

Corston Parish Council

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B&NES Local Plan (Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan) Partial Update Consultation Response

Overview

In response to the public consultation on the partial update of the B&NES's Local Plan, Corston Parish Council has carefully examined the proposed changes to the authorities planning policy. These proposed changes driven in the main by the Council's declared climate emergency and pledge to enable carbon neutrality in the district by 2030. Also the ecological emergency declared in response to the escalating threat to wildlife and ecosystems.

The majority of the proposed changes are seen as appropriate if the Council's climate and ecological objectives are to be achieved. A number of the proposed changes offer more than one option for change. In these circumstances it is considered that, provided the resulting change is pragmatic, deliverable and cost effective, the option that delivers the optimum result should be adopted.

However it is considered that a balance is to struck between the proposed changes and existing Green Belt policy that has successfully maintained conservation, ecological standards, open countryside and historic landscapes for the benefit of current and future generations.

Consultation Reference DM6

Areas considered suitable for applying the emerging policy for harnessing wind energy require much closer scrutiny and detail analysis to ensure visual and physical detriment to local communities are prevented.

Consultation Reference DM34 ST 6 Park and Ride

In considering this proposal to change a traditional Park and Ride site to a multi modal site, when taken together with the new proposal to investigate a reduction of non residential on street parking, an unacceptable situation could easily exist where parking space outside of the city will be seriously compromised.

The proposal to use a multi modal park and ride site for power generation, e bike and e car hire, farmers markets, pop up venues and festivals, household waste recycling centres, is considered implausible and need rethinking.

Consultation Reference Bath 6 Park and Ride

The proposed removal of Park and Ride sites from the Green Belt is not supported. Considering the proposed changes that are being considered for these amenities the need to make a special and compelling case for change and the additional scrutiny that sites in the Green Belt require is considered essential.

Consultation Reference DM36 Policy DB2 Development in Green Belt villages

Options 1 or 2 are not supported.

Housing Development Boundaries should remain with the infill locations individually identified. The recognised planning policy definition of the infill criteria to be included in this policy for ease of reference,

B&NES Five-year Housing Land Supply and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Updated 2021-01-07

COR1

This proposal to develop 180 new dwellings on land adjacent to Corston Lane and close to the A4 Bath Road has been examined in at least three earlier land availability assessments. The constraints previously identified have resulted in this option being removed from the earlier assessments. These constraints still exist and make any proposed development of this scale at this location implausible.

A short summary of the constraints include:

Exceptionally limited access onto Corston Lane for the large size of the development. The additional number of private, utility and service vehicles that will result will cause unacceptable congestion on a narrow country lane that is already used as a convenient rat run between the A39 and A4.

Currently exceptionally high traffic flows and regular peak time congestion on the A4 adjacent to the site and the Corston Lane tee junction cause disruption and potentially high levels of air pollution.

The 180 new dwellings proposed would double the size of the village without adding any essential facilities or services and result in an unacceptable loss of local Green Belt open space and the removal of currently productive farmland.

It is considered that COR1 should be removed from this current land availability assessment exercise.

Corston Community Housing Development Initiative

In 2020 a group of Corston's residents launched a local community housing development initiative to create a limited number of sustainable and affordable houses. This followed concerns raised by residents at a previous annual parish meeting about the lack of affordable housing in Corston.

Having undertaken a local consultation exercise, they have established sufficient local support to establish a steering group. Positive initial discussions have been held with the Duchy of Cornwall, the landowner of COR1, on the feasibility of release of some land for development of a small number of dwellings that would form the basis of a local community housing development project.

Discussions are at an early stage and the use of a small area of land associated with COR1 forms part of these discussions. However, Corston Parish Council

understands that any scheme would be advanced on the basis of securing Rural Exception Site status for the area required. The number of dwellings would therefore be much lower than a market development, commensurate with the existing constraints already identified and deliver significant local benefit through allocations made according to a local lettings policy.

Corston Parish Council have indicated their “in principle support” for such a community-led housing scheme, subject to the development of detailed proposals and the necessary viability tests.

COR2

This area was considered and removed from the last land availability review in 2017.

The constraints identified remain and are associated with the site being located in a Flood Zone and in an area adjacent to Corston Brook that is rich in local wildlife and flora and fauna.

In addition the site is bounded by a very steep slope, and does not have convenient road access. Both these factors would make construction and subsequent access for residents very difficult.

It is considered that COR2 should be removed from this current land availability assessment exercise.

NSL05

Corston has a close, longstanding and meaningful community relationship with our neighbouring parish at Newton St. Loe (NSL). In previous land availability assessments where land has been identified for major development at NSL, residents and the two parish councils have worked closely to ensure that all restrictive issues are identified and threats to the Green Belt surrounding the two villages are fully addressed and not overlooked.

Past assessments, including the most recent known as “West Twerton” have in different ways considered development of specific areas at this location. All have eventually been withdrawn due to the recognised constraints and issues.

The current NSL05 proposal for an exceptionally large area of land between the Globe and Newbridge, bounded on either side by the River Avon and Pennyquick, has been examined in the past; the constraints identified then still exist and will have a significant impact on the suitability of this area for development.

These constraints include:

Exceptionally high traffic flows and significant congestion at this location as major routes converge at the Globe roundabout from the A39, A4 and Pennyquick. Any benefit in this area as a result of reduced traffic from measures introduced from the declared climate emergency will be lost due to traffic numbers increasing as a result of the very large development proposed.

Additionally, the openness of the Green Belt at this location will be seriously compromised by any development.

Significantly, an attractive major route into the World Heritage Site of The City of Bath will be unacceptably compromised by such a large development. This already being recognised as an issue not to be compromised as shown in the partial update of B&NES's Local Plan at paragraph 3.11 that states:

“At a strategic level, opportunities on the edge of Bath were assessed and allocated where appropriate through preparing the Core Strategy. The impact of development on the edge of the City not only in Green Belt terms, but on the World Heritage Site and its setting, the Cotswolds AONB and other environmental assets, was shown to limit development potential. Circumstances are not considered to have changed since adoption of these Development Plan Documents “.

Lastly, parts of the area designated as NSL05 are subject to regular flooding.

Conclusion

Consultation Reference

DM6 requires much closer scrutiny to determine suitable locations for wind generation.

DM34 ST 6 Park and Ride proposals are considered implausible and need rethinking.

Bath 6 Park and Ride Removal of Park and Ride sites from the Green Belt is not supported

DM36 Policy DB2 Development in Green Belt villages Options 1 or 2 are not supported.

COR1, COR2 and NSL05 to be removed from the current B&NES Five-year Housing Land Supply and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)
Updated 2021-01-07

Cllr John Bravin
Chair Corston Parish Council

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