

To all Parish & Town Councils

Local Plan Partial Update and Draft Statement of Community Involvement

Local Plan Partial Update

I am contacting you to inform you that the Council is commencing a partial update to its Local Plan. The Local Plan is the primary document setting out the Planning Policies for B&NES and there are a number of key policies that need to be updated.

The Council was preparing a new Local Plan within the context of the West of England Joint Spatial (JSP) but as the JSP has now been formally withdrawn the preparation of the new Local Plan has been delayed.

The partial update is not a new Local Plan but is an update to the Core Strategy & Placemaking Plan (together comprising the adopted Local Plan for B&NES). The update will not change the plan period of the adopted Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan. The most urgent issues that the partial update will address include:

1. The need to update particular policies to address changes in circumstances and national policy & legislation since our Core Strategy was adopted in 2014, particularly the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency
2. Update and replenish housing supply in order to ensure the Core Strategy requirement can be met
3. Review and update policies relating to the development of the Universities and the impacts of student accommodation on our communities

The Council is publishing a commencement document for consultation, which sets out the proposed scope of the partial update, why it is being prepared and the programme for its preparation. Alongside the commencement document the list of Core Strategy & Placemaking Plan policies proposed to be updated at this time has also been published for comment. The Council wants to hear your views on the proposed Local Plan partial update.

Both documents are being made available for comment for a period of 8 weeks, from 6th April to 1st June 2020.

Further details of the consultation and the documents are available at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/planning-consultation-local-plan-partial-update-and-statement-community-involvement>

Call for Sites

In order to help inform the partial update of the Local Plan the Council will also be undertaking a 'call for sites'. This will build upon previous 'call for sites' and we will be asking communities and other stakeholders to submit sites they consider to be potentially suitable for development for housing, employment uses or renewable energy development. The 'call for sites' will commence on 20th April and further details will be set out shortly before this date on the Council's website at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/form/propose-a-site-for-development>

COVID-19

The Council fully understands the critical nature of the unprecedented situation caused by COVID-19. However, the government has made it clear that the planning system should continue to function as best as possible and progress made. Therefore, after careful consideration this consultation is taking place and will be held online only. As would normally be the case at the commencement stage no public events or exhibitions will take place. This will protect the health of our communities. Consultation is open for a slightly longer period than would usually be the case and there will be opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to contribute ideas and comment on the emerging content of the Local Plan partial update when we consult on options and policy approaches later in the year. Please contact us if you have queries relating to this consultation and we will endeavour to respond in a timely manner.

It is noted at this time that parish and town councils are unable to hold meetings. However, co-ordinated comments on behalf of the parish or town council should still be submitted where possible through delegated authority to the Clerk. If formal approval of the comments by your council is required then it is suggested that, wherever possible, the comments are still submitted during the consultation period noting that this is subject to consideration and ratification by the parish/town council. If you are unable to submit comments on behalf of your council within the consultation period please let us know. In light of the current circumstances, the Council will be flexible to ensure that all those who want to comment on the commencement document will have the opportunity.

B&NES Council will work closely with parish & town councils in preparing the Local Plan partial update. The arrangements for this are still being considered within the current situation and we will be in touch again in due course. We will also be sending out a short survey to ascertain your views on how best to engage with parish & town councils.

Comments on the commencement document are encouraged to be submitted through the on-line comment form: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LocalPlanpartialupdateandDraftSCI> or by email to local_plan2@bathnes.gov.uk

If you are unable to comment electronically written comments can be posted to the address below. Please note that as staff are primarily working from home in line with government advice you will not receive an acknowledgement of your comments.

Planning Policy (Local Plan partial update)
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Lewis House
Manvers Street
Bath BA1 1JG

Draft Statement of Community Involvement

The Council is also reviewing its current Statement of Community Involvement (My Neighbourhood: A Neighbourhood Planning Protocol). The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will engage residents and other stakeholders in the planning process from planning applications through to the preparation of planning policy documents.

A draft of the reviewed SCI is also being published for consultation and is available for comment from 6th April to 1st June 2020.

Comments on the commencement document are encouraged to be submitted through the on-line comment form: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LocalPlanpartialupdateandDraftSCI> or by email to planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

If you are unable to comment electronically written comments can be posted to the address below. Please note that as staff are primarily working from home in line with government advice you will not receive an acknowledgement of your comments.

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If you have any queries on the consultations please contact the Planning Policy team, preferably by email at planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

