

Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ID/3: MATTER 12 - SITE ALLOCATIONS IN BATH

Issue 1– whether the strategy for site selection is the most appropriate when considered against the reasonable alternatives, having regard to the evidence to support the selection of allocated sites?

Q1. Does the evidence support the selection of the allocated sites, when considered against any reasonable alternatives and having regard to deliverability considerations?

In particular, do the site allocations have regard to flood risk and the need to ensure development in vulnerable areas is safe whilst not increasing flood risk elsewhere?

1. The selection of the allocated sites in Bath and the consideration of reasonable alternatives was explored in the Placemaking Plan Options document (CD/PMP/G7). The 'Rationale for Land Use Options within the Central Area and Enterprise Area' (CD/PMP/B1) was produced to accompany the Placemaking Plan Options document. In this, various land use options for different sites were considered to explore different spatial strategies for allocating sites within the Central Area & Enterprise Area for mixed-use development to deliver the headline land use objectives of the Core Strategy (CD/PMP/G6). It was also informed by the Bath Enterprise Area Masterplan (CD/PMP/B2) that was commissioned by the Council.
2. In the production of the Options as well as the Draft Placemaking Plan further evidence was used as set out below. As set out in the Council's Statement in response to Matter 2, Issue 1 Q1 g-j) (BNES/PMP/002/3) the demand for land use is greater than the supply.
 - a. Housing Land Supply Report (CD/PMP/S3)
 - b. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (CD/PMP/S4)
 - c. Office Market Review (CD/PMP/DM23)
 - d. Bath Hotel Futures Study 2015 (CD/PMP/B12)
 - e. Retail Study 2014 Stage 1 and 2 (CD/PMP/DM14 & DM15)
 - f. Industrial Market Review (CD/PMP/DM18)
3. With this body of evidence it was clear that there is little choice over whether to select sites for development or not; all available sites are required to enable the delivery of a range of land uses to meet future development requirements. Locations within the City Centre were under the most competition for re-use.

4. When considering the mismatch between the demand for different uses (as identified in the evidence base) and the lack of sites to meet the objectively assessed needs, the allocation of sites to accommodate those uses is seen as the most appropriate strategy.
5. In addition the site allocations in the Draft Placemaking Plan are proposing a mix of land uses that has been demonstrated to be viable, and which are in accordance with the placemaking objectives of the Core Strategy and the Placemaking Plan.
6. The formulation of the most appropriate strategy therefore entailed deciding the best mix of uses and capacity for each available development site, not which sites should be selected. In light of the NPPF requirement to seek to fully meet the needs of development and to plan positively, not to use all the available development locations was not considered a reasonable alternative.
7. The Sustainability Appraisal (CD/PMP/G9) also considered alternative options at each stage in the plan preparation process, as described in the SA extract below:

3.6 Through the process of preparing the draft Plan more options were suggested and some options became less relevant due to changes in circumstances such as market change, site availability and changes in national guidance. Therefore relevant options were reviewed taking into account the objectives of the Core Strategy and emerging Placemaking Plan Policies. The appraisal of alternative options is presented in Annex C.

3.7 Therefore, Alternative Options appraisals (as reported in Annex C) helped to inform the draft Plan. The appraisals of the draft Plan policies are presented in Annex D.
8. The basis for the Council's preferred mix of uses on the different available sites in the central area/Enterprise Area is explained in more detail in the Council's Statement in response to Matter 2, Issue 1 (BNES/PMP/0002/3).
9. Flood risk was taken into account through the selection and consideration of alternative sites. The Core Strategy (July 2014) sets out the growth level and general growth area applying a sequential approach to flood risk. The general growth areas identified in the Core Strategy are within various different flood risk zones, therefore a sequential approach within the policy areas was taken when deciding on specific site allocations in the draft Placemaking Plan.
10. B&NES Flood Risk The Sequential and Exception Tests (Nov 2015) provides detailed analyses. http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Planning-and-Building-Control/Planning-Policy/Placemaking-Plan/flood_risk_sequential_test_report_nov_2015.pdf

11. In addition all of the site allocations have been subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal (CD/PMP/G9/2), and have been appraised against agreed objectives. Objective 10 relates to flood risk and, together with the appraisal questions, is reproduced below:

Table 5: Placemaking Plan Revised SA Framework	
SA Objectives	Appraisal questions/prompts (Does the policy/option lead to...)
Objective 10: Reduce vulnerability to, and manage flood risk (taking account of climate change)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development which supports and corresponds with appropriate flood risk management guidance including applying a sequential approach and policies for any form of flooding including surface water flooding?

12. The affected site allocations all contain an appropriate policy clause to ensure that development is safe (for example by raising floors) and does not increase flood risk elsewhere (for example by ensuring no net loss of floodplain storage).
13. Table 10 of the Sustainability Appraisal (CD/PMP/G9/2) provides the summary results of the draft Plan appraisals, whilst Annex D (CD/PMP/G9/6) contains the full Draft Plan Appraisals.

Q2. Are the development requirements and design principles for the site allocations positively prepared, justified, effective and in accordance with national policy?

14. To inform the production of the Placemaking Plan, the Council commissioned a suite of further evidence to complement the existing body of evidence related to the city’s heritage assets. These include, but are not limited to, the following documents:
- a. WHS Attributes (CD/PMP/B8)
 - b. WHS Setting SPD (CD9/W1)
 - c. Bath City-Wide Character Appraisal(CD4/UDL1)
 - d. Building Heights Strategy(CD/PMP/B8)
 - e. Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals(CD/PMP/B13/1-6)
 - f. Morphology Study (CD/PMP/B3)
 - g. Historic Overview of Development Sites (CD/PMP/B6)
 - h. Green Infrastructure Strategy(CD/PMP/G27)
 - i. Public Realm and Movement Strategy(CD4/UDL13)
 - j. Pattern Book (CD/PMP/B14/1-3)
 - k. Bath Enterprise Area Masterplan (CD/PMP/B2)
 - l. Natural Environment Evidence Base for the Enterprise Area Masterplan (CD/PMP/B11)
 - m. Bath Building Height Strategy (CD4/UDL2-5)

15. This evidence base has informed the preparation of the development requirements and design principles for the site allocations. These were consulted on at the Placemaking Plan Options (CD/PMP/G7) stage, which considered reasonable alternative options for the proposed site allocations.
16. The B&NES Viability Appraisal (CD/PMP/S2) tested the financial viability of a range of options for each of the site allocations. Based on this assessment, the site allocations coupled with other requirements emerging from other development management policies are realistic and deliverable, and are effective and in accordance with national policy.
17. The Council considers that the development requirements and the design principles have been positively prepared. As described in the Council's Statement to ID/3: MATTER 1 - PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:
 - a. The Placemaking Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol (Statement of Community Involvement) adopted in 2012 and updated in 2014 (CD/PMP/G17).
 - b. The Council is satisfied that the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 have been met. The Regulation 18 Consultation Statement (CD/PMP/G12) and the Regulation 22(1)(c) Consultation Statement (CD/PMP/G13) show how public engagement and consultation have been undertaken in accordance with the 2012 Regulations and the Neighbourhood Planning Protocol (CD/PMP/G17) and how the comments received have been taken into account in the preparation of the Placemaking Plan. The Council's response to Question 4 in ID/1 provides further clarification on the procedural requirements for publicity regarding the alterations to the Core Strategy (BNES/PMP/001). See also the Legal Compliance Checklist (CD/PMP/G15) and Soundness Toolkit (CD/PMP/G16).
 - c. The Council has produced a Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate (CD/PMP/G14) which details how it has met its duty under Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in relation to the Placemaking Plan.

Q3. Should Policy SB4 include hotel use?

18. The allocation of specific land uses on sites is the result of an assessment of the relevant evidence base. This is both in terms of the quantum of development, through an understanding of the qualitative requirements of different types of development and the characteristics of different parts of the city. This was tested through the Placemaking Plan Options document (CD/PMP/G7).

19. The Council has also agreed, in recognition of the lack of available land, to prioritise residential and office development over other uses. Part of the city centre and Central Area are within the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area (EA) which is part of the West of England City Deal agreed with Government. The main focus in the EA is the delivery of economic and employment growth with up to 9,000 jobs planned to be delivered by 2030.

20. SB4 Bath Quays North is identified as an area where a sufficient critical mass of B1 floorspace is necessary, as informed by the Bath Enterprise Area Masterplan (CD/PMP/B2) and to realise the Council's economic strategy. Whilst it is plausible that a hotel could have been included in the site allocation, the view was taken that residential use would be more appropriate to ensure delivery of the site, as well as ensuring the delivery of a priority land use.