

To:planning.policy@n-somerset.gov.uk  
Bcc:Bleadon BOB Community Website  
10 Dec 2018

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- *Please find my response below:*

**Q1. Do you agree with these or are there other challenges or issues which we have not included and how might the Local Plan address these?**

How the Housing will be met?

Dr Liam Fox MP Dec 2014 in the House of Commons. In Apr 2012 NSC had a Core Strategy that was adopted and approved by the Planning Inspector, which provided "a revised regional spatial strategy that reflected local needs, infrastructure and objectives, which had a total target of 14,000 houses by 2026 ... The plan was subsequently challenged in the courts by the university of Bristol, which wants to build on green-belt land". The High Court ruled in favour of the university of Bristol. "Had the inspector given adequate reasoning, North Somerset would now be required only to provide 14,000 houses" (Previous regional strategy target of 26,750 was abandoned).

In July 2016 CPRE wrote on the new NSC Local Plan "North Somerset needs a period of stability in terms of Strategic Planning and not to be chasing a timetable of a new plan that meets the need of the JSP", we agree. So it seems NSC already has its original 2026 target in hand with 13,932 of the original 14,000 already committed or having planning. So it seems NSC is being asked to build an additional 11,000 for the remaining 10 years as part of the JSP partnership. Then presumably more development will be requested post 2036 for both NSC and JSP. When will the 'growth'/development stop? How do we protect green fields for general well-being, environmental, leisure, farming and future generations? How can NSC ensure that planning permissions are actually built rather than land banking?

What is a Sustainability Appraisal and will there be one for the Local Plan?

"Meet the needs of the present" Whose needs, NSC or surrounding less well managed and more populated authority areas? What about local food and economic agricultural security e.g. protecting rural areas, especially for future generations?

How can these issues be addressed through the Local Plan?

Bleadon is an ancient settlement with a rural tradition of farming, still practiced today. We/NSC needs to protect our local fields and green spaces and create a strategic gap for Bleadon to protect its character and stop it being consumed by urban sprawl from WSM.

**Q5. Do you agree with these or are there other challenges or issues which we have not included and how might the Local Plan address these?**

Around 40% of the land in North Somerset is designated as Green Belt but it is appears to be mainly Bristol and Bath sprawl that is encroaching into NSC, and Bleadon now, by jumping over the protected Green Belt. How will NSC protect rural agricultural village life?

**Q6. Do you agree with these or are there other challenges or issues which we have not included and how might the Local Plan address these?**

(6. Central Parishes) JSP growth is affecting villages. What percentage of this growth is for NSC local residents (many will continue to work in Bristol but prefer cheaper NSC prices)? How can NSC consider developing on 'internationally-protected habitats', these should remain protected?

**Q7. Do you agree with these or are there other challenges or issues which we have not included and how might the Local Plan address these?**

(7. Mendip Hills) The 'role of tourism and pressures for holiday accommodation' along with 'increased pressures for recreation' should not be allowed to compromise Bleadon's rural village community by over development as it will also destroy the reasons why tourists come to Bleadon in the first place. Tourism should be encouraged and created around open space and natural habitat recreation and education instead of man-made constructs. Outdoor pursuits will also improve public mental and physical health and well-being, which is also needed not just housing and economic growth.

**Q8. What are your views on the options for a revised settlement hierarchy?**

What is local housing growth?

What about local requirements decided by local residents? Why compliance to non-strategic requirements especially as government and NSC have not put the infrastructure in place to deal with the increase? E.g. hospitals, doctors, care homes, schools, etc. whose need will only increase with the influx of new residents. More for requirement will arise for NSC and JSP after 2036? Continual growth cannot be sustained.

Bleadon is visited by people from around the world with its 'quaint' English village surrounded by countryside, rivers, PROW, allotments, rivers and all the associated wildlife, as documented in books throughout the centuries (otters, badgers, kingfishers, water voles, etc.) Can Bleadon apply for protected 'quaint English parish status' now because with the rate of ongoing development required for NSC and JSP combined will destroy this community within the next generation.

What about DEFRA's new November 2018 campaign with the statement "*improving the environment within a generation and leaving it in a better state than we found it*"

What about the rise in second homes bought in North Somerset, i.e. "*almost one in every five homes sold last year in the area were to people who already had another property*" as published in the Mercury 15 Oct 2018? How can NSC ensure that the new homes built will be for new people and not second homes?

Where will the non-strategic sites be?

Green Buffers and Strategic Gaps should be created for Bleadon to stop the urban sprawl from WSM, and the Settlement Boundary should be protected

How will Neighbourhood Plans fit with the Local Plan?

Clarity is needed between local Parish Council Neighbourhood Plans (NDP) & Parish Plans, district NSC Local Plans, regional Joint Spatial Plans (JSP) and Central Government directives, including those used by the Planning Inspector to seemingly override local and district decision making. Also, clarity between NSC Local Plan and associated SHLAA and local Parish Council allocations.

3.1 Settlement hierarchy What is a settlement hierarchy?

Hierarchy determines "... what role each settlement can play in addressing the future housing needs of the **District...**" Yet this proposed plan seems to be mainly accommodating regional aspirations. At what point does development stop, when we have no land, and no ability to produce food left?

What is the existing hierarchy? Why does the existing hierarchy need to be reviewed?

Why is there such a large SHLAA 'likely' allocation next to the current Bleadon Infill settlement boundary as it is not a town or service village?

Why does the existing hierarchy need to be reviewed?

NSC states that a review of the settlement hierarchy and boundaries is needed because of NSC's involvement in the JSP. Who are these options for, the JSP or NSC including Bleadon's undeclared needs? Like Bristol has a green gap every community should have one before they are no longer communities with their own identity and cultural practices.

Settlements may have changed due to external development pressure not local need and so the review should not remove previous protections.

What are the options for a new hierarchy?

*"Distribute the growth and reduce the pressure on towns and particularly service villages"* but this may increase the pressure on infill villages like Bleadon unnecessarily.

**Q9. What are your views on the options for revised settlement boundaries?**

**3.2 Settlement boundaries What are settlement boundaries?**

Keep Bleadon's settlement boundary and create a natural green gap/green field space between villages and sprawling urbanized towns.

Why do the existing boundaries need to be reviewed?

Developments adjacent to settlements like Bleadon do not mean that Bleadon should lose its infill status and allow expansion to 'join' up with the urban sprawl from WSM

This plan seems to be all about growth but it is not necessarily in step with local Bleadon need and may be in conflict with its Neighbourhood Development Plan project. e.g. The SHLAA sites adjacent to the current settlement boundary (from likely to unlikely) indicates much more housing would be acceptable to NSC than currently expressed from the NDP feedback. Bleadon like other villages has an increasing elderly population that may not require family homes, instead potentially needing, bungalows, assisted home living, etc. How will the local plan ensure the correct type of local housing is built, not just what Central Government, JSP or the developer want to build?

What are the options for reviewing the settlement boundaries?

Options seem to seem to meet government's pro-growth agenda and JSP's target not necessarily Bleadon's local need.

When considering Bleadon's settlement boundary it should be remembered that part of it is in a flood zone, it currently has a fantastic landscape on the edge of the Mendip Hills that should be protected, and several protected areas that should remain e.g. ANOB, SSSI, SNCI, wildlife reserves, and a bird sanctuary on levels which should all be protected from direct and indirect development. It also is a settlement heritage that goes back to the Bronze age, i.e. Bleadon Man.

What is proposed for North Somerset?

*Infrastructure delivery plan* – The Infrastructure that includes hospitals, doctors, etc. should be in place before this large scale increase in development and associated residents.

NSC has stated that it has worked with JSP, town and parish Councils, developers and landowners, when will residents being actively consulted?

**Q27. What are your views on the proposed options for increasing urban living?**

(5. Urban Living) Until the NPPF emphasis on efficient land use and 'use of minimum density standards' and brownfield sites has been put in place infill settlement boundaries

such as Bleadon's should not be reviewed or changed. Focus seems to be on development and return on investment rather than local need.

'up not out' does not seem to have been applied to the new housing around WSM, which surely would have created a greater density in an urbanised area that would reduce the pressure on surrounding villages?

**Q37. How else can the Local Plan help to maintain and increase employment growth associated to Weston-super-Mare?**

(6. Employment) The NPPF has three dimensions to sustainable development, economic, social (built environment incl housing & services) and environmental (protecting & enhancing our natural, built & historic environment). We feel greater attention is being spent on the first two at the detriment of the environment and local Bleadon

**Role of the new Local Plan**

What about agricultural/farming opportunities for the next generation?

**Q38. What are your thoughts on the four proposed options for a Bristol Airport policy in the new Local Plan 2036? Do you have a preferred option?**

(7. Bristol Airport) How many airport employed people live in NSC? It seems to be all about growth not need

What are the current and future predicted health and environmental impacts for such a large proposed expansion? What are the local and regional impacts, how does this fit with climate change aspirations and reduction in CP2 levels? Not enough public discussion at a local level has been had to answer this question with all the relevant and related facts.

**Q39. Are there any other transport issues or challenges that have been missed? How can they be addressed in the Local Plan?**

(8. Transport) Keep Bleadon parish as an infill and encourage people to use it for recreational purposes improving mental and physical health and well-being and protect local wildlife and agriculture industry from housing and industrial over-development. Improve local bus transport also in relation to rail travel times so that they can be used to commute effectively.

New cycle route through Bleadon levels to Brean was created. Keep Bleadon settlement boundary and protect the levels for recreational and environmental purposes.

Strategic cycle routes - Reduce the speed on the A370 through Bleadon into/from WSM to encourage cycling. Maintain the footpath alongside the A370 to encourage local and tourist pedestrians.

**Q40. Are there any other options for how the Local Plan can deliver self-build and custom housing schemes?**

(9. Potential new policy areas) Site Allocations Plan is accommodating the JSP not necessarily NSC's local need

**Q41. Do you have any views on the review of affordable housing policies?**

Information on this topic is conflicting and scarce. What is the cost of an affordable house?

**Q43. Do you have any views on our intended approach to Health Impact Assessments?**

What about keeping the existing rural healthy living without the need for development and associated increased pollution?

**Q46. Should the Local Plan identify suitable land for large-scale renewable energy development to support new development?**

Why is land needed when we have roofs?

**Q48. Do you have any views on our intended approach to flood risk?**

Why does tourism accommodation, which may be occupied all year round, appear to have a different development criteria to permanent accommodation?

**Q49. Do you have any views on our intended approach to development on previously developed land in the countryside? What type of sites may be suitable for residential redevelopment?**

Building on these sites should not compromise the aims of the parish with a well defined 'village fence', or the surrounding agricultural practices.

**Q50. Do you have any views on the conversion of holiday accommodation to residential use in the countryside? What approach should future policies take?**

Building on these sites should not compromise the aims of the parish with a well defined 'village fence', or the surrounding agricultural practices

**Q51. Do you have any views on our approach to minerals?**

Prevent mineral extraction for onshore and off shore gas (fracking) in North Somerset, especially on the Bleadon Levels. Why has there been no local information on what this may entail in our communities? Keep the Bleadon settlement boundary and prevent development in the Bleadon and surrounding communities.

How does the Local Plan address the immediate fracking issue... e.g. NSC mercury article 19 November 2018 re: NSC Councillors vote to determine local fracking bids, rather than permitted development. Keep the fossils fuels in the ground and prevent CO2 buildup through any subsequent use.

**Q53. What are your views on our proposed approach to Green Infrastructure?**

Create an ecological zone for Bleadon linking its established key habitats and provide it with its own linked network. Include Bleadon's PROWs, SNCIs, SSSI, wildlife areas, etc. Improve Bleadon's and all members of the public opportunity for leisure, recreation and environmental education.