerows of amenity or biodiversity value where possible. Where development affecting trees or hedgerows is proposed, the application must be accompanied by:
 - f. an accurate survey and assessment of all existing trees and hedgerows on site in accordance with BS5837 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations)' 2012 by a competent arborist; and
 - g. details of protective measures to be put in place during the development process to ensure the health and safety of each specimen and hedgerow to be retained; and
 - h. where removal of a mature tree is proposed, a plan for replacement planting on a two for one basis and using semi-mature specimens, unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

Design in new development should have proper regard to the setting of protected trees.

Landscaping and tree planting should be integrated into new development.

Woodland Creation in Bath and North East Somerset:

The scale of proposed housing growth and infrastructure development in North Somerset can be a threat to our natural environment but, when well-planned and resourced, can also provide an opportunity to deliver green infrastructure. It is essential that there is an ambitious approach to ensuring every opportunity is taken to achieve 'net gain' for biodiversity through the planning process.

We note that a Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan is being developed across the four West of England Authority's to underpin the JSP and we would like to see Bath and North East Somerset set an ambitious vision for green infrastructure through its Local Plan review process.

The Woodland Trust believes that trees and woods can deliver a wide range of benefits, and this is strongly supported by current national planning policy. Woodland creation is especially important because of the unique ability of woodland to deliver across a wide range of benefits: - these include for both landscape and biodiversity (helping habitats become more robust to adapt to climate change, buffering and extending fragmented ancient woodland), for quality of life and climate change (amenity & recreation, public health, air quality flood amelioration, urban cooling) and for the local economy (timber and woodfuel markets and supporting agroforestry).

The **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) supports the need for more habitat creation by stating that: *'Local planning authorities should: set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure'*, (DCLG, March 2012, para 114). Also para 117 states that: *'To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:....promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan'*.

The **England Biodiversity Strategy** makes it clear that expansion of priority habitats like native woodland remains a key aim - *'Priority action: Bring a greater proportion of our existing woodlands into sustainable management and expand the area of woodland in England'*, (*Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystems services*, DEFRA 2011, p.26).

A reading of these two policies in the National Planning Policy Framework together with the England Biodiversity Strategy indicates that habitat expansion, like native woodland creation, should form a high priority for Bath and North East Somerset's Local Plan.

The levels of development proposed for the area create parallel opportunities for environmental growth, and it is essential that a range of green infrastructure should be prioritised at the outset including clear targets to increase tree canopy cover across the plan area. The Woodland Trust would like to see a strong commitment here to the expectations on developers to provide trees as part of a new development or of any regeneration scheme. Our guide to [residential developments and trees](#) may help to provide a framework.

The Woodland Trust recommends that our **Woodland Access Standard be adopted here as a measure of success**. This standard aims to ensure everyone has reasonable access to woodland – as encapsulated in our [Space for People](#) publication.

The Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard aspires that:

- No person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size; and
- There should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes

Woods make particularly outstanding green spaces for public access because of the experience of nature they provide, their visual prominence alongside buildings which offers balance between the built and natural worlds, their low maintenance costs and their ability to accommodate large numbers of visitors.

Woodland and related activities can also be valuable in promoting social inclusion. Woodland activities, such as tree planting, walking and woodland crafts, can provide a forum for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds to come together to learn about and improve their local environment.

The extensive links between woodland and health is now firmly embedded in national Government policy for health, planning and forestry –

- Health: “Access to green spaces is associated with better mental and physical health across socioeconomic groups.....Defra will lead a national campaign to increase tree planting throughout England, particularly in areas where tree cover would help to improve residents' quality of life and reduce the negative effects of deprivation, including health inequalities." Healthy Lives, Healthy People (Government White Paper, November 2010, paras 3.36-37).
- Planning: “Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.” National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012, para 73).
- Forestry: “Our trees, hedgerows, woods and forests contribute significantly to the quality of life in both rural and urban areas. Amongst other things, they enhance the local environment and biodiversity, support economic growth through regeneration, help mitigate the impact of climate change, assist in reducing air pollution and provide important health and educational benefits....The Natural Environment White Paper recognised the value and potential for green spaces to support and contribute to everyone’s health and well-being. This is being reflected in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, which underpins the new public health duty of local authorities’. Government Forestry Policy Statement (Defra, January 2013, p.16).

A recent report from Natural England highlights recent good practise in social prescribing for mental health, in particular the role of nature-based interventions (Natural England, 2017). It demonstrates the benefits of green prescriptions for mental health, wellbeing and the NHS budget. The report cites a study of social prescriptions for woodland health promotion activities for those with mental health problems in Scotland, which ranked as a ‘highly cost effective’ intervention for health by NICE benchmarks (Willis et al., 2016; Buck, 2016).

Finally on flooding, Trees and woodland can reduce localised flooding and alleviate the effects of larger floods in a variety of ways, including:

- Water penetrates more deeply into the woodland soils (higher infiltration rates) leading to less surface run-off.
- Trees, shrubs and large woody debris alongside rivers and streams and on floodplains act as a drag on flood waters, slowing down floods and increasing water storage.
- Trees protect soil from erosion and reduce the sediment run-off, which help the passage of water in river channels, reducing the need for dredging.
- The greater water use of trees can reduce the volume of flood water at source.

- Trees slow the speed at which rain reaches the ground, with some rain evaporating into the atmosphere - even in winter native deciduous trees intercept up to 12% of rainfall.

A joint Environment Agency/Forestry Commission publication *Woodland for Water: Woodland measures for meeting Water Framework objectives* states clearly that: 'There is strong evidence to support woodland creation in appropriate locations to achieve water management and water quality objectives' (Environment Agency, July 2011- <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/woodlandforwater>).

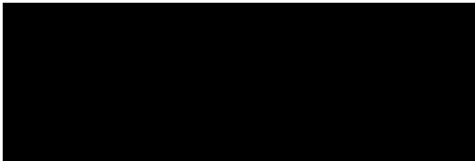
In addition to water management, trees can combat the effects of urban heat island and have a role in improving air quality.

Trees & woods can play a significant role in sustaining the landscape scale connectivity that underpins ecological resilience and helps combat climate change effects. The varied and unique habitats woodland sites provide for many of the UK's most important and threatened fauna and flora species cannot be re-created and cannot afford to be lost.

The recent announcement from Theresa May on the Northern Forest project highlights the political commitment to woodland creation.

We hope you will take these comments into consideration as part of the consultation process. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch via this email address governmentaffairs@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Brabner-Evans
South West External Affairs Officer

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