

Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan

Somer Valley (Part 4)

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO ID/3: MATTER 20 – Economic development

Whether the policies contained in the Placemaking Plan would secure the delivery of around 900 net additional jobs in Somer Valley area?

The Core Strategy outlines a requirement to plan for around 10,300 additional jobs (net) between 2011 and 2029. For reasons of sustainability the spatial strategy is to focus most of this job growth at Bath and then Keynsham and the Somer Valley (principally the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock), with only limited job growth being directed towards the rural areas.

Q1. Will the Placemaking Plan secure an overall increase in office floorspace from about 31,000m² in 2011 to about 33,700m² in 2029?

1. The Placemaking Plan allocates sites for office development in sequentially preferable locations. Mixed use development sites in town centres - SSV1 (Central High Street Core), SSV 2 (South Road Car Park), SSV14 Charlton Timber Yard and edge of centre site - SSV4 (Former Welton Manufacturing site) would facilitate new office floorspace. This will be further supplemented by out of centre site - SSV9 Old Mills Industrial Estate.
2. The Somer Valley has also been confirmed by DCLG as part of a designated Enterprise Zone. A business case has been submitted to government setting out the sites to be covered by the EZ which includes the sites referred to in Paragraph 1. The proposed EZ has a strategic fit with the West of England Strategic Economic Plan, the B&NES Economic Strategy (2014-2030) and Central Government's growth agenda. The Somer Valley element of the proposed Zone will, by promoting local employment growth, focus on the sustainable development of the area. Through the expansion of high value, light industrial and manufacturing uses and the provision of space for advanced engineering, high tech and low carbon technology companies, . The Council is expecting to receive the decision in November. A final business case will be submitted in November 2016 with implementation commencing in April 2017.

Q2. Will the increased office and industrial / warehouse floorspace be focussed at the locations identified in Policy SV1 3(b)?

- 3 Yes, the increased office and industrial warehouse floorspace will be facilitated by new employment site SSV9 Old Mills (on the edge of Midsomer Norton but within Paulton Parish) and the policy framework that protects existing industrial uses and supports additional

provision within identified strategic and other primary industrial estates. Their strategic importance is confirmed through the Industrial Market Review (CD/PMP/DM18) and together with the sites in MSN & Radstock town centre they will act as the main focus for job growth in the Somer Valley

Q4. Are the employment sites the most appropriate when considered against the reasonable alternatives?

4. The Placemaking Plan, through its site allocations and Development Management policy framework will facilitate provision of the necessary job growth in accordance with the spatial strategy (see also statement on Matter 2 relating to overall approach).
5. The broad principles and locations were set by the Core Strategy Policy SV1, SV2 and SV3. Through the identification and allocation of employment sites, the Placemaking Plan applied the sequential approach to the office development and utilised existing successful industrial estates, in consistent with Policies ED2A and B. The allocation of employment sites with site specific requirements provide further guidance and supplement the CS framework. The site allocations were also informed by the Sustainability Appraisals (CD/PMP/G9/6).
6. It is worth noting the progress made for the allocated employment sites as below.
7. **Policy SSV1 Central High Street Core and SSV2 South Road Car Park:** The Council and Midsomer Norton Town Council have jointly appointed a Midsomer Norton Project Officer specifically to progress key sites in the town centre including these sites. The Project Officer is progressing various tasks including investigating land assembly feasibility and town centre public realm & retail frontage improvement projects.
8. **Policy SSV4 Former Welton Manufacturing Site** The outline application (16/02607/OUT) for a mixed use scheme has been submitted in late May following a pre-application consultation (16/00018/PADEV). This mixed-use redevelopment includes approx. 3,730 sq. metres of offices (B1), light industrial (B2), convenience store and public house (A1, A3, A4 and A5, C1, Sui generis). It is due to be determined in September 2016.
9. **Policy SSV9 Old Mills Industrial Estate:** The land is allocated primarily in order to provide a long term supply of new employment land and to boost jobs in the area to address the high levels of out-commuting and forms an important site in the Bristol, Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.

10. **Policy SSV14 Charlton Timber:** the application (15/02944/FUL) for the regeneration and conversion of existing Charlton Timber Centre into 6 units to be used under Use Class A1-A5 was permitted in April 2016.

11. Therefore the Council considers that the employment sites allocated are the most appropriate when considered against the reasonable alternatives.