



## **Bath and North East Somerset Council**

### **Westfield Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 16 Consultation**

**Dates of the consultation: 3rd April - 15th May 2018**

The following page presents a summary, written by Officers at Bath and North East Somerset District Council, of the comments made during the Regulation 16 consultation on the Westfield Neighbourhood Development Plan, which took place between 3rd April - 15th May 2018. The summary is written to provide assistance to the Examiner and to allow anyone who wishes to see some of the issues raised. It does not contain every point a consultee has made. The Examiner will read the comments of each consultee in full.

Date	Organisation	Comments
9/4/18	Amec Foster Wheeler on behalf of  National Grid	An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Grid's electricity and gas transmission apparatus which includes high voltage electricity assets and high pressure gas pipelines, and also National Grid Gas Distribution's Intermediate and High Pressure apparatus.  National Grid has identified that it has no record of such apparatus within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
9/4/18	Highways England	Highways England is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network (SRN) which in this instance consists of the A36 which runs some distance to the north of the plan area.  We are therefore satisfied that the proposed plan policies are unlikely to result in development which will impact significantly on the SRN and we have no comments to make. However, this response does not prejudice any future responses Highways England may make on site specific applications as they come forward through the planning process, and which will be considered by us on their merits under the appropriate policy at the time
11/5/18	Historic England	I can confirm that there are no comments on the Plan we wish to make.
15/5/18	The Coal Authority	As you will be aware the Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the current defined coalfield.  According to the Coal Authority Development High Risk Area Plans, there are recorded risks from past coal mining activity in the form of 6 mine entries and areas of recorded coal mine workings at shallow depth. It is noted that the proposed plan does not allocate any sites for future development and therefore we have no specific comments to make. However, if in the future the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate sites for development in these areas then consideration will need to be given to the risks posed to surface stability in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Bath and North East Somerset Development Plan. In addition any allocations on the surface coal resource will need to consider the impacts of mineral sterilisation in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan.  In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) please continue to consult The Coal Authority on planning matters using the specific email address of <a href="mailto:planningconsultation@coal.gov.uk">planningconsultation@coal.gov.uk</a> .

15/5/18	<p>Origin3 on behalf of</p> <p>Radstock Co-Operative Society</p>	<p>These representations have been prepared by Origin3 on behalf of The Radstock Co-operative Society having regard to their land and current 'Radco' food retail store in Radstock town centre. The site lies within the Westfield NDP boundary on its eastern periphery, and represents a unique opportunity to contribute to the continued regeneration of the town centre, improve the existing public realm and to revitalise the retail and public realm experience of residents and visitors alike.</p> <p><b>The Radstock Co-operative Society Site</b></p> <p>The site is under the ownership of the Radstock Co-operative Society is roughly 3.5ha in size. It is located between the A362 Somervale Road to the north and the A367 Wells Road to the south. The existing store occupies the eastern part of the site, within the primary retail policy area of Radstock town centre. The existing servicing area and an extensive under-utilised customer car park area extends to the rear of the store to the west. The parking area is framed by existing vegetation and mature tree cover along Wellow Brook to the north, and on the western and southern site boundaries. The site falls from the south to north with the central car parking area level. A site location plan is provided at Appendix 1 .</p> <p><b>Regeneration</b></p> <p>The Radstock Co-operative Society are in the process of exploring options to safeguard the continued operation of the store by developing a new store, enhancing the public realm and the overall retail and leisure experience of the town centre. The emerging concept is for a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment of the site to comprise the demolition of the current building and its replacement with a high quality modern store alongside ancillary office, retail, café and residential development.</p>
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**Westfield Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies**

The Westfield Parish NDP communicates the aspirations for the Parish positively and appropriately, for the benefit of the local community and visitors. The Radstock Co-operative Society support the vision of the NDP specifically ‘to enhance the Parish . . . through the use of creative development’, through the ‘enhancement of amenities and infrastructure’. The Radstock Co-operative Society are committed to supporting the aspirations and objectives of the Westfield NDP and acknowledge that Westfield is ‘a parish committed to education and enterprise’. The NDP aims to contribute to sustainable development by:

- Promoting a strong and sustainable economy throughout Westfield
- Encouraging and supporting existing businesses to expand and diversify
- Reducing the need of people and businesses to travel long distances to work.

Two of the NDP economic objectives are the ‘enhancement of retail space’ and to ‘raise the quality and quantity of employment opportunities in Westfield to try to reduce out-commuting’. These economic objectives will be achieved through various policies within the NDP which are commented on below.

**Policy 10: New business development on land already in business use and providing employment**

This policy supports business development on land already in business use and providing employment which is the case for the Radco site. It is considered that the emerging concept for the Radco store entirely accords with this policy. A purpose-built, modern convenience shopping facility is proposed to replace the existing under-utilised and outdated store. In addition to the new store, the concept will deliver office space and retail / café space, to help boost local business and economic activity in the town centre.

**Policy 11: The provision of any new or additional retail floor space**

This policy supports the provision of new or additional retail space in the demarcated areas. The Radco store is noted on the policy map ‘Retail areas through Westfield’ on page 60 of the NDP. The emerging concept will serve to enhance Westfield’s shopping offer, adding to the mixture of local services and existing retail space. The concept would revitalise the shopping and leisure experience of residents and visitors by extending and enhancing the public realm and introducing an attractive variety of commercial enterprises to the town centre.

**Policy 12: Land usage proposals**

The intentions of this policy are acknowledged and welcomed as a means to retaining opportunities for employment within Westfield. The existing store is ageing, inefficient and under-utilised and therefore a new modern, purpose-built store is required. The commitment from the Radstock Co-operative Society is that there will be no net job losses within the store itself, as a result of the development proposal. The redevelopment of the site will vastly increase the quantity, quality and variety of employment opportunities available. The regeneration proposal would provide demonstrable and ongoing economic benefits to the local community. The introduction of ancillary office, retail, and residential uses are essential to enable the delivery of a high quality design with socio-economic scheme benefits for Radstock. The proposal also promotes making the best-use of redundant brownfield land in a sustainable location, co-locating a sustainable mix of uses, thereby helping to reduce commuting. It is also sequentially desirable to building on greenfield land on the edge of the towns and villages of the Somer Valley.

**Policy 20: Parking for domestic dwellings**

This policy proposes the parking standards within the Parish for new residential developments. These are proposed to be one space per 1 -bed dwelling, two spaces per 2 or 3-bed dwelling, three spaces per 4-bed dwelling and above, and half a space per dwelling for visitor parking. The policy excludes garages from the prescribed minimum standards on the basis that most people use their garage for storage. These NDP proposed parking standards are more onerous than the adopted BANES standards, which include garages and seek 0.2 spaces per dwelling for visitor parking.

In our opinion, uniformly applying parking standards across an area does not give consideration to the context and bespoke access and movement strategy for each individual site. The Radco site is a town centre site and has ease of pedestrian access to a range of employment opportunities, services and facilities. An access and movement strategy which is overly reliant on the private car will potentially undermine the use of sustainable public transport options, make it easier for out-commuting the Parish and could potentially serve to increase congestion on problematic routes such as the A367, which is highlighted multiple times throughout the NDP. It is suggested that the NDP policy is revised to reflect the standards set out in the BANES Placemaking Plan or appropriate flexibility incorporated to reflect consideration of each residential site on a case-by-case basis.

		<p><b>Summary</b>  The Radstock Co-operative Society generally supports the objectives and aspirations policies within the Westfield Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. Together we are greatly looking forward to playing a role in helping to achieve the aspirations of the community on what is a key regeneration site for both Westfield Parish and Radstock Town. The customers and members deserve a better offering and a purpose-built, modern shopping facility will enhance the town centre and public realm, protect employment opportunities and core services such as the Post Office and introduce new offerings for commercial space and town centre living. The comprehensive regeneration of the site is synonymous with the economic objectives and policies of the NDP and the aspiration to retain and enhance existing employment and retail facilities.</p>
15/5/18	<p>B&amp;NES  Planning  Policy</p> <p>Officer  Comments</p>	<p>This response sets out Bath and North East Somerset Council's Planning Policy Officer response to the Westfield Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16. They focus on ensuring general conformity between the Neighbourhood Plan and national policy and strategic policies of the B&amp;NES Development Plan.</p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Bath and North East Somerset Council Officers made comments on the Regulation 14 version of the Plan and also made further comments as the Plan progressed towards the submission version of the document. Copies of these comments are available in the consultation statement.</p> <p>Areas of concern raised at the Regulation 14 stage related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy 2 (Housing Standards);</li> <li>- Policy 9 (Economic Development);</li> <li>- Policy 20 (Parking Standards)</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>The Steering Group engaged positively with the Regulation 14 comments and Officers are now content that the concerns relating to Policy 2 and Policy 9 have been resolved and that the Plan is in general conformity with Strategic Policies from the Bath and North East Somerset Development Plan (Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan). There remains, however, some concerns regarding Policy 20 of the Plan. Further details are provided below.</p>

**Policy 2**

Officers were concerned that earlier drafts of Policy 2 lacked sufficient clarity and also evidence to support its approach and deviation from Policy H7 of the B&NES Placemaking Plan (PMP). The reworded Policy is now consistent with wording from PMP H7.

Officers are also aware that the Written statement to Parliament: Planning update March 2015, states that: “The optional new national technical standards should only be required through any new Local Plan policies if they address a clearly evidenced need, and where their impact on viability has been considered, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Guidance. Neighbourhood plans should not be used to apply the new national technical standards.”  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015>

**Policy 9**

Officers were concerned that no reference was made to Strategic Policy ED2A of the B&NES PMP in the policy, as drafted at the Regulation 14 stage. Members of the Steering Group engaged positively with B&NES Officers through meetings and have amended the policy.

Officer’s recommend a minor rewording of the first sentence of the policy to read:

“The proposed Proposals for the expansion of Westfield Industrial Estate will be supported subject to the following criteria:”

This amendment is recommended for the purposes of clarity; reflect that proposals for the expansion of the Industrial Estate are emerging and not currently subject to a planning application or allocation; and that the policy is intended to operate as a criteria based policy against which planning applications (or proposals) will be determined.

**Policy 11**

The objective of enhancing the local centre is supported by the PMP in Policy CP12 and SV1. It is considered the policy as drafted needs to be clarified to ensure that it accords with national policy set out in the NPPF, as well as policies in the PMP, relating to the Sequential Test and Impact Assessment for new retail development.

**Policy 20**

Officers remain concerned that the reworded Parking Standards policy is still contrary to Policy ST7 of the PMP. Policy 20 differs from PMP ST7 in that it excludes garages from the prescribed minimum standard and increases visitor parking from 0.2 to 0.5 per dwelling. Policy ST7 is considered to be a Strategic Policy in that it applies district-wide level and is an important component of the strategy for managing traffic and parking provision. The effect of excluding garages from the parking standards is particularly significant in relation to smaller dwellings e.g. parking provision for two or three-bed dwellings is different by a magnitude of 50% between PMP Policy ST7 and Policy 20 of the Westfield Neighbourhood Plan.

It is recognised that parking is an important issue within the Parish and that the Steering Group/Draft Plan is reflecting the strong views of the local residents, however, Officers are concerned that removing garages from the prescribed minimum standard and increasing visitor spaces would be to the detriment of good design and undermine other strategic policies within the B&NES Development Plan; PMP Policy D4 (Streets and Spaces: “c Car parking and highways design should not dominate the design of the development or the public realm”) and PMP Policy ST1 (Promoting Sustainable Travel: “reducing the growth and the overall level of traffic”; “reduce dependency on the private car”).

It is also considered that evidence for justifying this policy approach is lacking. The pictures included within the draft Neighbourhood Plan and the responses to previous consultations do demonstrate evidence of existing parking pressure within the Neighbourhood Area. Policy 20 would only apply to new development within the Neighbourhood Area. It is considered, therefore, that these existing problems would be best managed through introducing parking control measures, for example double yellow lines to keep junctions clear. Measures such as these would be outside of the remit of Planning Control/Neighbourhood Planning.



		<p><b>Additional comments</b></p>
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Informal comments received on the consultation draft plan have suggested that the title of the map on page 21 of the plan, currently worded as “Allocated housing sites” requires amending for clarity. Whilst the plan shown at 5.5/page 21 is correct in terms of the sites shown are allocated in the B&NES PMP, the description of these sites as “Allocated Housing Sites” is not correct (given some sites are allocated for uses other than housing) and should be amended to read as:

“Allocated Sites from the B&NES Placemaking Plan”.