

# Concept Statement for the Ensleigh MOD site September 2012

To be read in conjunction with the B&NES Local Plan, Draft Core Strategy, other relevant planning policies and the evidence base

***The redevelopment of Bath's three MoD sites is a rare and challenging opportunity to create a series of new residential neighbourhoods in a unique World Heritage Site. It is an opportunity to boost housing supply within the city and to add to the evolution of Bath as a centre of innovative and progressive urban design.***

***Whilst the Council is seeking to make the best use of land in the city, it must also ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site are given proper consideration. Working with local communities and the development industry, the Council looks forward to achieving high quality residential areas that make efficient use of land, respond to the unique local context and integrate well with established neighbourhoods and communities.***

## Introduction

After a long and influential presence in the city, the Ministry of Defence is now leaving Bath. It has already begun to relocate staff to its site at Abbey Wood and will begin the disposal of its Foxhill, Warminster Road and Ensleigh sites in September 2012.

The Council's Draft Core Strategy has identified these sites as being critical to meeting the city's need for additional housing. The Council is committed to ensuring that the housing led redevelopment of these sites is of high quality and responds to the specific design and placemaking challenges that each presents. To help achieve this, the Council has been working in partnership

with the MoD, the Homes and Communities Agency and ATLAS to produce Concept Statements for each site. As part of this the Council has commissioned evidence that has informed our understanding of each site and has highlighted important issues to be considered and addressed by developers.

## Purposes of Concept Statements

The purposes of the Concept Statements are to summarise the Council's analysis of the sites, describe the Council's vision for their redevelopment, and to set out the design principles that will need to be met in order to realize that vision. The statements have been prepared now to inform the sale of the sites and shape the formulation of development proposals.

## Role and Status

The Concept Statements have been subject to public consultation and set out the Council's expectations for each site. Developers will need to respond to these and to the commissioned evidence, and will also be expected to engage with the public and the Planning Service in the formulation of their proposals for development.

The Concept Statements need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy.

The content of the Concept Statements will be used to inform the Council's forthcoming Placemaking Plan DPD and should be regarded as part of the preparation stage of that document. They will carry due weight as a material consideration in negotiations with developers and in the determination of planning applications.

## The Council's Vision for Bath and North East Somerset

The Council has recently revised its vision for the kind of place that it wants Bath and North East Somerset to be, putting people first and communities at the heart of everything it does. It sees Bath and North East Somerset as a place:

- Where everyone fulfils their potential;
- With lively, active communities; and
- With unique places and beautiful surroundings.

The Council has set the following three objectives, which are intended to help fulfil this overall vision. This Concept Statement responds to these objectives.

- Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;
- Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live; and
- Building a stronger economy

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## Introduction to the Ensleigh site

The site comprises 10.35 ha, and occupies an exposed and prominent location on the Lansdown plateau. It is 2.75 km to the north of the City Centre.

Aside from some residential properties to the south and east of the site, the surroundings are open in appearance. The land to the west is used as sports fields. The eastern and southern parts of the site are located on or close to the crest of a ridge, beyond which land slopes steeply toward Bath. The site is sensitive to a number of important viewpoints.

At present the dominant built form on site is of single story utilitarian blocks with one two storey block occupying the north west quadrant of the site. The remainder of the area is used for vehicular circulation and parking. The principal access is from Granville Road.



Figure 1 – Aerial photograph showing the site and its immediate context.



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## Site analysis

Achieving the most appropriate design approach will require detailed examination of the site context. Prospective developers will be expected to demonstrate, through character appraisal and a thorough understanding of the evidence base, how their proposed scheme responds to the site.

Figure 2 illustrates the key constraints and opportunities already identified through the Council's analysis of the site. Key issues include:

- Critical location within the World Heritage Site;
- The edges of the site are visually sensitive;
- Scale and massing are critical, particularly adjacent to the ridgelines;
- Setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt will need to be carefully considered;
- Peripheral location of the site requires measures to ensure greater self-containment and enhanced public transport access to the city centre.
- Grade 1 listed Beckford's Tower with important views in and out.
- Setting and character of adjacent listed buildings;
- Opportunities to improve habitat connectivity; and
- Clusters of significant trees worthy of retention. Opportunities to plant new trees within the site.

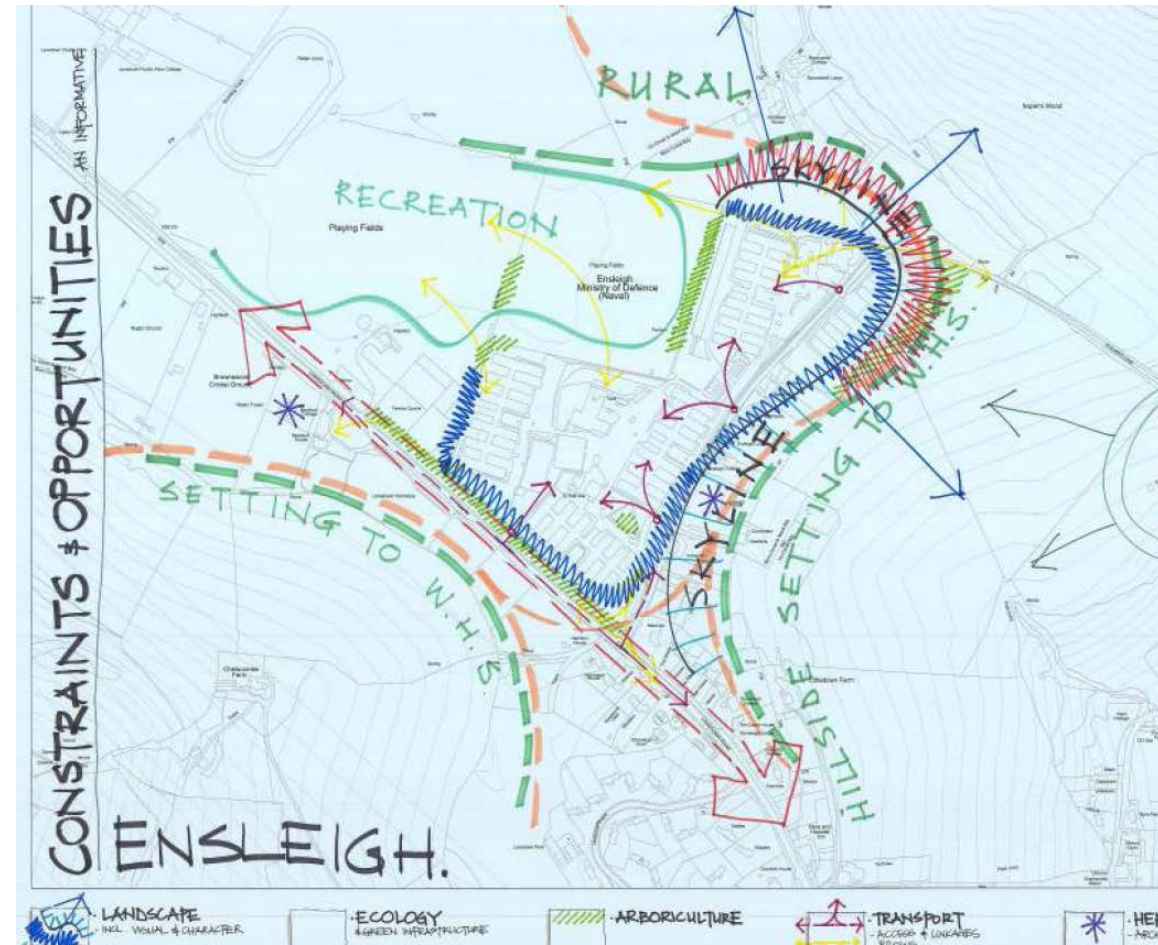


Figure 2 Initial analysis of key constraints and opportunities

The available evidence base, which supports this analysis is available at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements)

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## The Council's Vision for the site

This is a commanding site in an exposed and prominent location on the edge of the Cotswold plateau. Lying adjacent to an historic approach road into Bath, it provides an exciting opportunity and a creative challenge to provide an exceptional and sustainable neighbourhood that responds to its sensitive context.

The Council's Vision for this site is for:

- The delivery of a scheme that responds to the challenging requirements of such a visible and sensitive site; one that requires an appropriate and carefully considered response to issues of acknowledged importance.
- Development that delivers significant numbers of high quality homes and that achieves the site's full potential contribution towards meeting the city's overall housing needs.
- A housing led development that delivers viable community facilities and generates public transport demand that help to make the development more sustainable, and helps to enable people to make more sustainable lifestyle choices.

The formulation of any scheme for this site therefore demands a thoughtful and intelligent response that balances this vision and seeks to create opportunities to enable a high quality output. Given the size of the MoD site, its peripheral location and the lack of existing facilities, the aim of delivering a sustainable place requires a keen sense of the additional opportunities that there might be in the areas adjacent to the site. This is essential in order to secure a development capacity that can support the related infrastructure and facilities required to deliver a more sustainable community and lifestyle.

In this regard, it is important to note that the land to the north and west of the MoD site boundary is not in the Green Belt, nor within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (see plan below).



Figure 4 Extent of Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty shown in green and hatched area. Source: Bath Local Plan

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Spatially and when integrated with the MoD site, this enlarged area could provide the potential opportunity to enable a bolder vision to be generated, and one that in due course could more comprehensively achieve the vision for the site as set out above.

It is however an extremely sensitive location particularly in terms of landscape, World Heritage Site issues and visual impact, and part of this area is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). It also provides vital sports facilities for local schools and alternative replacement provision would need to be sought in collaboration with the owners of the land. These environmental concerns were very strongly reflected in the consultation comments received and thorough appreciation of these important considerations is of the utmost importance. Massing and visual impact studies would need to be undertaken to assess and demonstrate the impact of development on these issues of acknowledged importance.

The option of development in this area will be considered more thoroughly in the emerging Placemaking Plan.

For clarification, this Concept Statement relates to the boundary of the MoD site as indicated in Figure 1.



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Figure 5 - Illustrative concept plan highlighting the potential connectivity within the site and to adjacent area.

Key to be added

## Key components of the development

The Council expects that the development will include the following key components:

- Approximately 350 new homes in a range of types and sizes, including 35% affordable housing. The Council's aspiration is that these are built to Level 5 or above of the Code for Sustainable Homes;
- A new single form entry primary school (unless suitable alternative provision can be identified);
- Up to 2,000 sq. m of employment floor space;
- Small scale retail facilities should be sought on the site
- 1.2 ha of integrated formal open space;
- 1.2 ha of natural open space, including structural landscaping;
- 0.24 ha of allotments;
- There will be at least one vehicular access to the site from the Lansdown Road and at least one vehicular access from Granville Road.
- A financial contribution to identified infrastructure.

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## Design principles

This part of the Concept Statement sets out the Council's proposed design principles, which are intended to help prospective developers formulate scheme proposals that will realize the vision. These principles have been formulated with a view to securing high quality development. They are not, however, intended to stifle design creativity. If a prospective developer proposes an alternative approach, which would clearly meet or exceed the Council's aspirations for design quality, that approach will be considered on its merits. This qualification is intended to ensure that the design principles set out below do not preclude one-off exceptional design solutions.

These Design Principles need to be considered in the context of the Council's vision and objectives, adopted local and national planning policy, the commissioned evidence base and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy.

Developers will need to:

- Demonstrate how they have responded to the evidence base, and have addressed emerging and adopted planning policy.
- Reflect best practice as embodied in 'By Design', and achieve a 'good' standard as a minimum when assessed against 'Building for Life' criteria.
- Respond to the Council's aspiration to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 or above for all housing across the development site. A viability assessment that has considered the financial implications of development at Code 5 and above forms part of the Evidence Base for the MoD sites. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that this aspiration has been thoroughly

considered. All homes should be Level 6/zero carbon in full if being delivered after 2016.

- Undertake massing and visual impact studies at an early stage to demonstrate the impact of the quantum of development on issues of acknowledged importance. This should be undertaken to inform the development value ascribed to the site.
- Formulate a comprehensive masterplan for the whole site area, recognising that the delivery of this masterplan may be achieved in different phases.

## Layout

- The layout shall be pedestrian and cycle dominant, with excellent public transport accessibility. A 'shared space' ethos for streets and spaces should prevail throughout the site.
- The street layout and pattern of development will be expected to facilitate possible expansion into potential sites to the north and west of the MOD site, even if its delivery is deemed to not be desirable at the present time.
- The layout shall use site topography and vegetation to minimize the visual impacts of the development on the edge of the plateau in particular.
- Layout will be expected to respond positively to the fact that the eastern edge of the site in particular is highly visible from other parts of the city.
- The layout will be expected to exploit opportunities to create new views and juxtapositions, which will enhance the character of the city.
- Development will be expected to have a positive relationship with Lansdown Road, and be set back behind a continuation of the roadside dry stone wall. Individual development plots accessed directly from Lansdown Road will be strongly resisted.

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## Density and mix of uses

- The scheme proposals will be expected to maximise the potential to deliver a significant amount of new residential development on this site, subject to an appropriate and considered response to issues of acknowledged importance. It should be connected to the city centre by existing bus services.
- The scheme shall include a mix of dwelling types and sizes, and include opportunities for self-build housing.
- There is a minimum requirement on developers to provide sufficient land and to fund the construction of a 210 place school and associated facilities on the MoD Ensleigh site, unless alternative provision can be identified
- In addition to home working this site also offers opportunities for employment development. Provision of up to 2000sq m gross of employment space will be encouraged.
- Small scale retail facilities should be sought

## Landscape and ecology

- The scheme will deliver high quality green infrastructure providing good opportunities for people to access, enjoy and utilise natural spaces
- Development proposals must respond sensitively to the different edges of the sites and provide high quality semi-natural habitat within new areas of green infrastructure.
- Maintain and where possible reinforce the role this site plays in providing the hillside setting for the World Heritage Site and green skyline for the city.
- Development proposals shall also respond positively to the AONB.

- The margins of this site are of critical importance in terms of landscape and ecology, and the proposed development shall include appropriate responses.
- The developer will be expected to take steps to retain important trees on site and take opportunities to plant appropriate new trees within the site.
- Formal, informal and doorstep play opportunities will be provided within distances appropriate for age and independent play. Play areas will be provided for through the provision of an integration of playable landscape and equipment. Playable spaces within the public realm shall provide additional opportunities for the local community to engage with the site and each other.
- The scheme will be expected to be based upon well integrated and multi-functional Green Infrastructure, providing development that is permeable for both people and wildlife, and which includes appropriate provision of public open space:
  - Formal open space of 1.2 ha;
  - Natural areas, including structural landscaping of 1.2 ha;
  - Allotments 0.24 ha.
- Note that in principle some of the required open space provision could be met in areas adjacent to the site, if this can be demonstrated to properly meet needs and secure the long term protection, management and enhancement of these adjacent areas.



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Figure 6 - Development should respond appropriately to the skyline

## Density and mix

- The scheme proposals will be expected to maximise the potential to deliver a significant amount of new residential development on this site, connected to the city centre by existing bus services.
- In addition to home working this site also offers opportunities for employment development.

## Scale: height and massing

- The site is on the edge of the plateau where the scale (height and massing) of new buildings will need to be very carefully considered to avoid adverse visual impacts on the World Heritage Site and the AONB. More detail on this issue is contained in the Evidence Base.
- Building and public realm elements must be detailed well to ensure a high quality environment for all, that befits the setting of the World Heritage Site, views to and from Beckford's Tower and ensures the development will endure into the future.

## Appearance: details and materials

- Developers should select a high quality palette of materials and carefully consider detailing in the context of the World Heritage Site.
- Natural Bath stone ashlar or other appropriate high quality materials will be expected to be the dominant materials throughout the development.
- Boundary wall treatment must reflect the character of existing walls in the vicinity.
- Developers should use either dark coloured natural slate or clay pantiles for roofs - or integrated photovoltaics, and timber or metal framed windows.
- Developers should use natural stone for paving and kerbs throughout the publicly accessible parts of the scheme.
- Developers will be encouraged to create a more diverse development (in architectural terms) by making provision for self build arrangements on part of the site.

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## Historic environment considerations

- This site is within the World Heritage Site, not merely adjacent to it. The values of the WHS need to be recognised and development proposals need to respond to them positively.
- Development proposals must protect and enhance the settings of adjacent listed buildings.
- The scheme proposals will be expected to relate well to the geography and history of the city and to the edge of plateau location of this site. This should emerge from a detailed contextual analysis.

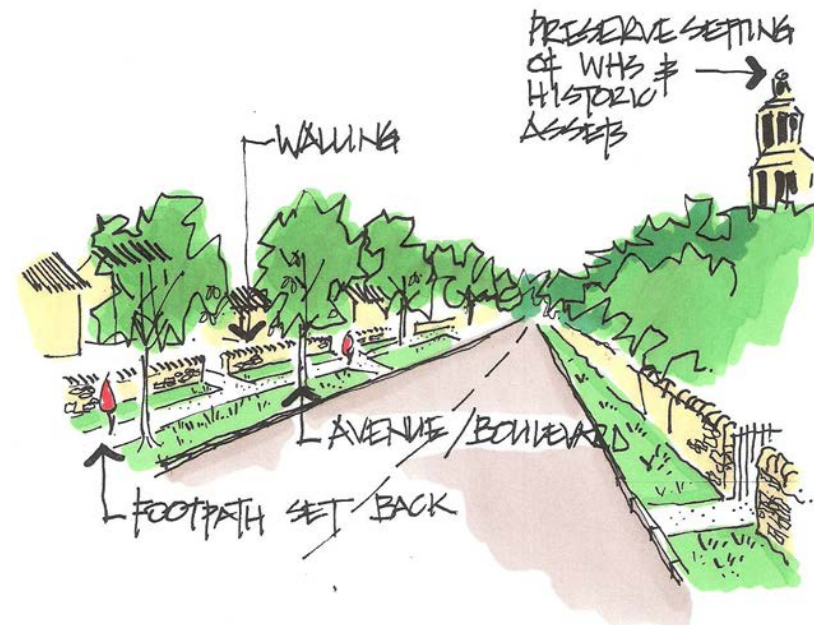


Figure 7 - Intended view along Lansdown Road.

## Access and movement

- Development proposals will be expected to include a comprehensive plan of access and movement solutions for the whole site, including the potential for accessing adjoining land.
- This comprehensive plan will be expected to make provision for buses to service the site, ensuring that all residents are within 400m walking distance of a bus stop.
- Development proposals will be expected to maximize opportunities to create new linkages in the existing network of footpaths etc through Green Infrastructure provision.
- There will be one vehicular access to the site from Lansdown Road and at least one vehicular access from Granville Road.

## Supporting facilities and infrastructure

- Development on this site will generate the need for additional primary school places, which given lack of capacity in the wider neighbourhood will require provision of a new primary school on-site.
- There is a shortfall of community facilities in the vicinity of the site and developers will be encouraged to address this shortfall in their development proposals.
- Development proposals will be expected to respond positively to the opportunity to reinforce the sports focus of the locality, looking beyond the MOD site to the adjacent playing fields and sports facilities.
- The scheme will be expected to deliver high quality green infrastructure, providing good opportunities for people to access, enjoy and utilize natural spaces.

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## Environmental performance

- The scheme proposals will be expected to include resource minimization strategies for energy and water, together with a waste reduction strategy.
- The Council's aspiration is to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 or above for all housing across the development site.
- An energy strategy should be produced that addresses the potential to reduce energy consumption through the use of high specification building fabric, passive and active solar technologies, and ground or air source heat pumps etc.
- The provision of large scale (site wide) low carbon energy infrastructure shall be considered as part of a comprehensive plan for the site. Any proposals will need to respond to the sensitive landscape character of the site.
- The designs of individual homes shall facilitate home working in order to help reduce the need for residents to travel by car to work elsewhere.
- Development on this site must maximize the opportunities to create and encourage a low carbon environment and lifestyle.
- Building and landscape design will include measures which provide on-site wildlife habitat features. For example, green roofs may be considered appropriate in some locations.
- The designing in of appropriate low and zero carbon technologies is welcome. The new school needs to be zero carbon or as close to zero carbon as possible.
- Any commercial buildings on site are to be BREEAM rated and zero carbon by 2019.
- Street lighting should be designed according to best practice. It should seek to minimise visual clutter and use low energy, whilst enabling a safe and convivial night time environment. It should be designed to avoid detrimental environmental impact including light pollution (sky glow) and light spillage onto adjacent areas.



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## Evidence Base

Evidence has been specifically commissioned to inform our understanding of the site and its context. It is not intended to be exhaustive in breadth or depth, but to highlight some of the important considerations relevant to informing the evolution of design proposals for the site.

The Evidence Base should be seen as complementary to adopted local and national planning policy, and other material considerations such as national guidance, best practice and emerging planning policy. It must also be recognised that there are inevitable tensions between the different studies that have been commissioned. It is the role of the developer team to be responsive to the issues that have been identified, and to demonstrate a reasoned and iterative response. In highlighting important issues, the evidence base should not be misinterpreted as precluding development; rather they are highlighted to enable a design response to be made.

To enable realistic site values to be established and to ensure that appropriate development proposals are generated, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of this Evidence Base and the planning policy framework against which schemes will be judged.

The Evidence Base, interpreted as a whole also provides the context for the commissioning of further detailed studies that will support proposed development. These will be identified following early engagement with the Council's Planning Service. The Council's view is that an EIA will be required for this site.

The Evidence Base covers the following key issues. This will be supplemented by other evidence as and when it is produced.

- Landscape and Visual, including
  - Ecology and
  - Arboricultural considerations:
- Bats
- Energy and Sustainability Standards
- Transport Issues
- Historic Environment, including archaeology
- Infrastructure Requirements
- Schedule of consultation comments

A summary document is also available.

These are all accessible via the Council's website, see [www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements)

## Public Consultation comments on Draft Concept Statements

All comments received during the public consultation on the Draft Concept Statements are also available on the Council's website. This provides an important resource for future landowners and developers both in their assessment of the value of the sites, and in the formulation of their development proposals. Developers will also need to be aware of these comments in light of the detailed community engagement that they are expected to undertake (see the Council's Statement of Community Involvement) in accordance with the Localism Act 2012. This process will help to enable higher quality development proposals, as well as creating a smoother path through the planning process.

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## The Process

This section of the Concept Statement summarises the process the Council expects applicants to engage in during the preparation of proposals and during the planning process. It outlines the resources it offers to applicants to enable the delivery of a managed planning process.

## The Planning Service's offer to Applicants

As part of its commitment to enabling the delivery of a smooth planning process, Bath and North East Somerset Council's Planning Service offers a comprehensive end to end range of services to applicants. This includes:

- Pre-application 'Development Team' advice review
- Enabling access to the South West Design Review Panel
- Offering Planning Performance Agreements to applicants
- Providing advice on how to step up to the requirements of The Localism Act and to engage effectively with local communities by using the B&NES Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

The Planning Service will agree a framework of pre-application and application services with the applicant that is bespoke to the needs of the proposed development.

## The Council's Expectation of Applicants

The Council will advise applicants to engage with the Planning Service from the outset. To help provide a quality of service:

- It expects applicants to conduct proposals through an agreed structured and accountable design development and planning process.
- It expects applicants to engage with local communities in shaping their proposals and demonstrate how its input has influenced proposals

For more information about the process of securing planning permission, and the Council's expectations of developer's engagement with local communities, visit <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>

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## Planning obligations

This part of the Concept Statement sets out the potential planning obligations which the Council will expect prospective developers to enter into in order to secure the necessary supporting infrastructure.

- 35% affordable housing.
- Provision of a new single form entry primary school on site (unless suitable alternative provision can be made).
- Provision of 1.2 ha of formal open space (and management and maintenance contribution).
- Provision of 1.2 ha of natural open space;
- Provision of 0.24 ha of allotments.
- Financial contribution towards new/extended bus services.
- Financial contribution towards infrastructure.
- Financial contribution to off-site Early Years provision
- Financial contribution toward Play Services
- Financial contribution to off-site Youth Services provision
- Current forecasts indicate that Secondary and Post 16 provision is projected to be sufficient, however pupil numbers will continue to be monitored and if there is projected to be a shortfall in available places in the future, a contribution to off-site Secondary and/or Post 16 provision will be required.
- Financial contribution towards provision of replacement employment provision to be allocated within the Bath area.

## Further sources of information

(DETR and CABE 2000) *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System - Towards Better Practice.*

(DETR and CABE 2001) *By Design - Better Places to Live by Design.*

(CABE 2006) *Design and access statements - How to write, read and use them.*

(CABE 2006) *The principles of inclusive design.*

(English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation 2007) *Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2.*

(DfT and DCLG 2007) *Manual for streets.*

(English Partnerships and Design for Homes 2006) *Car parking - What works where.*

Link to Council's Local Plan, Core Strategy and evidence base:

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

## Further information on the Concept Statements

For further information please contact Planning Policy on 01225 477548 or email to [planning\\_policy@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk)

These Concept Statements can also be made available in a range of languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats.