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Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

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Improving People's Lives

# Local Plan 2022 - 2042

## Launch Document

October 2022



# Foreword

This Launch Document for our new Local Plan is an important step forward to address pressing issues and to deliver on our shared priorities.

- How can we best respond to the climate and nature emergencies? And what bolder decisions do we need to take?
- Where should we allow new development to meet our need for more affordable housing, sustainable economic development, and for better jobs?
- What are our priorities for improving places so that we can help transform our quality of life? To achieve a healthy and resilient future for all and enable more sustainable lifestyles?

The new Local Plan is a valuable document that gives us the teeth to help deliver our ambitions. It needs to capture fresh thinking and innovative ideas if it is to provide the best possible planning framework for managing change, delivering the places that we want to live in and protecting what we value.

We need to be firm when necessary, to make sure that we get the very best from development, yet flexible too, when we need to allow great new ideas to flourish and to respond to changing and unpredictable circumstances.

I would urge you to engage in the process of shaping the future of Bath and North East Somerset. As a statutory document, the production of a Local Plan can seem like a long process, but it has proven to be robust in delivering change and in safeguarding our valued assets.

**Councillor Kevin Guy (Leader of the Council)**

**Councillor Tim Ball (Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing)**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose of this Launch Document</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Scope of the Local Plan</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stages in preparing the Local Plan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Relationship with other Plans</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Let us know what you think</b>	<b>17</b>

# Introduction

This Launch Document is the first step towards preparing a New Local Plan for Bath and North East Somerset.

The Local Plan will establish the planning framework for the district up to 2042. It will contain a vision, strategy and policies to guide and manage how the District grows and changes over the next 20 years, and how planning applications for new development are decided. It will also help to deliver the Council's corporate priorities, including improving people's lives, tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, and preparing for the future in terms of the economy and addressing inequalities.

Throughout its preparation, we'll be asking for your thoughts and ideas on how the District can grow sustainably to help address the challenges we face, such as the climate and ecological emergencies and the housing crisis, whilst protecting and enhancing the things we value about Bath and North East Somerset.

## Purpose of this Launch Document

This Launch Document marks the formal start of the preparation of the new Local Plan.

We would like your views on the approach we are taking in preparing the new Local Plan from the very start, including the content of this Launch Document. Please see details on how to respond on page 17, or at the following web address:

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan)

# Background



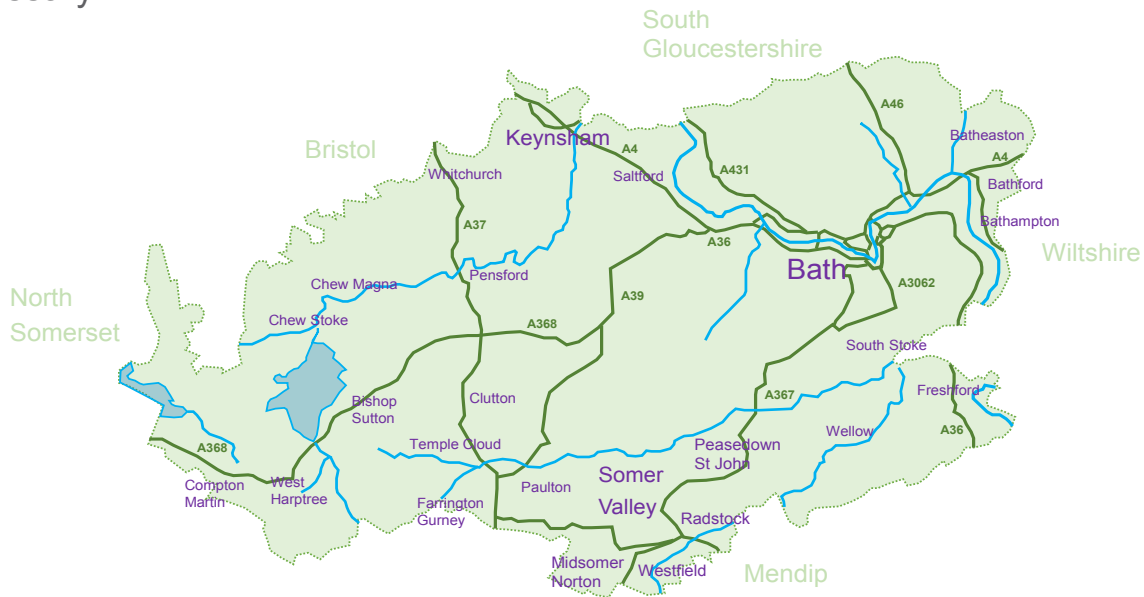
Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council's current planning policies were adopted in 2014 and 2017, and whilst some of these policies are being updated through the Local Plan Partial Update 2022, we now need a complete review of the existing Local Plan to make sure it is fit for purpose to address the challenges we are facing.

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) mayor has a duty to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the sub-region, covering B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. However, work on the SDS has been halted, so the three WECA authorities are progressing their Local Plans in collaboration.

# Scope of the Local Plan

The Plan area will be the whole administrative area of B&NES Council. As Local Plans must have at least a 15 year plan period from adoption, the proposed plan period is **2022 - 2042**.

Once adopted, the Local Plan will be reviewed every 5 years, and updated where necessary.



The primary purpose of Local Plan 2022 – 2042 is to address the local authority’s priorities for the development and use of land in the district, and set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of development, in order to create and sustain healthy and vibrant places and communities.

We will work with our communities and stakeholders to identify the key challenges in B&NES, and the objectives and policies we need in place to address these.

The starting point will be the Council’s One Shared Vision, as well as other key emerging strategies such as the Economic Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, and the Health and Well-being Strategy.

Preparation of the Local Plan will also allow us to incorporate and reflect national planning reforms, such as the introduction of Investment Zones.



# Scope of the Local Plan

The council's primary ambitions for the Local Plan seek to deliver our **main overriding purpose**:

To improve people's lives

These **primary ambitions**, which are drawn from the Corporate Strategy, the One Shared Vision, and other key emerging strategies (such as the Economic Strategy and Health & Well-being Strategy) are:

Responding to the challenge of the **climate emergency** and facilitating the goal of **net zero carbon by 2030**

Establishing a transformational approach to **protecting and enhancing nature**

Maximising delivery of **affordable housing** to respond to the district's demographic, social and economic needs

Creating opportunities for sustainable economic development, the types of **jobs** that are needed in our communities, and ensuring that there is the right type of space available for **businesses** to grow

# Scope of the Local Plan

Other issues in the scope of the Local Plan include:

Maintaining a 5-year housing land supply and facilitating delivery of the necessary type and scale of **new homes** to respond to the District's social and economic needs, including homes for older people, students, key workers, gypsies, travellers, and boat dwellers, supported accommodation for residents with health and social care needs, and provision of self-build dwellings.

Delivering high quality development that supports **vibrant, healthy, successful communities**, and addresses **inequalities**

Protecting and enhancing the beauty of our **environment**

Setting an approach to **sustainable transport** and movement which facilitates behavioural change and the 15-minute neighbourhood concept

Increasing **renewable energy** generation

Setting a positive strategy for the **conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment**

Ensuring new development is aligned with the necessary **infrastructure**, including community facilities and green infrastructure

Creating vibrant **town and city centres**



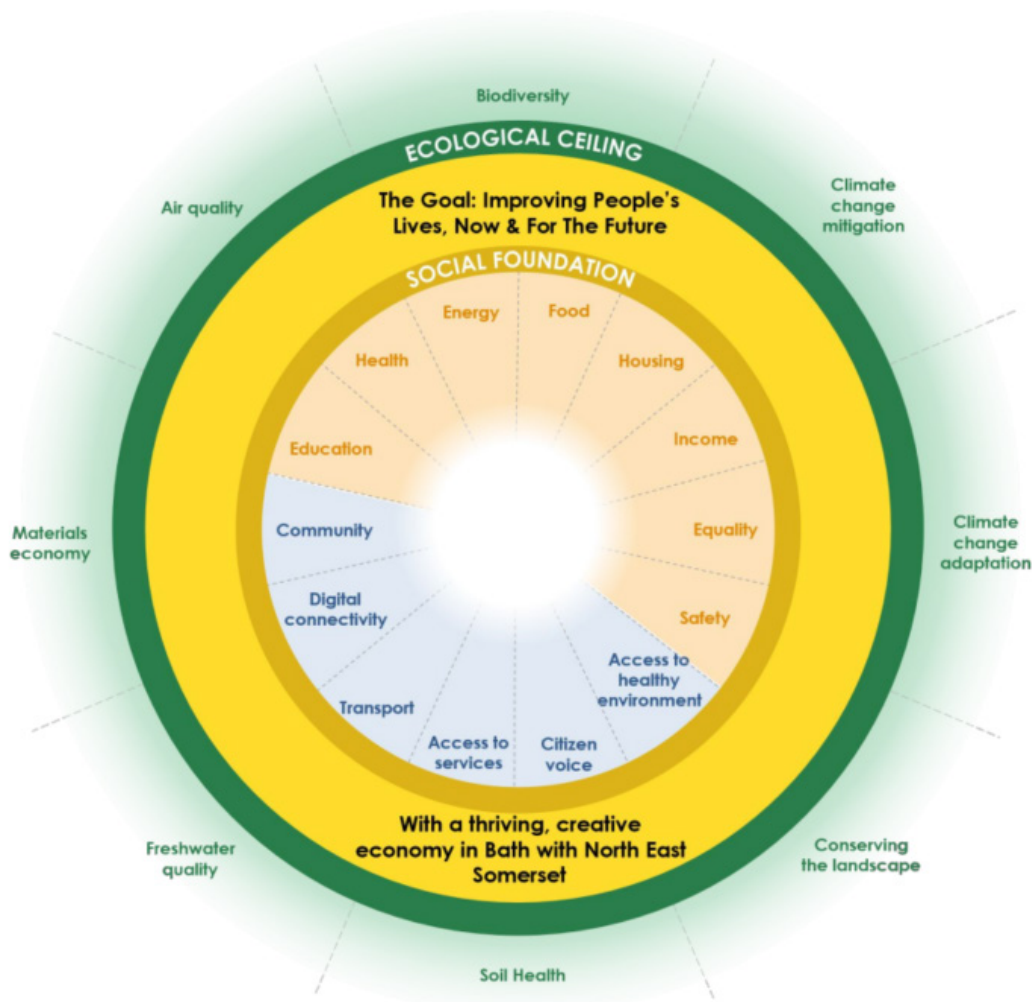
# Scope of the Local Plan

## The Doughnut Economics Model

As the Local Plan will need to address a range of sometimes conflicting aims, it is proposed that a “Doughnut Economics model” is used to help establish the most appropriate planning framework.

This model is a tool to help make decisions about the economy that combat climate change but at the same time seek to ensure social needs are met.

The model helps to show how policies and proposals will affect the environment and people. If it shows that a policy will have a harmful impact on the environment or people, it can be modified or deleted.



# Scope of the Local Plan

The diagram above shows an example of what a B&NES focused Doughnut Economics model might look like. The model has two parts:

- The inner wheel focuses on social and economic issues like socio-economics and homes.
- The outer wheel focuses on environmental issues like greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity.

The key is to seek to develop policies and proposals which benefit both the environment and people, with policies falling within the section of the diagram between the social foundation and the ecological ceiling, i.e. 'the doughnut'.

# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

The key steps and proposed timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

The diagram below sets out a summary of the stages carried out in the preparation, examination and adoption of the Local Plan, and the proposed programme.

## Preparation of the Local Plan

### Stage 1: Launch

October 2022

This **Launch Document** is published to commence the preparation of the Local Plan. Comments on the content of the Launch Document are sought from communities and stakeholders through consultation questions at the following web address: [www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan)



### Stage 2: Evidence Gathering, Engagement and Options Formulation

October 2022 - September 2023

Extensive gathering and analysis of data, evidence and information on key issues will be carried out. This will include a call for sites, enabling stakeholders to submit sites they consider to be available and potentially suitable for housing or employment development, or any other type of development, such as renewable energy. Details of the types of evidence required are set out on page 13.

During this stage, **communities, stakeholders and consultees will be consulted** multiple times, firstly to identify key issues and opportunities, and then to review evidence and help to develop policy options. Details relating to the engagement to be carried out are set out in the engagement strategy, published alongside this Launch Document.



# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Stage 3. Options Document Consultation

October 2023 - December 2023

Evidence gathered and responses from engagement will help to create an **Options Document** setting out initial issues and options that will define the draft Local Plan going forward. We will consult on this document and invite feedback from the public.



## Stage 4: Preparation of Draft Plan and Targeted Engagement

January 2024 - May 2024

Having taken account of responses received from the previous consultation, and further analysis of evidence, the Council will prepare a Draft Plan. Additional targeted engagement with key stakeholders will also be carried out at this stage.



## Stage 5: Draft Plan Consultation

June 2024 - August 2024

A **Draft Plan** will be published, and consultation on this document will be carried out for a period of at least 6 weeks. The local planning authority may make changes to the Draft Plan following the consultation, and may decide to carry out further consultation if any resulting changes are considered to be significant.



# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Examination

### Stage 6: Submission and Examination

**November 2024**

The final Draft Plan will be **submitted to the Government** along with the supporting evidence base, following which an independent Inspector will be allocated to assess the soundness of the Plan.



### Stage 7: Hearings

**January 2025**

The independent Inspector will **hold an Examination into the soundness of the Plan**. The Examination hearings will include evidence from anybody who wishes to make a submission on any of the key issues or questions highlighted by the Inspector. The Inspector will consider all of the evidence and representations made through the Draft Local Plan consultation process.



### Stage 8: Inspector's Report

**May 2025**

The Inspector will assess whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. The Inspector will publish their recommendations in a Report. If the Inspector has not recommended adoption, the Council can adopt the Plan in line with any 'main' modifications as suggested by the Inspector.



# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Adoption

### Stage 9: Adoption

**September 2025**

The Council will adopt the Plan at a full Council meeting.

We will undertake the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with Regulations 18 and 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Engagement and Consultation

Engagement and consultation with communities and stakeholders is key to preparing a vision and 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. The Council will therefore work closely with communities and stakeholders in preparing the new Local Plan. We will be carrying out a range of engagement and consultation throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, in line with the Council's core policy of **'giving people a bigger say'**.

Details of our approach to engagement are set out in an Engagement Strategy, which is published alongside this Launch Document, setting out the opportunities for key stakeholders to be involved in the preparation of the Plan.

In addition to the engagement strategy, a Consultation Statement will be prepared and updated at each stage of the Plan's preparation, setting out how consultation was undertaken, the key issues raised, and how the Council has considered these issues in progressing the Local Plan.



# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Evidence Base

Preparation of the Local Plan will need to be based on robust evidence, both to define the challenges we are facing, and to test policy options. We will use existing evidence as well as commissioning new studies.

The **evidence base** will need to cover a wide range of issues such as:





# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Duty to Cooperate

B&NES Council has a duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries and must collaborate with other strategic authorities to identify any relevant strategic matters which need to be addressed.

Cross-boundary strategic issues relating to the Local Plan might include issues such as addressing the sub-region's housing need, strategic highway issues, and flooding. This is particularly important in the absence of a sub-regional Spatial Development Strategy.

We will liaise with the prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies in identifying the cross-boundary strategic issues and work jointly with these bodies to address such issues through the preparation of the Local Plan. The Council will prepare and maintain a statement of common ground documenting the cross-boundary matters and progress in co-operation.

## Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA)

The preparation of the Local Plan will be informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which will include an assessment of health impact, and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

A framework for the Sustainability Appraisal will be agreed at the beginning of the project and will be used to assess and inform the plan-making process. It is intended to publish a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and an interim SA on the options for consideration. The Doughnut Economic model is now being used by some authorities as a vehicle for the SA, and this will be considered for the B&NES Local Plan.



# Stages in preparing the Local Plan

## Equalities Impact Assessment

B&NES Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that the objectives and policies within the Local Plan meet the requirements of the Act.

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out at multiple stages throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, to demonstrate how this duty has been met.

# Relationship with other Plans

## Neighbourhood Plans

B&NES currently has 11 made (or adopted) neighbourhood plans, with several others in preparation. As work on the Local Plan progresses, and the strategic context for the neighbourhood plans changes, communities should consider reflecting the Local Plan 2022 - 2042 in the preparation of new neighbourhood plans and made plans may become increasingly out of date. Communities may wish to review them to take account of any implications arising. The Council will continue to support Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums within B&NES in preparing and reviewing neighbourhood plans, and will discuss the implications of the new Local Plan as it progresses. Consultation with interested parties will be carried out at the beginning of the preparation process.

## SPDs

Policies in the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan, and the emerging Local Plan Partial Update, are supplemented by a range of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which are listed in the Local Development Scheme. These SPDs will continue to supplement the relevant policies in the Local Plan and some may require reviewing and updating. In seeking to improve the design quality of new development and 'building beautiful' the Council will consider preparing Design Codes for the District and places within it. The existing SPDs to be reviewed or new SPDs to be prepared are identified in the Local Development Scheme.

## CIL

We will review the Community Infrastructure Levy alongside the preparation of the new Local Plan.

# Let us know what you think

We need to hear from you. Please let us know your thoughts on the content of this Launch Document by filling out the form at the web address below, which seeks your opinions on:

The proposed  
scope and content  
of the Local Plan  
2022 - 2042

The proposed  
timetable for the  
preparation and  
adoption of the Plan

Our proposed  
approach to  
engagement

The proposed  
evidence base

Any other  
general  
comments

Consultation web address: [www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/localplan)

The consultation on this Launch Document runs from **4th October to 15th November 2022**.

Comments will be taken into account as part of the plan preparation process.

If you are unable to use the online form, please email your comments to [planning\\_policy@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk)

Or call a member of the planning policy team on **01225 39 40 41 (and select option 6)**.

Or send your written comments to:

**B&NES Council  
Planning Policy  
Lewis House,  
Manvers Street  
Bath  
BA1 1JG**

