

**Bath and North East Somerset Council**

**Local Plan 2022 – 2042**

**Consultation Statement**

**B&NES Local Plan 2022 – 2042**

**February 2024**

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**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

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**Improving People's Lives**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&ES) is preparing a new Local Plan for the District. The involvement of communities and stakeholders is key to preparing a strategy for the District which allows it to grow sustainably, meets the needs of our communities, and protects and enhances the things we value most.
- 1.2 The Council continues to work closely with communities and stakeholders in preparing the new Local Plan, carrying out a range of engagement and consultation throughout its preparation, in line with the Council's core policy of **'giving people a bigger say'**.
- 1.3 The Council is seeking to take an inclusive and proactive approach to engagement, providing the opportunity for all to engage in the plan-making process. This document sets out the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community and stakeholders on the Local Plan 2022-2042.
- 1.4 This statement sets out the consultation and community involvement undertaken during the preparation of the Local Plan. This is in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.5 This consultation statement explains how the consultation was undertaken and who has been consulted; details of how they were consulted; and a summary of the issues raised and how those main issues have been addressed.
- 1.6 The Planning Regulations require that the Council must consult each of the statutory consultees, general consultation bodies, public and business community on the Local Plan and invite each of them to make representations on its scope and content
- 1.7 This Consultation Statement builds upon the [Engagement and Communication Strategy \(October 2022\)](#), which was published alongside [the Local Plan Launch Document](#).
- 1.8 The principles set out in this document are consistent with the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#).

## **2 Stages in the preparation of the Local Plan**

- 2.1 The process of producing a Local Plan involves various statutorily defined stages, each of which entail consultation with stakeholders and communities. The stages and timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS), and is summarised in the diagram below.
- 2.2 The Engagement and Communication Strategy set out in this document provides details on how the Council has and will engage communities and stakeholders at each of the stages.
- 2.3 It should be noted that the programme has changed since the launch of the local plan. An updated LDS will be published in due course.

## **3 Engagement and Consultation to date**

- 3.1 There are a variety of ways in which communities and stakeholders can become involved in the preparation of the Local Plan. The minimum requirements for consultation and engagement are set out in the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#). However, the Council is seeking to be much more proactive in engaging with local communities and stakeholders in the preparation of the new Local Plan.

### **Stage 1 – Launch of the Local Plan**

- 3.2 At Stage 1 (Launch of the Local Plan), a district-wide consultation was held alongside the publication of a [Local Plan Launch Document which marked commencement of preparing the Local Plan](#). The Council sought feedback and comments on the approach to preparing the Local Plan set out in the Launch Document.

### **Information on the consultation**

#### **Notification mailout**

- 3.3 Residents, business owners, developers, built environment professionals and any other interested parties were invited to give us their views on the launch document. Information about the consultation was issued prior to the start of the consultation period by email/letter on 4th October 2022 to all those on the mailing list which included statutory consultees and a range of other stakeholders. Whilst the mailout encouraged people to submit their comments electronically using the comment form provided, it was made clear that letters would also be accepted.

- 3.4 The Parish and Town Councils were mailed separately with the same information.

#### **Press release and media coverage**

- 3.5 A press release was issued to remind residents and others of the opportunity to comment on the launch document and the list of policies proposed to be updated.

#### **Comment Form**

- 3.6 The Council produced a Comment Form on its website for those who wished to respond to the consultation. It included clear information on how to respond using the form.

#### **Dedicated webpage**

- 3.7 A webpage relating to the consultation could be accessed via links from the main Planning Policy webpage and on the dedicated Local Plan webpage ([www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan)).

- 3.8 The webpage set out the following information:

#### **Direct Contact Information**

- 3.9 An email address was provided on all the consultation material, mailouts, and website for those who wanted to ask direct questions and seek further information.
- 3.10 For respondents unable to comment electronically, written comments could be posted to the Council's mailing address.

#### **Call for Sites**

- 3.11 The consultation also included a 'call for sites' exercise, enabling communities and other stakeholders to submit sites they consider to be potentially suitable for development for housing, employment uses.
- 3.12 The sites submitted would inform the technical evidence supporting the Local Plan, such as the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). The HELAA is a technical assessment process of the suitability of land for development, which also includes availability and achievability. The HELAA process does not affect the planning status of any land which is assessed.

#### **Stakeholder engagement**

- 3.13 As would normally be the case at the commencement stage no public events or exhibitions were planned to take place alongside the publication of the launch document.

- 3.14 A webinar was held on 18 October, to launch the Local Plan and discuss the content of the launch document. [View the recording](#)

### **Representations on the Commencement document**

- 3.15 The consultation generated around 114 representations from a range of stakeholders including residents, parish councils, residents' associations in Bath and developers/planning agents.
- 3.16 A [report summarising the findings from the consultation](#) has been published online. The issues raised through consultation on the launch document have been considered by the Council and have informed preparation of the Options document (see stage 4 below).

### **Stage 2 - Evidence Gathering, Engagement and Options Formulation**

- 3.17 The Council engaged with community representatives and other key stakeholders in helping to inform evidence gathering and formulation of options that were subsequently set out in the Local Plan Options document. The engagement at this stage has been split into two sections, as follows:
- **Stage 2A:** Understanding Key Issues and Priorities
  - **Stage 2B:** Options Formulation
- 3.18 **Stage 2A** engagement (understanding key issues and priorities) was carried out in January to March 2023. Workshops were held with community representatives and key stakeholders on a place-basis, in order to gather information on the **key issues** facing stakeholders and communities in each of the following areas:
- Bath and its Environs
  - Keynsham
  - Whitchurch
  - Somer Valley
  - Rural areas of the district
- 3.19 The reports summarising the key issues and priorities arising from each session [have been published online](#).
- 3.20 Targeted engagement with representatives from seldom-heard groups was also undertaken at stage 2A, in order to ensure that the voices heard at the early stages of plan preparation included those who might not usually be involved in the Plan-making process. [A report summarising the key issues and priorities raised at each of the sessions](#) has been published online.

- 3.21 An online engagement meeting with a Q&A session was held with developers, agents and landowners within the district.

### **Stage 2B – Options Formulation**

- 3.22 In July to September 2023, the Council held further sessions with stakeholders and community representatives (Stage 2B Options Formulation), to share evidence collated to date, discuss the potential options emerging for policies and site allocations in local areas, and to seek input into these options.
- 3.23 This engagement comprised another set of workshops with community representatives and key stakeholders on a place-basis.
- 3.24 Further targeted engagement with the seldom-heard group representatives contacted at stage 2A was also undertaken.
- 3.25 Responses from these workshops and conversations was used to prepare the policy and site allocation options included within the Options Document.
- 3.26 The reports summarising the key issues and feedback arising from each session [have been published online](#).

## 4 Upcoming Engagement and Consultation

### Stage 3 – Options Consultation

- 4.1 Stage 3 (Options Consultation), is a District-wide consultation on policy and site allocation options which is being carried out, in order to understand the views of stakeholders and communities. Various webinars and in-person events are being held during the consultation period to ensure understanding of and discuss the content of the Options Document, and how parties can provide comments.
- 4.2 Consultation on the Options Document is being carried out in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.3 The Options document has been published online via a dedicated consultation page: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplanoptions>. The Options document has been made available through a HTML webbook or PDF format. Each section of the webbook includes consultation questions, allowing you to focus on specific areas of interest.
- 4.4 Hard copies of the Options document are available at Council Libraries and One Stop Shops.
- 4.5 All online comments should be submitted via our website. For users requiring an alternative to the webform, comments can be submitted via postal mail to: **Planning Policy, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JG**
- 4.6 A series of drop-in sessions (each running 3pm to 7pm) where people can discuss the options with council officers have been arranged at the following locations:
- Keynsham Community Space, 22 February
  - Trinity Church, Radstock, 26 February
  - Saltford Hall, 29 February
  - The Hive, Peasedown St John, 1 March
  - Bath Cricket Club, 4 March
  - Whitchurch United Reform Church, 6 March
  - Farrington Gurney Village Hall, 13 March.
- 4.7 A series of videos explaining the consultation will be published on the Council's [YouTube Channel](#)

## **Stages 4 and 5 – Draft Plan Preparation and Consultation**

- 4.8 Representations from communities and stakeholders on the Options document will be considered carefully and will inform the content of the Local Plan as it moves towards a Draft Plan. At **Stage 4 (Preparation of Draft Plan)**, it is anticipated that some targeted engagement with community groups and stakeholders will be carried out, to feedback responses from the options consultation and discuss preferred options.
- 5** At **Stage 5 (Draft Plan Consultation)** a Draft Plan will be published, and consultation on this document will be carried out for a period of at least 6 weeks in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.