

Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ID/3: MATTER 8 - INFRASTRUCTURE

Issue: Whether the timely delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed development is realistic and feasible.

Q1. Does the Infrastructure Development Plan demonstrate that the infrastructure required to achieve the proposed development in the B&NES Plan can be achieved without compromising the timely delivery of development?

1. The NPPF states that Local Authorities should work with other authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands; and take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas.
2. The Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) has therefore been developed as an evidence base to support the planning process and periodically updated as infrastructure programmes and individual projects progress. It is treated as a 'living document' to be amended as and when required to keep it up to date. This has required collaborative working with private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers as responsibility for infrastructure is fragmented across a wide range of public agencies, private sector bodies and tiers of government who perform regulatory as well as delivery responsibilities. The various stages of updates can be found in Appendix 1 of the IDP.
3. The IDP has been used as an evidence base in two examinations. The Core Strategy identified the essential infrastructure needed to enable delivery of the strategy; the Inspector found that Plan to be sound with the IDP providing evidence on infrastructure provision. He found no reason to believe that the infrastructure required to achieve the proposed development in the Core Strategy could not be achieved without compromising the timely delivery of development. The IDP was also used in the CIL examination. The Inspector recognised the IDP as a comprehensive assessment which draws upon significant engagement with service providers, and that the evidence the evidence provides a compelling justification for introducing a CIL regime.
4. Para 2.9 of the IDP acknowledges that financial resources will rarely meet all the identified needs for infrastructure and there will inevitably be a requirement to phase and prioritise projects. Para 2.10 states that the IDP needs to be managed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that key milestones are reached and key infrastructure is in place at the appropriate time to enable sustainable development. Para 2.11 recognises

that this is a 'moving target': public services, and the infrastructure they demand for delivery are in a constant state of flux; funding levels (and consequently legitimate infrastructure requirements) vary with political demands of the moment; and most private service providers do not plan beyond three years, and so cannot by definition be expected to know their precise requirements over the entirety of the Plan period. Para 2.12 therefore accepts that this means that infrastructure requirements as a result of growth are difficult to predict and are necessarily subject to a margin of error.

5. Since 2011 a number of infrastructure projects have been completed which have enabled the delivery of development within the district, including:
 - Bath Transport Package including Park and Ride capacity improvements
 - Greater Bristol Bus Network improvements
 - Bath Spa Station capital improvements and signal improvements
 - Cycle infrastructure at Two Tunnels and Five Arches
 - Public Realm and highway improvements at Rossiter Road / Widcombe Parade, Radstock Town Centre, Seven Dials, High Street and Stall Street
 - New ramp access to Keynsham train station
 - Floodplain storage compensation scheme and decommissioning of the gas holders at Bath Western Riverside
 - New primary school buildings at Weston All Saints, Midsomer Norton and Batheaston
 - Sixth Form accommodation at St Gregory's
 - New sports hall at Wellsway School
 - New GP surgery at Chew Stoke
 - New libraries at Keynsham and Paulton
 - Community facilities at the Victoria Hall in Radstock and Fry Club in Keynsham
 - Relocation of Manvers Street Police Station
6. This demonstrates a good track record of the timely provision of infrastructure to meet forecast demands in line with the requirements of the NPPF which has not compromised the timely delivery of development.
7. S106 agreements will continue to deliver the majority of site specific infrastructure highlighted within the Placemaking Plan and IDP.
8. The Regulation 123 list sets out the infrastructure types that it intends to fund, partly or wholly, through CIL receipts. Other funding mechanisms to complement CIL are described in para 2.25 / Figure 2 of the IDP. This will include the Council's own Capital Programme. The decision on how to spend the CIL income will be made as part of an annual process that aligns with the Council's annual revenue budget and capital programme setting. This is informed by the annual review and monitoring process as described in para 1.4 above.

9. The Council is of the view that the Infrastructure Development Plan demonstrates that the infrastructure required to achieve the proposed development in the B&NES Plan can be achieved without compromising the timely delivery of development. The delivery of various, specific, pieces of infrastructure are discussed below (traffic management proposals), and in other statements (e.g. Matter 2 – primary schools in rural areas, Matter 15 – East of Bath Park and Ride and overall parking strategy, Matter 22 – Midsomer Norton Town Park).

Q2. How are the traffic management proposals contained in Policy ST5 to be achieved and in what timescales?

10. The purpose of Policy ST5 is expressed in the supporting text para 621 in Volume 1 of the Placemaking Plan (CD/PMP/G1/1). This criterion based policy sets out the design and access parameters to guide any future traffic management proposals in order to help create a high quality public realm.
11. In support of the policies contained within the Placemaking Plan on traffic management proposals Bath and North East Somerset Council have prepared transport strategies for Bath and Keynsham that set the framework for the delivery of transport improvements including future traffic management requirements. In addition two further transport strategies are being prepared for the Somer Valley and Chew Valley areas which include the remainder of the urban centres for the district.
12. The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy (CD/PMP/B5) identifies in section 3.1 (page 9) that Bath has all the pre-conditions to be an exemplar sustainable transport city with strong public transport, a cycling culture (taking into account the topographical constraints) and a high proportion of walking trips. This, coupled with the unique built environment and development site potential, presents significant opportunities to transform the city into one where sustainable transport takes a dominant role and where traffic movement is managed more effectively. Section 3.2 of the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy (page 9) states that a key strand of the Strategy is to reduce the impact of vehicle movements through a combination of measures including better traffic management, comprehensive parking controls, expansion of park and ride and enabling people to walk, cycle and use trains and buses. With this in mind Policy GABP1 of the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy (page 12) states that a strong emphasis should be given to reducing the impact of vehicles by supporting trips that are made by means other than car, particularly walking and cycling with more people using improved bus and rail networks.
13. Specific traffic management proposals contained within the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy include the following actions:

- Action GABA10: Develop options for a Low Emission Zone to improve air quality in the city and press Government for appropriate enforcement powers to make such a zone effective if implemented. (page 17)
- Action GABA12: Develop a programme to remove traffic from the central areas of the City and reduce its impact in other areas e.g. Queen Square, Manvers Street, Dorchester Street. (page 17)
- Action GABA18: Identify need for increased Park and Ride capacity and detailed assessment of sites through the 'Placemaking Plan as part of a wider parking strategy. (page 25)
- Action GABA33: A replacement coach park should be provided at either Weston Island or Odd Down Park and Ride site. (page 31)
- Action GABA34: Develop an additional site where Coaches can drop off visitors e.g. Manvers Street/Avon Street. (page 31)
- Action GABA35: Find an additional coach parking site near to the city centre to complement the use of Weston Island. (page 31)
- Action GABA37: Work with the Highways Agency, Wiltshire and other authorities to develop proposals and strategies to remove through traffic and HGV's in particular, from Bath. (page 33)

14. Each of the individual actions listed above are currently being progressed by Bath and North East Somerset Council as follows:

- Action GABA10: Following the success of the previous Bath Air Quality Action Plan Bath and North East Somerset Council is in the process of producing a new Action Plan for Bath. The feasibility of a Low Emission Zone (or newly introduced Clean Air Zones), given the soon to be published guidance, will be considered as part of the new plan which will be consulted on during 2017.
- Action GABA12: A number of traffic management schemes have successfully been implemented in the centre of Bath, primarily as part of the Bath Transport Package. These are discussed in more detail below but have been developed in line with the guiding principles set out in Policy ST5
- Action GABA18: Bath and North East Somerset Council have undertaken a number of detailed traffic studies including updating the GBAT model to identify the need for a Park and Ride and assess the options for a potential site. Transport Evidence Explanatory Note (CD/PMP/B27) on Bath Park and Ride outlines the Council's case for the necessary expansion of the Park and Ride facilities around Bath to support paragraphs 6.22 and 6.23 in Part 1 of the Placemaking Plan. In addition the Council are committed to undertaking a detailed Parking Strategy for the authority as a whole with a view to completing this during the 2016/17 financial year.
- Action GABA33, Action GABA34, Action GABA35: Bath and North East Somerset Council are in the process of producing a Coach Strategy that will sit alongside the

authorities Parking Strategy. The Strategy will include options for a replacement coach park and pick up and drop off facilities.

- Action GABA37: Bath and North East Somerset Council continue to work with Highways England, Wiltshire Council and other neighbouring authorities to develop in partnership options for improving access for vehicles travelling from the south coast to the motorway. As part of this discussions are taking place with the Department for transport regarding the potential for an A36/A46 link road which would significantly reduce current levels of through traffic currently experienced in Bath.

15. In addition to the policies and actions contained in the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy Bath and North East Somerset Council have already successfully constructed several traffic management schemes in and around the centre of Bath in accordance with the principles set out in Policy ST5 of the Placemaking plan. These include the following:

- I. High Street and Northumberland Place public realm improvement scheme – The High Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme was completed in June 2013 and was part-funded by the Bath Transportation Package, a £27m package of measures funded by the Department for Transport.

Works commenced with the refurbishment of Northumberland Place where the space was resurfaced and new street furniture was installed. With the support of the traders, the aim was to de-clutter the space, increase footfall and improve the experience for pedestrians. Works to the High Street followed on directly after the completion of Northumberland Place. The new scheme for High Street created a more pedestrian friendly environment through the expansion of pedestrian areas and the improvement of existing signalised crossings, including an extended crossing area between the Corridor and Guildhall. Access to Cheap Street was improved with a shared space scheme for pedestrians and vehicles. New street furniture, including new bus shelters, wayfinding signage and cycle stands were also installed to finish the scheme. Together, the measures have created a more pedestrian friendly environment on High Street, enhanced the streetscape and afforded better access to public transport.

- II. Stall Street and Lower Borough Walls pedestrian improvements – The Stall Street and Lower Borough Walls pedestrian improvement scheme was completed in late 2015 and was part-funded by the Bath Transport Package access restrictions. As part of Bath and North East Somerset Council's commitment to create a safer and more attractive city centre area, reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, the authority implemented new traffic restrictions during core shopping hours (10am to 6pm) on Lower Borough Walls & Stall Street enforced through rising bollards. This section of Bath carries approximately 25,000 pedestrians per day. By reducing

vehicle traffic this section of Bath is a more pleasant space for local people and visitors to shop and socialise.

- III. Seven Dials cyclist and pedestrian improvements - The Seven Dials cyclist and pedestrian improvement scheme was completed in summer 2015 and was funded by the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition programme. Seven Dials is at the historic west gate of Bath where seven routes meet and lies to the west of the city's main thoroughfare. The Council sought to reduce congestion and allow people to move around more freely in Bath, this project has improved the area as a public space with a greater focus on cyclist and pedestrian needs through the use of shared space.
- IV. Saw Close - Following on from recent public realm improvements to the Seven Dials and Kingsmead Square area the Council is linking with the Saw Close developer to improve the public highway from the back of the pavement outside the Theatre Royal and adjoining businesses to the public realm work to be delivered by the Casino development. This £2.15m project will be part funded by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Revolving Infrastructure Funding.
- V. Rossiter Road and Widcombe Parade Improvements - The Widcombe Parade and Rossiter Road scheme is a £2.1m civil engineering led project, by Bath & North East Somerset Council completed in 2015. The project is an exemplar of civil engineering leading an interdisciplinary approach to place making. Post completion review has established the scheme has secured significant conservation and regeneration benefits founded upon a robust and successful multi-modal transportation network. The scheme delivers significant improvements that include:

Widcombe Parade and Pulteney Road South

- I. 20 mph speed limit and new pedestrian crossings.
- II. Two-way cycling connections.
- III. Improved wayfinding to help re-connect the Parade.
- IV. Improved bus stops closer to the shops
- V. Retained on-street short stay shopper parking and dedicated delivery bays
- VI. High-quality "conservation" paving throughout
- VII. New tree planting, including a large gateway plane
- VIII. New seating and bicycle parking

Rossiter Road

- I. A36 through traffic re-directed from the Parade
- II. 30 mph speed limit

- III. Signal controlled crossings linking the Parade to Bath city centre and station and safer connections to Widcombe Primary School
 - IV. Station drop-off on Rossiter Road
16. In accordance with Placemaking Plan Policy ST5 the draft Keynsham Transport Strategy contains the following objectives (page 2):
 - Minimising the future increase in traffic congestion;
 - Supporting and enabling the local economy;
 - Promoting sustainable mobility;
 - Widening travel choice;
 - Improving connections, particularly to improved rail services and the town centre;
 - Widening access to opportunities: jobs, learning, training, leisure and other local facilities;
 - Improving air quality and reducing vehicle carbon emissions;
 - Improving the quality of life for residents;
 - Ensuring that all traffic management and pedestrian schemes are designed to take mobility needs into account.
 - Maximising safety for all transport users
17. Further to the Keynsham Transport Strategy a number of additional studies were undertaken including an audit of pedestrian and cycling facilities in the town, an assessment of future car parking demand and an options report of public realm improvements for Keynsham High Street. The Public Realm report included several options for improvements to Keynsham High Street and as part of a wider feasibility approach an experiment of the preferred option is due to be put in place during 2017 using temporary Traffic Regulation Orders in order to monitor the effects of such a scheme before any measures are implemented in the longer term. The public realm improvements will respond to the principles and parameters contained in Placemaking Plan ST5.
18. As part of a £1m grant provided by Central Government a number of regeneration improvements have been made to Radstock's Town Centre. The works included a new road layout to reduce levels of congestion, improvements to the public realm and resurfacing of The Street and Fortescue Road combined with new paving. The new road layout supports the creation of more than 40 new jobs and will generate £1.6 million for the Somer Valley area.
19. Bath and North East Somerset Council will continue with its commitment to making improvements to its streets and places in line with Placemaking Plan Policy ST5 in the centre of its towns through better management of traffic on the highway network.