

Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-2026
Methodologies for Urban Capacity and Urban Extension Capacity Studies for
Bath & North East Somerset

INTRODUCTION

In order to test the capacity of areas in Bath & North East Somerset identified in the First Detailed Proposals (September 2005) and Draft RSS (submitted to Government May 2006) various capacity studies have been carried out. These cover both the capacity of existing urban areas, areas of search for urban extensions and the remainder of the District for the 2006-2026 period. The capacity studies were initially mainly environmental based assessments and this was followed by a sustainability assessment of the possible urban extension options.

Appendix 1 sets out the methodology for assessing urban capacity/potential in the Bath, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Keynsham urban areas;

Appendix 2 sets out the methodology for assessing potential urban extension capacities for the south east of Bristol and south/south west of Bath.

Appendix 3 sets out the methodology used for the sustainability assessment of the possible locations for urban extensions.

Appendix 4 sets out notes on the assessment of capacity for development in the remainder of the District.

**Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026:
Methodology for assessing urban capacity**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The urban capacity assessment work has been undertaken in response to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It builds upon previous urban housing capacity studies undertaken by the Council and will provide an estimate of the potential of the urban areas within Bath & North East Somerset to accommodate additional housing and employment development during the period from 2006 to 2026.
- 1.2 The main purpose of this work is to input into the preparation of a housing supply trajectory for Bath & North East Somerset and the West of England for the RSS period. Within this main purpose it serves four sub-purposes:
- to act as an initial assessment of the likely viability of the proposals being put forward in the draft RSS
 - to provide a fuller statement of viability, linked to more detailed site/area assessments, for the Examination in Public (EIP) of the RSS
 - to highlight the anticipated pattern of housing supply over a 15-20 year period as a means of:
 - (i) identifying supply issues, including infrastructure provision; and
 - (ii) prompting discussion and action on measures needed to correct any problems in order to manage the supply of housing land
 - to input into UA local development frameworks, in particular core strategy documents and site allocation development plan documents
- 1.2 The draft RSS also outlines job growth levels that need to be accommodated. In order to inform the Council's response to this aspect of the draft RSS the urban capacity work also examines the potential of the urban areas (Bath in particular) to accommodate some or all of this forecast job growth.
- 1.3 The Council has prepared and endorsed a 'Vision for Bath' and is undertaking work on developing a 'Vision' for Keynsham and Midsomer Norton and Radstock. This urban capacity assessment supports and examines the delivery of these 'Visions', which in relation to Bath will result in significant change to the city centre and its fringes.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This urban capacity assessment broadly utilises the methodology used in carrying out the Council's previous urban housing capacity studies (which was last published in 2004). However, given the strategic nature of this assessment certain elements of this methodology have been altered. The

methodology still broadly reflects the approach set out in government guidance 'Tapping the Potential: Assessing Urban Housing Capacity – Towards Better Practice' (September 2003). In December 2005 the ODPM issued draft practice guidance on Housing Land Availability Assessments (HLAAs). The implications of the approach set out in this draft guidance to the methodology used for this study, as well as its conclusions, will need to be assessed during the lead up to the RSS EIP in spring 2007.

2.2 The study followed the four main stages of assessment set out in 'Tapping the Potential':

1. identification of the capacity sources - identify the urban areas to be assessed and consider all potential sources of housing
2. surveying that capacity - utilise existing data and develop survey methodologies to identify opportunities for additional housing
3. assessing the yield - estimate the theoretical potential number of units that can be accommodated from the sources identified
4. discounting the potential - make judgements on the target dwelling numbers that might be brought forward from the potential or theoretical capacity within the time period of the study.

Identification of urban areas and capacity sources

2.3 The urban areas covered by the UHCS are:

- Bath (identified as a Strategically Significant City and therefore a focus for future development in the draft RSS)
- Keynsham
- Midsomer Norton and Radstock (Norton-Radstock)

Land located within each of these built up areas was included in the assessment. Land adjoining the urban area of Bath and Bristol has been assessed separately in examining the capacity and location of potential urban extensions (see Appendix 2).

2.4 A range of sources of potential housing opportunities have been assessed, namely:

1. previously developed land and/or buildings now vacant; including derelict land and buildings, and abandoned and unoccupied buildings;
2. vacant land not previously developed;
3. redevelopment of existing housing;
4. redevelopment of other existing uses;
5. development of car parks where under-utilised;
6. conversion of commercial buildings;
7. living over the shop;
8. intensification and development in existing residential areas;
9. sub-division of existing housing;
10. re-use of empty homes.

Surveying the capacity

- 2.5 The approach is primarily based on identifying and assessing individual sites. The identification of sites makes use of existing data sources including the National Land Use Database, Residential and Employment land surveys and Retail surveys.
- 2.6 The exercise of identifying sites covers the whole of the urban areas and has also focused on priority areas which have been examined in detail. These are areas where urban change is considered most likely to happen and as such where opportunities are most likely to arise. The priority areas include:
In Bath: Bath city centre, Moorland Road district centre, Western Riverside and Upper/Lower Bristol Road employment areas
In Keynsham: town centre
In Midsomer Norton and Radstock: the two town centres and their fringes and the major employment areas e.g. around Westfield
- 2.7 The Council's previous urban housing capacity studies sought to identify and assess potential 'large' sites (i.e. those sites theoretically yielding 10 or more dwellings). These sites make up source categories 1 to 5. Small sites (source categories 6 to 9) were treated separately, as the detailed identification of such sites represents a time consuming and resource inefficient exercise given the likely yield and inability to influence their delivery. Estimates of housing capacity likely to come forward from small sites were derived from an assessment of overall potential, analysis of past completions and the impact of changing planning policy assumptions.
- 2.8 The assessment undertaken updates the position on the previously identified sites and identifies and examines additional opportunities. This entails:
- incorporating new planning permissions
 - reviewing recent developments affecting other previously identified sites/areas, or adjacent sites
 - estimating potential dwelling outputs from new potential sites/areas
 - referring to and including the results of any new site briefs and other documents
 - considering any changes in local policies which might affect dwelling potential
 - reviewing density assumptions, utilising (where relevant) the indicative density ranges included in draft PPS3 Annexe C
- 2.9 These processes are explained in the stages relating to surveying the yield and discounted capacities below, as well as in the 'Results and Conclusions' document.
- 2.10 A different approach to previous studies has been used in estimating the potential contribution from new sites/areas. Given the strategic nature of this assessment and the long time period to which it relates the focus has been on identifying and assessing significant new future development opportunities as opposed to all new potential 'large' sites. The additional capacity likely to arise from windfall sites (both small and large) has therefore been estimated having

regard to past trends and also an analysis of potential from likely sources and areas. This is considered more appropriate given the difficulty of identifying the full range of potential ‘windfall’ sites that might come forward over a twenty year period.

Assessing the yield

- 2.11 The identification of ‘theoretical potential’ for new housing within the wide range of opportunities identified is fundamental to a wide and proactive consideration of ‘urban potential’. The approach ensures that sites and potential capacity are not excluded at an early stage before proper consideration is given to relevant factors and policy judgements made. This will for example ensure that sites not currently allocated for housing are re-appraised and the various options in relation to such matters as the density of development are considered.
- 2.12 The theoretical capacity of each site has been calculated by using minimum net density multipliers which comply with the density ranges set out in draft PPS3 (Annex C) and are set according to the sites’ location. These are as follows:

City/town centre site	= 100 dwellings per hectare (dph)
Urban site (with good public transport accessibility)	= 60 dph
Suburban sites	= 45 dph

It is important to note that the above densities are minimum figures solely used for the purposes of calculating theoretical capacity. They do not constrain higher densities being achieved where detailed site assessment shows this to be appropriate. Therefore, in certain instances the target capacity may be higher than the theoretical capacity, whereas in other cases it could be lower as a result of various factors.

Discounted capacity

- 2.12 The final stage of the study is the assessment of how much of this theoretical housing capacity (if any) is likely to be brought forward and when it might be developed. This provides an explanation and understanding of the relevant factors that limit the suitability and/or availability of a site for residential development either in whole or in part. This is a judgmental process, but it is important that it is explicit and not limited by past trends. It is also at this stage of the capacity study that the potential for accommodating employment uses as well as housing is considered.
- 2.13 Target (or discounted) housing capacities for individual sites are shaped by a variety of factors. In summary these factors include:

- the demand and need for other uses within each urban area;
- the physical, environmental and social infrastructure needed to support additional housing;
- the environmental impacts of development on the immediate and the wider area;
- accessibility considerations (both vehicular and alternative modes); and
- site developability, including market viability

2.14 In making judgements about the suitability and capacity of sites it important that the use or mix of uses they could accommodate is fully considered. This process is informed not only by the individual site characteristics, context and location, but by the strategy for shaping the future of the settlement in question. As such the urban capacity assessment is an examination of development potential set within a framework of securing the long term sustainability of the District's urban areas.

Strategy for urban areas – economic role

2.15 As stated above the process of assessing development potential entails making assumptions about a range of uses that need to be accommodated within an urban area (see 'Results and Conclusions' document). It is particularly important that account is taken of the future economic role and health of each settlement. The draft RSS outlines forecast job growth levels that need to be accommodated. In assessing the capacity of sites to accommodate development account must be taken of this job growth and the implications of seeking to accommodate it. Therefore, the process of assessing the capacity of identified sites (particularly in Bath) includes an examination of their potential to accommodate employment uses.

2.16 Information on alternative job growth forecasts is also available, including West of England economic forecasting work undertaken by the Joint Strategic Planning & Transportation Unit (JSPTU) and other studies commissioned by the Council, and the implications of these alternative forecasts need to be tested.

Bath

2.16 With regard to Bath the draft RSS suggests that between 2006 and 2026 the City should accommodate 6,000 dwellings within the existing urban area and forecast job growth of 16,000 – 20,000 jobs in the Bath Travel-to-Work Area should also be accommodated. The capacity of Bath to accommodate both significant housing and job growth (based on the RSS and other economic forecasting work by the JSPTU) needs to be assessed.

2.17 In order to assess urban capacity and the implications for Bath and potential urban extensions to the City, three broad 'job growth' scenarios have been used. These are:

1. Trend based forecast job growth
2. Forecast job growth based on 2.8% GVA (in line with the West of England Partnership's First Detailed Proposals and lower end of the RSS forecast)

3. Forecast job growth based on 3.2% GVA (in line with upper end of the RSS forecast)
- 2.18 The forecast job growth is broken down into broad employment sectors. Employment densities (set out below) are then used to estimate the likely floorspace and land take of this forecast job growth. The employment densities used are extrapolated from the Employment Densities Guide produced by Arup Economics & Planning for English Partnerships, and are as follows:
Industrial = 32m² per job
Office = 25m² per job
Other (non-business space) = 20m² per job
- 2.19 The analysis underpinning these three scenarios and results of the assessment are set out in the 'Results and Conclusions' document.

Keynsham and Norton-Radstock

- 2.18 In relation to Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock the Council has commissioned Ernst & Young to carry out economic analysis to assess their current and future economic role. The initial conclusions of this work have, as far as possible, been used to inform policy judgements relating to employment land supply and therefore, capacity for additional housing and potential land take of likely job growth. Given that the Ernst & Young work is still being finalised further refinement of the capacity assessment, particularly employment capacities, will be necessary during the lead up to the EIP.

Viability and marketability factors

- 2.19 Government guidance emphasises the importance of ensuring that viability and marketability factors are properly considered in order to ensure that the estimated capacity is deliverable. As such joint assessments or at least consultation with development interests e.g. the House Builders Federation (HBF) is encouraged.
- 2.20 In co-ordinating urban housing capacity studies across the West of England the JSPTU commissioned DTZ Pinda Consulting to provide economic and market advice. Although completed about 5 years ago this study provides useful information on future market prospects for residential development in each urban area, the impact of land values for competing alternative uses, and the marketability and viability of providing different types of housing in different parts of the urban areas studied. This study therefore provides a useful context for considering viability and marketability factors in the assessment of site capacity.
- 2.21 In relation to Bath it should also be noted that significant elements of the urban capacity assessment have drawn on and reflect the conclusions of the 'Vision for Bath' work. The assessment of and proposed uses and capacities

of sites within the 'Vision for Bath' is underpinned by economic and viability analysis.

- 2.22 Due to time constraints further assessment of economic factors and the involvement of the HBF and/or other development interests can not take place during this stage of the assessment i.e. during the RSS consultation period. However, in the lead up to the RSS EIP (due to take place Spring 2007) it is anticipated that further attention will be paid to these factors. Consideration will be given as to how this is best achieved in light of emerging government guidance on HLAAAs.

Delivery and Phasing

- 2.23 In addition to the planning policy framework and development viability/market factors the delivery of sites is influenced by other factors including the additional infrastructure requirements. The estimation of urban housing capacity has therefore included an initial strategic assessment of potential infrastructure requirements focussing particularly on the key issue of transportation infrastructure.
- 2.24 Given knowledge of the potential constraints to development (including infrastructure requirements) an estimation of the likely timing of delivery of housing capacity has been made, with the RSS 20 year period broken down into four 5-year periods. Further more detailed work on the delivery and phasing of development in order to establish a development programme will be undertaken during the lead up to the RSS EIP.

3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1 The results of the urban capacity assessment, including an explanation of the assumptions which underpin the policy judgements made, are set out in a separate document: 'Bath & North East Somerset Assessment of Urban Capacity 2006-2026: Results and Conclusions'. The capacity is summarised for each urban area in a tabular form which broadly reflects the format used for the assessment by Baker Associates on behalf of the SWRA.

**Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026:
Methodology for assessing urban extension capacities**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The First Detailed Proposals (September 2005) and Draft RSS (May 2006) identify areas of search for urban extensions. Locations include south/south west of Bath and adjoining south east Bristol.
- 1.2 Appraisals of potential urban extensions were carried out in two stages. Stage 1 carried out in June 2005 was an initial assessment of the impact and capacity of broad areas of search (first identified for Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) Testing purposes) to accommodate an urban extension. Stage 1 studies relied mainly on desk top data collection. However, because of the potential impacts of an urban extension on the setting of the City of Bath World Heritage Site a more detailed landscape and heritage assessment involving site surveys was carried out for areas adjoining south/south west Bath. The methodology for these studies which refined the broad areas of search to potential urban extension locations is set out over leaf (studies A and B).
- 1.3 Stage 2 (Urban Extension Environmental Capacity Appraisal) focussed on environmental and urban design opportunities and constraints and was a more detailed appraisal (including desk top and field studies) of more specific areas of search/potential urban extension locations.
- 1.4 The following pages set out the details of the methodology used for stages 1 and 2.

2.0 Stage 1: Review of Capacity of Broad Areas of Search for Urban Extensions

A) Initial Desk Top Assessment - Urban extensions south/south west of Bath & south east of Bristol

2.1 In June 2005 it was agreed that each West of England UA would review the potential/capacity of areas of search for urban extensions within its area, as identified in the GBSTS land use Test F/6. The agreed approach was:

1. Identify gross areas for further investigation (within the broad area of search), having regard to:
 - National and international environmental designations (as applied to the identification of broad areas of search for sustainability assessment and GBSTS testing) and distance from urban areas.
 - Strategic Sustainability Assessment criteria and findings of the SSA workshops (as described in the schedules and summary note previously circulated covering environmental, social, economic and accessibility/connectivity criteria and green belt functions).
 - Additional information on physical constraints (e.g. areas of filled, mined or unstable land, protection zones, etc.) and other issues that may need to be addressed (e.g. power lines).
 - Impacts on local landscape character areas, as defined in adopted or emerging Local Plans; described in specific and objective terms, e.g. intrinsic qualities, effects on views from specific locations, effects on the setting of settlements, or effects on the integrity of defined character areas/features – with reference to mapping of topography, landscape character areas, viewpoints, etc. Other impacts on important local conservation, environmental and amenity interests.
2. Assess net developable areas; allowing for primary route networks, structural landscaping, incidental open space, and other un-developable areas (the ‘ready reckoner’ circulated at the meeting on 15th June proposed a rule of thumb of 80% net, unless there is more specific information).
3. Calculate mixes of uses that may be accommodated, having regard to:
 - Types and densities of housing that may be appropriate, with reasons, (35-50 dph in urban fringe locations or higher; e.g. at transport corridors/nodes or activity centres, or bordering/within urban areas).
 - Allowances for local and (where appropriate) district-level facilities (schools, shops, health, community and commercial facilities and local /district parks and playing fields), based on the ‘ready reckoner’ of numbers of houses, standards of provision and site areas, allowing for:
 - existing facilities or deficits in provision within neighbouring urban areas; and
 - opportunities for combined provision, e.g. parks, playing fields, flood plain, green belt or community forest, or multi-use schools and community facilities
 - The potential for strategic or local employment in business use classes (with reference to figures circulated by the Joint Strategic Planning &

- Transportation Unit (now West of England Partnership Office), included in 'Test F/6' and other uses if appropriate (e.g. strategic leisure facilities).
4. Produce approximate summary figures on areas (gross and net), land uses, densities, numbers of jobs, types of housing, mix of local/district facilities – with reasons and supporting information, including suggestions for where local information and analysis needs to be added to the earlier outputs (e.g. implications for adjoining urban/rural areas).
- 2.2 This methodology was largely followed but information on deficits and opportunities for combined provision was not incorporated because of time constraints.

B) Landscape and World Heritage Study of the Potential for an Urban Extension to the South/South West of Bath

Methodology and Definitions

- 2.3 Underpinning the methodology is an understanding of landscape character and in particular the published *Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment (2003)* adopted as SPG by Bath & North East Somerset Council.
- 2.4 The method for assessing what impact development within the area immediately surrounding Bath would have on the World Heritage Site has been developed in accordance with guidance on the definition of buffer zones given in UNESCO's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2005)* and ICOMOS-UK's *Guidelines for the definition of boundaries for candidate World Heritage Sites (2001)*.
- 2.5 The *Operational Guidelines* state that a buffer zone is an area surrounding a World Heritage Site which has complementary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the Site. The *Guidelines* require that buffer zones are put in place where necessary for the proper conservation of the Site. According to the *Guidelines*, buffer zones should include:
- the immediate setting of the World Heritage Site;
 - important views; and
 - other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the site and its protection.
- 2.6 The City of Bath World Heritage Site does not currently have a buffer zone and an assessment of whether a buffer zone is required has not yet been carried out. In lieu of this work, this study has included, within the wider landscape setting criteria, an assessment of the impact of development in the study area on the three concerns listed above, in addition to an assessment of the impact of development on the character of the Site itself.
- 2.7 Four criteria were assessed in relationship to potential development:

1. The impact of development on landscape character in particular sense of place, character area as a whole and quality of landscape.
2. The impact of development on visual effects in particular views from within and without the area being assessed, impact on skylines and approaches, overall conspicuousness of development.
3. The impact of development on the World Heritage Site in particular the impact on:
 - (i) The character of the World Heritage Site
The World Heritage Site is the entire city of Bath. Assessments of impact on its character need to address the Site as a whole with its harmonious combination of built form and green space, as well as individual areas or buildings. Bath is a compact and visually harmonious city that has remained largely contained within its landscape hollow, with largely green ridgelines, and the city rarely visible from the surrounding countryside.
 - (ii) The wider setting of the World Heritage Site
The wider setting of the World Heritage Site is the rural landscape that surrounds it. To the north of the River Avon this is the upper part of the steeply sloping valley sides as well as the gently rising plateau top beyond. To the south of the city, where the Cotswold ridge is gradually reducing in height and extent, the landscape setting is more varied as the Cotswolds give way to different landscape character areas such as the dramatic Limpley Stoke Valley to the east, the Cam Valley to the south and the Hinton Blewett and Newton St Loe Plateau Lands to the west.

4. The potential for mitigation of possible development

2.8 A survey form was developed to enable the above aspects to be assessed on an area by area basis. Assessment areas were selected firstly by plotting the designated rural landscape character areas (as defined in the SPG - *Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset, A Landscape Character Assessment 2003*) on a map and dividing them where appropriate into more detailed and visually distinctive sub-character areas. Each area was driven and walked through and around before selecting a representative viewpoint from which to complete the assessment form. This enabled a well-rounded assessment to be made. A photographic record was made, including photographs taken (where weather permitted) into the areas from the wider countryside. Each coherent area was scored on a 3-point scale for landscape character, visual aspects, WHS and potential for mitigation as follows:

1. Low effect – i.e. little impact on landscape character / little impact on views, inconspicuous / little or no impact on historical or environmental assets / little impact on WHS criteria. Appropriate mitigation will be effective resulting in a low residual impact.

2. Moderate effect – i.e. moderate impact on landscape character etc. Appropriate mitigation will be reasonably effective resulting in a moderate residual impact.

3. High effect – i.e. high impact on landscape character etc. Mitigation will not be effective, resulting in high residual impact.

2.9 For each sub-character area surveyed the four scores were amalgamated to give a development capacity score, again on a 3-point scale of:

1. High capacity to ‘absorb’ development with appropriate mitigation

2. Moderate capacity to ‘absorb’ development with appropriate mitigation

3. Low capacity to ‘absorb’ development. Mitigation would not have a significant effect in reducing the impact of development on landscape character and views.

3.0 Stage 2: Urban Extension Environmental Capacity Appraisal

3.1 Following the stage 1 assessment (see above) parts of the broad areas of search were considered to be unsuitable for the development of an urban extension for strategic environmental reasons. More specific ‘areas of search’ were identified as being worthy of further investigation i.e. more detailed environmental capacity appraisal.

3.2 The stage 2 study relates to these more specific areas of search. Each area of search was assessed for impact to landscape and visual, ecology, historic environment and World Heritage issues, and for strategic urban design opportunities and constraints. These assessments included site visits and desktop studies. Each of the disciplines has an individual methodology (given below) and all except urban design were appraised under the following sections:

- Identification of existing conditions;
- Impact assessment;
- Potential for mitigation; and
- Identification of any further work required.

3.3 The assessments for each area of search were then jointly considered to decide the overall capacity for development for each area of search. The capacity is expressed graphically on maps as follows:

Red	Areas considered by the group as not appropriate for development because of impacts identified concerning a range of environmental issues and urban design factors. The group recommends that the Council should not consider these areas suitable for an urban extension.
Orange	Areas considered by the group to be questionable for development due to a high impact on at least one significant environmental factor. The group recommends that further work should be carried out to assess the full implications of the impacts if the Council is minded to consider these areas for an urban extension.
Yellow	Areas considered by the group to have the potential to accommodate development with less negative impact on environmental factors and urban design considerations. The group recommends that these areas should be considered for an urban extension subject to further relevant suitability assessments.

3.4 An estimation of development capacity (dwelling numbers) was made using a land use budget approach. The land use budget and development capacity for the red areas was not calculated as these are considered to be unsuitable for development. The land use budget for the yellow and orange areas was calculated using the following criteria:

Occupancy	2.3 people per dwelling
Employment land	10% of gross site area (unless specific requirements)
Community facilities	0.75ha per 1000 people
Local facilities	100m ² gross per 1000 people and 25% plot ratio
Primary School	2.5ha per 1500 dwellings
Secondary School	10ha for greater than 6000 people or 2500 dwellings
Parks and open space*	0.6 ha per 1000 people
Pitches*	1.6ha per 1000 people

Source: West of England Partnership Office (WEPO)

3.5 The remaining land represented the area for housing. To make allowance for incidental open space, gardens, roads serving the development and retained landscape features, the area for housing was multiplied by 80% to give a net development area. A density multiplier of 50dph was then applied to give a potential number of units. The potential population was calculated using 2.3 people per dwelling.

* The figures for parks, open space and pitches will need to be reviewed to take account of the Bath & North East Somerset Green Space Strategy. This may result in the reduction of developable area.

Urban Design

3.6 A brief strategic urban design appraisal was undertaken of each area of search. This outlined some of the principal opportunities for new development to link into and make use of the existing infrastructure and facilities within an area: A high level of integration is considered fundamental

to achieving a sustainable urban extension. Further work will be necessary for each site, identifying other urban design issues such as character and context, structure, height and massing at a higher level of detail.

Landscape and Visual

- 3.7 The methodology is supported by an understanding of landscape character and in particular the published Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset – A Landscape Character Assessment adopted as SPG by Bath & North East Somerset Council.
- 3.8 Three criteria were assessed in relation to potential development:
1. The impact of development on landscape / townscape character in particular the sense of place, the character area (both the part affected and as a whole) and the quality of the landscape.
 2. The impact of development on visual effects in particular the views from within and outside the area, the impact on skylines and approaches and the overall conspicuousness of the development.
 3. The potential for mitigation of possible development
- 3.9 Each area was surveyed by two Landscape Architects before selecting a representative viewpoint from which to complete an assessment form. A photographic record was made, including photographs taken into the areas from the wider countryside.

Archaeology & Historic Environment

- 3.10 A 'Rapid Desktop Assessment' was carried out for each area consulting the following sources for the Historic Environment:
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 - Conservation Areas
 - Listed Buildings
 - Historic Parks and Gardens
 - Historic Battlefields
 - Sites and Monuments Record
 - Historic Landscape Characterisation
- 3.11 This information was used to gain an overview of the known historic environment character and status of each site. The broad impacts of development and options/potential for mitigation were then considered.

World Heritage

- 3.12 The two Bath areas of search were assessed for impact against the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Site, as identified in the

original nomination papers (1986) and the World Heritage Site Management Plan (2003), and against identified characteristics (set out in the assessment tables below) of the landscape around the city as setting to the World Heritage Site.

Nature Conservation

3.13 A 'Rapid Desktop Assessment' was carried out for each area consulting:

- Statutory wildlife designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), etc);
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIG);
- Phase 1 habitat information;
- local wildlife designations (this differs for each authority – e.g. “Wildlife Network” sites for Bristol; bat protection zones for Bath);
- Strategic Nature Areas as identified in the regional spatial strategy and Nature Map;
- Existing / recent records for notable species, with particular reference to Species of Principal Importance; and UK protected and European protected species;
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats and semi-natural habitat, including rivers and streams, ponds and other water bodies;
- Ancient Woodland Inventory sites;
- BAP and other relevant Project data -different for each authority e.g. hedgerow data; Batscapes data; greater horseshoe bat corridors; proximity to BAP project areas;
- Green infra-structure information as available from aerial photographs and draft Horseshoe Bat Corridor information.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026:

Strategic Sustainability Assessment

Assessment of contribution urban extensions make to meeting social, environmental, natural resource and economic objectives with reference to First Detailed Proposals; Bath & North East Somerset & Bristol Community Strategies and Corporate Objectives.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper sets out a methodology for assessing the sustainability of options for urban extensions south of Bath and south east of Bristol. It builds upon the stage 1 and stage 2 assessments described in Appendix 2 which were largely environmentally based studies. This assessment ensures that social, economic and resource issues are taken into account in considering the appropriateness of various urban extension options.

2.0 Sustainability Objectives

2.1 Two pieces of work are available which include some strategic sustainability analysis of the areas of search. These are the West of England Strategic Sustainability Assessment (SSA) March 2005 and the SWRA SSA for the West of England contained in the SSA of the Draft RSS Final Report March 2006.

2.2 High level Sustainability criteria set out in the SWRA SSA above (see annex 1 document 2 which reproduces ‘SSA Guidance for Sub-regional Studies’ prepared for the South West Regional Assembly by Land Use Consultants with Collingwood Environmental Planning and Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants; and an extract of the SSA of the Draft RSS covering the West of England) are used to assess how the urban extensions proposals perform in terms of overall sustainability. In addition two criteria have been added from the West of England SSA Document (see annex 1 document 2). Criterion 10 as it relates to the Community Strategy Objectives with the addition of Council corporate objectives and First Detailed Proposals objectives. Criterion 11 from Document 1 is also used to assess the impact on Green Belt objectives. The full set of high level criteria is as follows:

The Criteria (see Annex 1 documents 1 & 2 for further explanation of each criterion)

Objective 1	Improve health
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Objective 2	Support communities that meet people's needs
Objective 3	Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs
Objective 4	Providing access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment
Objective 5	Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets
Objective 6	Minimise consumption of natural resources
Objective 7	Compliance with underlying policy objectives i.e. First Detailed Proposals (FDP) objectives, Bath & North East Somerset and where appropriate Bristol Community Strategy and Corporate Plan objectives
Objective 8	Meeting Green Belt objectives and priorities set out in PPG2, FDP, Draft RSS and Regional Assembly Strategic Green Belt Review

2.3 Headline objectives 1 to 6 are supported by a set of more detailed questions that are used to decide whether the development of the urban extensions would be likely to achieve the headline objective. These are also set out in annex 1 documents 1&2.

2.4 A number of other reference documents are referred to in annex 1. The main objectives of the West of England First Detailed Proposals (document 3) and extracts from the Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol Community Strategies and Corporate Plans (documents 4-6) will assist in the assessment as it relates to Objective 7 above. The analysis of Green Belt impacts as it relates to objective 8 above was informed by the South West Regional Assembly Strategic Green Belt Review (see <http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/swra/downloads/ourwork/RSS/GreenBelt/Appendix10.pdf>) and the West of England Green Belt Assessment (to be provided by the West of England Partnership), as well as extracts from Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) – (see document 7), the First Detailed Proposals (see document 8), and the Draft RSS (see document 9).

2.5 Annex 1 document 1 also sets out the Appraisal Matrix used in RSS SSA. The methodology is broadly followed but all development options for both urban extension locations are discussed in the 'Comments' section.

3.0 Urban Extension Locations

3.1 The potential for urban extension within the Areas of Search E and B set out in the draft RSS have been assessed. The options assessed (see tables below) were derived from the Bath & North East Somerset

strategy agreed at 19th January Council and the environmental capacity appraisal of urban extensions (see Appendix 2 above). The environmental based options are derived from the areas assessed by the Urban Extension Environmental Capacity Appraisal as firstly, having potential to accommodate development with less negative impact on environmental factors and urban design considerations and secondly, also including areas considered to be questionable for development due to a high impact on at least one significant environmental factor. The assessment considers how each option performs against the eight criteria setting out any conflicts between options followed by a conclusion and recommendation.

	Draft RSS April 2006 OPTION 1	19th January 2006 Council OPTION 2	May 2006 Environmental based OPTION 3
Location: Capacity:	Area of Search E South/south west of Bath 1,500 dwellings between Twerton and Odd Down	South/south west of Bath 1,000 dwellings between Newbridge area and Odd Down	South/south west of Bath Nil capacity between Newbridge area and odd Down

	Draft RSS April 2006 OPTION 1	19th January 2006 Council OPTION 2	May 2006 Environmental capacity appraisal based OPTION 3	May 2006 Environmental capacity appraisal based OPTION 4
Location: Capacity:	Area of Search B S.E. of Bristol 6,000 dwellings includes Whitchurch, Stockwood Vale and Hicks Gate areas	S.E. of Bristol 5,000 dwellings at Whitchurch	S.E. of Bristol Hicks Gate unspecified number of dwellings including land in Bristol which is still subject of further work by Bristol City Council; Whitchurch 1,600 dwellings	S.E. of Bristol Hicks Gate unspecified number of dwellings including land in Bristol which is still subject of further work by Bristol City Council; Whitchurch 3,500 dwellings

ANNEX 1

- 1) Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West Strategic Sustainability Assessment Criteria Final Report March 2006
- 2) Extract from West of England Partnership Strategic Sustainability Assessment Criteria February 2005
- 3) Extract from West of England First Detailed Proposals August 2005
- 4) Extract from B&NES Community Strategy 2004
- 5) Extract from B&NES Corporate Plan Annual review 2005/2006
- 6) Extract from Bristol's Community Strategy 2006 and Bristol's Corporate Plan 2006-2009
- 7) Extract from PPG2, Green Belts 1995
- 8) Extract from First Detailed Proposals August 2005
- 9) Extract from SWRA Draft RSS

From 'SSA Guidance for Sub-Regional Studies', prepared for the South West

Regional Assembly by Land Use Consultants with Collingwood Environmental Planning and Levett-Therivel Sustainability Consultants, June 2004

Suggested Appraisal Matrix (Columns)

Policy XX				
Detailed questions: does the option/ policy/ proposal...	Assessment of effect ¹	Can the contribution/ effect be quantified with reference to baseline information and targets?	Will the effect be temporary or permanent?	Justification for assessment, with reference to: Likelihood of effect Geographic scale of effect Current environmental, social and economic trends of affected area Likelihood of affecting particularly sensitive locations Plus recommendations for mitigating negative effects and improving positive effects

Suggested Appraisal Matrix (Assessment of effects)

¹ Symbols used to indicate positive or negative contribution to meeting the detailed question:

√ √	Major positive	X	Minor negative
√	Minor positive	X X	Major negative
1	Neutral effect	?	Uncertain effect

Suggested Appraisal Matrix (Rows)

High level objective 1: improve health

- 1.1 Improve health
- 1.2 Reduce health inequalities
- 1.3 Promote healthy lifestyles, especially routine daily exercise

High level objective 2: support communities that meet people's needs

- 2.1 Help make suitable housing available and affordable for everyone
- 2.2 Give everyone access to learning, training, skills and knowledge
- 2.3 Reduce crime and fear of crime
- 2.4 Promote stronger more vibrant communities
- 2.5 Increase access to and participation in cultural activities

High level objective 3: Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs

- 3.1 Give everyone in the region access to satisfying work opportunities, paid or unpaid
- 3.2 Help everyone afford a comfortable standard of living
- 3.3 Reduce poverty and income inequality
- 3.4 Meet local needs locally
- 3.5 Increase the circulation of wealth within the region
- 3.6 Harness the economic potential of the coast in a sustainable way
- 3.7 Reduce vulnerability of the economy to climate change and harness opportunities arising

High level objective 4: Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment

- 4.1 Reduce the need/desire to travel by car
- 4.2 Reduce the need/desire to travel by air
- 4.3 Help everyone access basic services easily, safely and affordably
- 4.4 Make public transport, cycling and walking easier and more attractive
- 4.5 encourage a switch from transporting freight by road to rail or water

High level objective 5: Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets

- 5.1 Protect and enhance habitats and species (taking account of climate changes)
- 5.2 Promote the conservation and wise use of land
- 5.3 Protect and enhance landscape and townscape
- 5.4 Value and protect diversity and local distinctiveness including rural ways of life
- 5.5 Maintain and enhance cultural and historical assets
- 5.6 Reduce vulnerability to flooding, sea level rise (taking account of climate change)

High level objective 6: Minimise consumption of natural resources

- 6.1 Reduce non-renewable energy consumption and 'greenhouse' emissions
- 6.2 Keep water consumption within local carrying capacity limits (taking account of climate change)
- 6.3 Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals
- 6.4 Reduce waste not put to any use
- 6.5 Minimise land, water, air, light, noise and genetic pollution

Conclusions and key recommendations for mitigating effects and improving positive effects

Extract from the SSA of the Draft RSS - Final Report March 2006

What does the draft RSS section say?

West of England

10.5. The sub-regional strategy for the West of England can be summarised as:

- Realising the economic potential of Bristol, Weston super Mare and Bath and seeking to achieve a high quality of life.
- Maximising the use of previously developed land and buildings within a revised green belt to make provision for significant urban extensions for mixed use development.
- Bristol to maintain its role as the economic hub of the Core City and of the South West. In Bath growth to respect its historic status and in Weston super Mare the strategy will be one of regeneration.

What are the likely effects on the SSA headline objectives?

West of England

Positive and effects Negative effects

Improve health

Positive effects

Improving the quality of housing should have positive health effects, especially where there are currently deprived / excluded communities. The emphasis on access and urban regeneration should improve accessibility of health services and facilities.

Negative effects

Population expansion could put increased pressure on existing health services.

Development for example at Bristol Airport and promoting connectivity to motorways is likely to continue the trend of car reliance and negative social and health impacts related to this.

Support communities that meet people's needs

Positive effects

The strategy aims to provide better balance between employment and housing. This should in turn reduce the dependence on commuting, particularly into Bristol from Weston super Mare. Potential benefits from proposed improvements / increases in public transport provision. Regeneration and urban focussed development, could improve cultural, health and education provision.

Negative effects

Promoting connectivity to motorways, and economic growth focussed strategy may undermine aims to improve communities and provide for local needs.

Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs

Positive effects

Central aim of draft strategy is the realisation of economic potential and provision for jobs.

Negative effects

Emphasis on growth rather than suitability to local needs may develop an economy

which relies on connectivity while providing little benefit for existing deprived and excluded communities in the area. The aim to develop Bristol Airport, and connectivity to the motorway network could lead to economic 'leakage' rather than sub-regional benefit. Congestion is already a major problem (and economic cost) to the sub-region. The current draft RSS sub-regional strategy may exacerbate rather than alleviate this.

Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to the environment

Positive effects

Potential benefits from proposed improvements / increases in public transport provision. The strategy also focuses on a better balance of housing and employment. The urban centred development and regeneration are likely to improve access, by providing services in easily accessible locations.

Negative effects

Population increase could put strain on existing services and amenities, as well as increasing congestion. Expansion of Bristol Airport will increase air travel.

Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets

Positive effects

The strategy recognises the important environmental and heritage value of Bath.

Urban centred development proposed is likely to ease pressure on rural settings, though the scale of urban extension proposed implies a degree of loss to greenfield sites. Where public transport and non-car transport manages to offset car travel, positive environmental effects are possible.

Negative effects

The expansion proposed at Bristol Airport is likely to have significant negative impacts, both through the airport itself (flights, footprint) and through access related (travel to and from, conversion of farmland to car-parking etc.). The emphasis on providing new links to M4, M5 and the airport all likely to encourage

greater car / freight movement and related negative impacts. The urban extension at Bath could affect the historic integrity of the city.

The revision of green belt boundaries will be required for urban extensions and the airport. Flooding (both tidal and fluvial) and drainage will be issues to consider within the West of England, especially Weston-Super-Mare but also Bristol. Impacts on the Severn Estuary SAC/SPA will need to be considered and a positive approach taken to the planning to deal with coastal squeeze.

Minimise consumption of natural resources

Positive effects

None identified.

Negative effects

Construction of housing / infrastructure, increased economic activity and population growth are likely to increase consumption, and waste generation.

What improvements (e.g. mitigation, enhancement) could be made?

West of England

10.15. The draft RSS could be improved by:

- Carrying out further work to determine urban and infrastructure capacity to inform the phasing of the extensions and lead in times for development.
- Investigating whether the reduced rate of dwellings compared with earlier drafts

of the RSS poses the risk that with high growth the gap between jobs and homes

will widen and longer distance commuting will increase.

- Reconsidering the proposed airport expansion and connectivity to the motorway

network as these are likely to conflict with environmental objectives (e.g. to reduce the need to travel, to minimise CO2 emissions, etc.).

**WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP
24 FEBRUARY 2005**

ADDENDUM ON STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Appraisal criteria will be needed for two separate but related stages of developing an agreed spatial strategy.

- Stage 1: to appraise strategic locations that will form the “building blocks” of the final spatial strategy. These strategic locations were the basis of the three scenarios set out in the consultation document “*Directions for Change*”. The purpose of these criteria is to assess the suitability/feasibility of the strategic locations to accommodate sustainable development.
- Stage 2: to assess the overall impacts of a preferred spatial strategy, including the need to maximise positive impacts, minimise or mitigate negative impacts, and to monitor outcomes.

Although the two stages of appraisal fulfil different functions, there are common elements in relation to overall sustainability aims and objectives – social, economic and environmental. The differences will be in the emphasis given to the criteria and the wording of the criteria, as one set is concerned with assessment and choice, the other with impact and mitigation.

Moving to a composite spatial strategy will depend on combining individual strategic locations that present opportunities to create sustainable communities. The suitability of these strategic locations for inclusion in a preferred strategy will depend partly on their individual attributes (e.g. landscape, habitats, etc.) and partly on other objectives, including their geographical distribution in relation to housing needs or the needs of business, their dependence on new strategic infrastructure, phasing and other issues affecting the implementation of an overall spatial strategy.

Stage 1 criteria are listed below. Stage 2 criteria are drawn from ‘*SSA Guidance for Sub-Regional Studies*’ prepared by consultants for the Regional Assembly in June 2004 (appended in the report to the Planning, Transport & Environment Group for 24th February).

The Stage 1 criteria were drawn up for the Regional Assembly for use in the assessment of urban extensions or non-extension options (e.g. development in transport corridors, expanded settlements or new settlements). They include various sustainability criteria (1-9) with additional criteria relating to consistency with other policy objectives (10) and assessment of the extents to which green belt locations perform the functions of green belt listed in PPG 2 (11). They are appropriate for the further appraisal of strategic locations that were subject to public consultation in *Directions for Change* – and other strategic locations, e.g. those suggested in the public consultation – as a basis for generating a spatial strategy.

Under each of the 11 criteria below are prompts or considerations that may be used to apply the criteria. They should be used to reach an overall view about how to apply the criteria in each strategic location, but they will not all apply in every strategic location.

1. Intrinsic environmental characteristics of land and valuation of those characteristics (international/ national/other designations):

- Quality of Life Capital?
- Intrinsic landscape quality / status (e.g. AONB)
- Biodiversity
- SSSIs / NNRs etc
- Agricultural land quality / versatility
- Historic environment / archaeology
- Flood risk / surface drainage
- Groundwater resources
- Sewage treatment
- Contaminated land
- Slopes
- Stability
- Local air quality
- Noise pollution –motorways, airports etc

2. Intrinsic functional characteristics of land:

- Landscape character
- Use / accessibility of land as amenity area for urban / other residents
- Public open space / common land / covenants
- Community Forest status
- Importance as ‘gateway’ site for urban area
- Importance as setting from key viewpoints
- Mineral reserves
- Power lines

3. Intrinsic locational characteristics of land

Distance from:

- City centre
- Other major sources of employment
- Rail station with frequent services
- Frequent bus services
- Secondary schools
- Health facilities
- District shopping centres
- Recreation / leisure facilities
- Waste facilities
- Hazardous sites (COMAH)

4. Implications of potential development for adjoining urban areas

- Potential for improving urban fringe environment
- Potential for assisting ‘retrofitting’ major employment / retail development in adjoining urban fringe areas
- Potential for regeneration in adjoining urban area
- Likely trip patterns to work / shops / schools / leisure etc.
- Implications for public transport facilities (viability / potential improvements)
- Implications for urban traffic congestion / local highway network

- 5. Implications of potential development for adjoining rural areas**
 - Loss of landscape / amenity
 - Implications for public transport facilities (viability / potential improvements)
 - Implications for traffic congestion / local highway network
 - Implications of potentially improved local facilities
 - Potential coalescence with smaller settlements
 - Potential loss of local character / identity of existing settlements
- 6. Strategic implications of potential development**
 - Attractiveness of site to potential employers / service providers
 - Implications on longer-distance travel patterns – inc proximity to motorways / primary network
 - Implications for movement across whole urban area
 - Implications for drainage across river catchment
- 7. Alternative future uses of land / assessment of their relative sustainability benefits**
 - Agriculture
 - Recreation / amenity / open space
 - Employment
 - Transport
- 8. Requirements / potential for major new capital investment**
 - Public transport
 - Roads
 - Community facilities / schools / health etc
 - Drainage
 - Water supply
- 9. Internal characteristics of proposed development**
 - Potential scale of development on site – implications for scale of requirements / improvements to provision
 - Opportunities to promote public transport / cycling ./ walking
 - Opportunities to promote better homes – jobs relationship – mixed uses
 - Potential for energy efficient development (eg CHP)
 - Potential to maintain / enhance environmental assets / characteristics within development
 - Potential to maintain values as open space / recreational area
- 10. Compliance with underlying policy objectives**
 - Community strategy objectives
 - Structure Plan objectives
 - RPG
 - PPGs
- 11. Green Belt**

Current status, presence of exceptional circumstances to justify change and extent to which land continues to meet PPG2 Green Belt purposes:

 - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

West of England First Detailed Proposals

Key objectives of the spatial strategy

2.5 The RSS must provide a policy framework for investment, development, regeneration and conservation in the West of England, as a Core City region, to benefit the area and the regional and national economies, and to maintain and improve the quality of life of the area's residents, by:

- > as a priority, promoting urban renaissance, especially in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, to make them better places in which to live, work, visit and invest, to create balanced communities, and to maximise the success of their future growth and development;
- > regenerating areas of disadvantage, particularly in Bristol and Weston-super-Mare;
- > promoting and enhancing prospects for sustainable development and investment in south Bristol and Weston-super-Mare;
- > making the best use of previously developed land, and enabling its release as early as possible, in order to minimise the take-up of greenfield land;
- > ensuring that the Green Belt continues to perform its fundamental strategic roles and objectives in the area, while reviewing its general extent in certain areas to contribute towards meeting the sub-region's requirements for sustainable development;
- > overcoming existing deficits in physical and social infrastructure in the West of England, and providing infrastructure to create balanced new communities, as part of the sub-region's successful economic expansion.
- > delivering a step change in the quality of public transport and traffic management within the Bristol urban area, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, and between the cities, smaller towns and rural areas across the sub-region.
- > improving strategic communications to areas outside the West of England, by sea, air, rail and road;
- > protecting and enhancing key environmental assets, especially those of national or international importance, and retaining, enhancing and restoring the diversity of wildlife and the landscape in the sub-region;
- > improving efficiency in the use of resources, with waste production minimised and waste managed in a sustainable way;
- > contributing towards achieving a carbon-neutral economy in the sub-region, with reduced household, transport and commercial energy consumption, reduced environmental pollution, increased renewable energy generation, and positive adaptations to climate change and rising sea levels;

> encouraging the provision of green infrastructure throughout the sub-region, through environmental initiatives within the urban areas, maximising the potential of the Forest of Avon, and measures to enable the Green Belt and rural areas to play a positive role in contributing towards a high quality of life for all residents in the sub-region;

> enhancing positive relationships between urban and rural areas for their mutual benefit.

2.6 Development within the sub-region will focus on the Bristol urban area, as the region's major location for future growth in economic activity and housing provision.

2.7 Priority will be given to the integrated provision of infrastructure and development to improve communications within and around south Bristol and to provide new links between the M4, south Bristol, the airport, the M5 and Weston-super-Mare.

2.8 Sustainable urban extensions will be developed to the south and east of the Bristol urban area subject to the prior provision of necessary infrastructure and the release of land from the Green Belt. They will be planned and developed as sustainable communities which deliver a high quality of life through high standards of design and access, the protection and maintenance of environmental assets and landscape setting, and by providing the physical and social infrastructure required.

2.9 Provision for significant economic growth and housing at the other regionally important centres within the area, Weston-super-Mare and Bath, will reflect their future potential, environmental factors and the need to address problems associated with commuting by improving the balance between economic activity and housing provision. Sustainable urban extensions will be considered at Bath, subject to the need to address environmental and landscape constraints associated with its status as a World Heritage Site, its setting, transport implications, and the release of land from the Green Belt. At Weston-super-Mare, urban extensions will accommodate mixed development, a new sustainable community, and transport infrastructure improvements.

2.10 Where there are major environmental or transport constraints to extensions to the major urban areas, significant development at settlements outside the main urban areas will be considered if it is well related to sustainable transport links to a main urban area, enhances or supports services, facilities and employment opportunities in the settlement and meets Green Belt, environmental and other sustainability objectives for the sub-region. It may not be possible for Bath, in particular, to accommodate levels of development appropriate to its role in the sub-region, because of its environmental, transport and Green Belt constraints, and therefore settlements beyond the Green Belt within Bath and North East Somerset will need to be considered for development.

**Bath & North East Somerset
Community Strategy 2004**

Shared Ambitions

BE: distinctive	BE: inclusive	BE: creative	BE: safe	BE: sustainable
Promoting a 'sense of place' so people identify with and take pride in our communities	Celebrating the contributions people from different backgrounds and with different experiences can make, and promoting equality of opportunity	Sharing resources, working together, and finding new ways of doing things	Building communities where people feel safe and secure	Taking responsibility for our environment and natural resources now and over the long term

Improvement Ambitions

BE: there on time	Improving our local transport
BE: at home	Improving our housing situation for local people
BE: inspired	Improving local opportunities for learning and gaining skills
BE: better off	Improving our local economy
BE: green	Improving our local environment
BE: assured	Improving our local health and social care

**Bath & North East Somerset Corporate Plan
Annual Review 2005/2006**

Corporate Improvement Priorities

Short-Medium Term Goals Longer-Term Aspirations

- n) **Reducing the Fear of Crime** – Increase public confidence and see a reduction in the fear of crime
- s) **Facilitating an Increase in the Availability of Affordable Housing** – Minimise the growing gap between affordable housing and demand / need
- o) **Promoting the Independence of Older People** - Deliver services in an integrated and timely way to ensure the maximum level of independence possible for an individual, (i.e., the right service in the right place at the right time)
- t) **Improving the Quality of Public Transport, Roads and Pavements and Congestion** - Agreed 20 year Vision for Transport which identifies local and Sub Regional Projects to deliver real alternatives to improve access and reduce congestion
- p) **Improving the Life Chances of Disadvantaged Teenagers** - Ensure fewer vulnerable teenagers are without employment, education or training placement after the end of the compulsory schooling
- u) **Developing a Sustainable Economy** – Generate a sustainable economy with a more balanced mix of employment, in line with the Sustainable Economic Development Plan “Towards 2013”
- q) **Improving the Environment for Learning** - Secure additional capital to invest in improving the quality of learning in classrooms and schools
- v) **Improving the Public Realm** – Tangibly improve quality of public realm in a considered, coherent and planned manner through targeted transformations of spaces and initiatives focussed on street scene improvements
- r) **Reducing Landfill** – Reduce household waste to landfill to 52,000 tonnes per annum by a combination of domestic waste reduction and recycling measures as part of the Council’s emerging Waste Strategy
- w) **Improving Customer Satisfaction**
Improve access to services and information for all through integrated access channels (service access shops, contact centre, mobile workers, web), so customers are dealt with at first point of contact with the Council

Bristol Community Strategy 2006

Long term aims for Bristol are to secure:

- a thriving economy;
- learning and achievement;
- health and well being;
- a high quality environment;
- balanced and sustainable communities;

Bristol Corporate Plan 2006 – 2009

Aims

The vision is a long term and aspirational one. To take the vision forward and to provide a framework for implementation, it has been translated into five long term aims for the city. These aims are shared by all stakeholders in the city and not just the city council. They are set out in the Community Strategy and are:

— **A thriving economy** - to maintain and develop a competitive economy in what is a growth area; to ensure that all people and neighbourhoods in Bristol can contribute to, and benefit from, that thriving economy; and to make Bristol one of the most attractive places in Europe to live, work and visit.

— **Learning and achievement** - ensuring that all children and young people achieve high standards and acquire the qualifications and skills to progress with confidence into employment, training and active citizenship.

— **Health and well-being in Bristol** - to ensure that everyone in Bristol has the opportunity to be as healthy, fulfilled and as independent as possible with investment focussed on working in an inclusive way to promote well-being and the prevention of ill-health.

— **A high quality environment** - Bristol to be a green capital in Europe, tackling the causes of climate change and creating a clean and attractive built and natural environment.

— **Balanced and sustainable communities** - to create balanced and sustainable communities with a high quality of life where no-one is disadvantaged.

Extract from PPG2 January 1995

Purposes of including land in Green Belts

1.5 There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Extract from West of England
First Detailed Proposals August 2005**

Green Belt

2.19 The Green Belt surrounds and separates Bristol and Bath, and has an essential role in helping to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. It will be maintained in accordance with national policy set out in PPG2, subject to the review of its outer and inner boundaries, to ensure that it continues its fundamental role of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

2.20 In particular, this Green Belt will support both the national purposes of Green Belt designation and the spatial strategy by meeting the following fundamental objectives: -

- > checking the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol urban area and Bath
- > preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another, by maintaining the physical separation and distinct identities of the Bristol urban area, Bath, and other settlements in the sub-region, including in particular the area between the two cities
- > safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- > preserving the setting and special character of historic cities and towns, including the World Heritage Site of Bath
- > assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Extract from South West Regional Assembly Draft RSS

4.2.5 Green belt is a key feature in planning for the West of England, preventing the coalescence of settlements (principally Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare) as well as 'urban sprawl'. It is important that the primary role of the green belt in preventing the joining up and loss of character of settlements is reinforced. Recognising that the capacity of the existing urban areas to accommodate development is lower than the overall requirement, well planned urban extensions will be needed to meet this shortfall, incorporating the conclusions of the '*Strategic Green Belt Review*'¹. With a complex delineation of administrative boundaries it will be essential for all the Unitary Authorities (as identified in Policy SR2) to work jointly in defining the precise green belt boundaries to accommodate, where appropriate, the identified urban extensions and needs of ports and airport through joint LDDs.

APPENDIX 4

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026: Note on the assessment of capacity for development in the remainder of Bath & North East Somerset outside Bath, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock urban areas; and outside the south east Bristol and Bath potential urban extensions

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In estimating the potential capacity of Bath & North East Somerset to accommodate additional housing and to establish a housing trajectory for the RSS period for the whole District assessment of the likely contribution of the rural areas (i.e. outside the urban areas of Bath, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock and the potential urban extensions) needs to be undertaken. Set out below are notes on how this assessment was undertaken.

2.0 Capacity assessment

- 2.1 In estimating the likely dwelling capacity of the rural areas a number of different types of site have been looked at and their contribution reviewed as detailed below:
- 1) Large sites with planning permission – capacity and likely delivery of these sites have been reviewed having regard to information on delivery constraints.
 - 2) Existing Local Plan allocations – potential contribution has been reviewed having regard to development constraints and the emerging policy framework.
 - 3) Other identified sites – other known major potential opportunities have been identified and assessed. As it is not possible to identify now all sites that are likely to be allocated in future LDDs an allowance for such sites has been made based on analysis of previous Local Plan allocations; impact of the emerging policy framework (particularly influenced by the draft RSS); and knowledge of potential opportunities in larger villages.
 - 4) Large and small windfall sites – assessment of their future contribution based on analysis of past trends, examination of overall potential and the impact of the emerging planning policy framework.
- 2.2 As noted above the process of estimating the potential capacity of the above sites has taken account of the impact of planning policies. The draft RSS, which seeks to focus development in the main urban areas and extensions to them, thereby limiting the amount of development directed towards the more rural areas, has set the context for the assessment undertaken.

- 2.3 The Council is developing a 'Vision for Bath & North East Somerset' which will also provide an input into and influence the local planning policy framework established through the LDF. The implications of this emerging Vision on the potential housing capacity of the rest of the District will be examined during the lead up to the RSS EIP.

3.0 Phasing and Delivery

- 3.1 In reviewing the contribution of different types of sites an initial estimation of the potential timing of development has been made. In addition brief consideration has been undertaken of the potential transportation infrastructure required to ensure the additional housing can be delivered. During the lead up to the EIP further analysis of phasing and delivery factors will be carried out.