

3.4 Consultation on the critical issues facing North Somerset over the plan period took place in Summer 2020 through the Challenges for the future document and including the proposed vision and strategic priorities. This was followed in Autumn 2020 by the Choices for the future document which confirmed our priorities and set out four broad spatial development alternatives for discussion. Links to the Choices and Challenges consultation documents and the consultation statements which set out the details of the response received are provided in the background papers.

3.5 The Local Plan vision was consulted upon in Challenges and was broadly supported.

By 2038 there will be a transformation in the way we live which reflects a more responsible attitude to climate change and the use of resources. New homes, buildings and communities will be highly sustainable, accessible and attractive places with higher quality standards. There will be more diversity in terms of the form and type of new development to increase variety and choice to better meet the needs of all, create jobs and to tackle inequality. Regeneration will transform and breathe new life into existing towns and valued areas will be protected. People's well-being, a strong sense of community, opportunity and fairness will be at the heart of all development in North Somerset.

3.6 The Choices consultation fed back on the response received to Challenges and set out how the local plan would address the identified key issues:

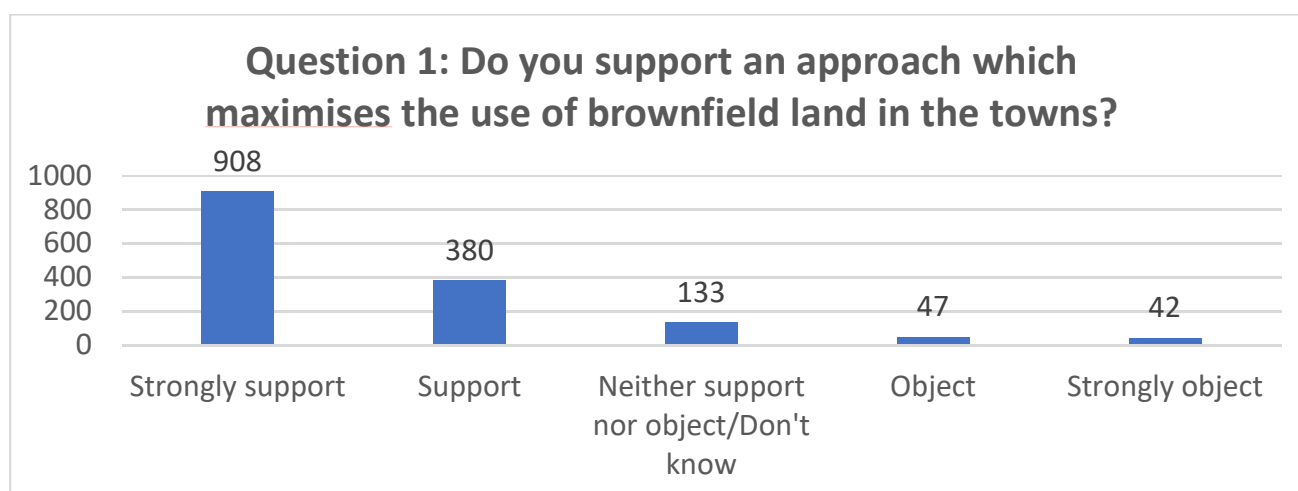
- Importance of climate change: *We will ensure that the local plan reflects climate change principles.*
- Locate new houses near jobs and services: *Prioritising growth at sustainable places.*
- Don't build in the flood plain: *Avoid areas at highest risk of flooding.*
- Prioritise brownfield land: *Supports regeneration and likely to be close to facilities.*
- Encourage active travel: *Make walking and cycling the preferred and most attractive option.*
- More genuine affordable housing: *Encourage a variety of tenures and types of housing.*
- Better design: *Excellent design becomes the norm.*
- Green Belt: *Depending on the agreed approach, some areas may need to be reassessed.*

3.7 Government guidance requires the local plan to identify the priorities for the development and use of land. The Council consulted on draft priorities in Challenges for the future and these were amended in Choices. These are important in that they will directly influence the development of the spatial strategy and the broad distribution of growth. The Local Plan strategic priorities are as follows:

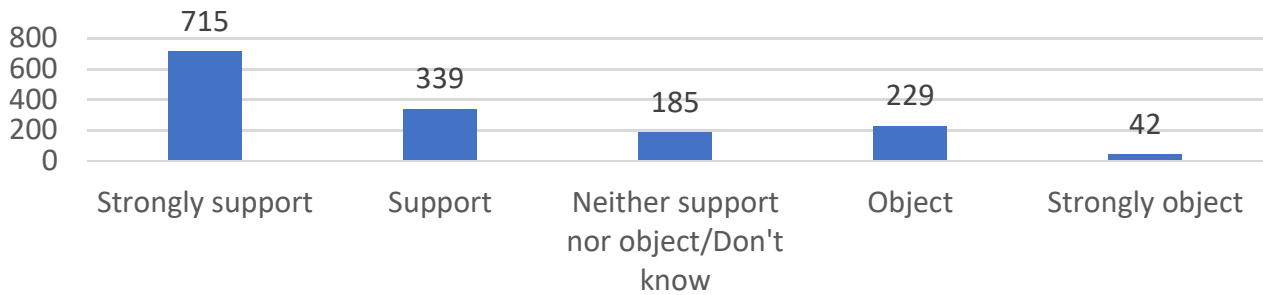
- To promote sustainable development and address the climate emergency.
- To deliver the zero carbon ambition by maximising the opportunities for low carbon development and the use of renewable energy.
- To develop new and existing communities in a way which enhances health and wellbeing, reduces inequalities and is child and family friendly.

- To increase the number and range of job opportunities across the district, particularly at the towns to give people the opportunity to work near to where they live.
- To prioritise the location of new development close to places with a wide range of services, facilities and job opportunities.
- To address the decline in the town centres of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead through supporting regeneration and place-making initiatives which revitalise these places as the focus for retailing, community uses, housing and jobs.
- To reduce car use, encourage walking and cycling, and high quality and effective public transport.
- To deliver a diverse range of housing in a variety of tenures, sizes and forms, particularly genuine affordable housing, to meet future needs of North Somerset residents at locations where they are most needed.
- To deliver essential new strategic transport infrastructure to support new development and enable more sustainable travel options.
- To deliver residential densities through good design, particularly at town centres, transport hubs and on brownfield sites.
- To provide essential infrastructure in step with development, both transport infrastructure and community infrastructure such as schools, healthcare facilities and community centres.
- To prioritise the importance and delivery of green spaces when considering new development, support priority habitats and species and safeguard areas at risk of flooding.

3.8 The Choices for the future consultation focused on alternative approaches to the broad distribution of growth (housing and employment). This included a structured questionnaire which helped to highlight whether respondents (individuals and organisations) supported or objected and their reasons. There was clear support for an approach which maximises the use of brownfield land in the towns (60% strongly support, 25% support) and that new housing should avoid locations which are at risk from flooding (47% strongly support, 22% support).



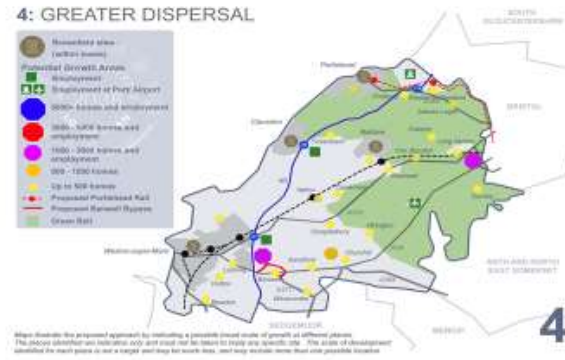
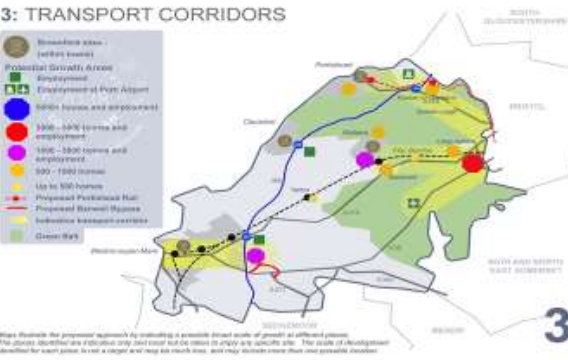
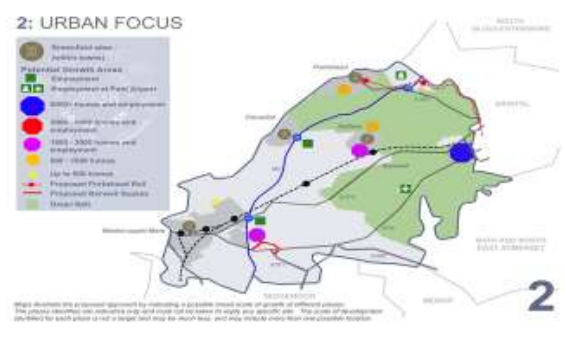
Question 2: New housing development should avoid locations which are at risk from flooding. Do you support this approach?



3.9 The Choices for the future consultation presented four alternative approaches for identifying how the new growth could be accommodated. While these illustrated the principal alternatives, the consultation document emphasised that there will be other options and that the preferred strategy may be a hybrid combining elements from different alternatives. Each of the approaches sought to accommodate the growth required (housing and employment) but through the identification of broad locations, not specific sites. The approaches avoided the use of areas at risk of flooding for residential in accordance with the identified strategic priorities. The four approaches were:

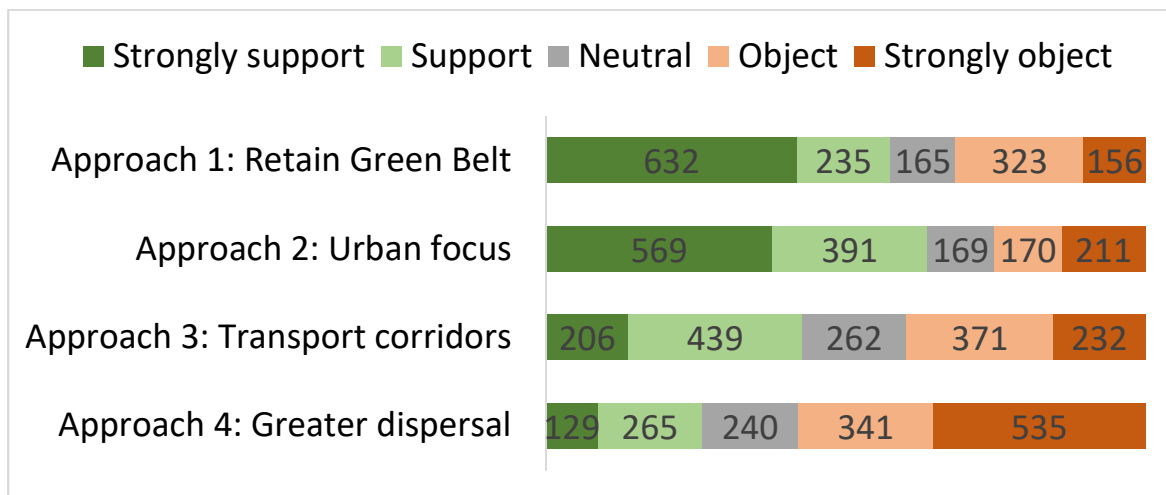
1. Retain Green Belt: Development opportunities identified outside the Green Belt.
2. Urban Focus: Maximised the amount of growth close to the four towns as well as locations well related to the Bristol urban area using a relatively small number of large strategic sites.
3. Transport Corridors: Focused growth on existing or potentially enhanced public transport corridors into Bristol and Weston.
4. Greater Dispersal: Growth is more widely distributed using a large number of smaller development locations.

These were illustrated by the following diagrams:



3.10 The Sustainability Appraisal of the four approaches (see background papers) concluded that Urban Focus performed best against the sustainability objectives and Greater Dispersal the worst. An approach which, all other things being equal, seeks to locate development closer to a wide range of services, facilities and jobs and public transport opportunities tends to score better in relation to a range of sustainability objectives.

3.11 The response to the Choices consultation on the four approaches is summarised in the following chart (see consultation statement for further details). It is important to emphasise that this exercise was not a referendum; the purpose was to help understand the advantages and disadvantages, how well they reflected our vision and priorities and therefore how they might inform the preferred spatial strategy. Overall, taking 'strongly support' and 'support' together, Urban Focus was just ahead, although Retain Green Belt was very close behind and scored better in terms of 'strongly support'. Transport Corridors was roughly 50/50 in terms of overall support/objection. The Greater Dispersal approach was significantly less well supported.



3.12 Further evidence has been produced by AECOM on the transport implications of the four approaches. This study assessed the approaches against the following four objectives:

1. To reduce the need to travel, and the distances that people will need to travel, to access key opportunities, facilities and services including employment, leisure and retail.
2. To maximise opportunities to facilitate travel by walking, cycling and e-bikes or emerging personal transport modes.
3. To deliver access to high quality public transport services, supporting mobility across North Somerset and further afield, which is available to all.
4. To reduce the impact of vehicle travel on the highway network, including in terms of congestion, safety and the quality of our natural and built environment.

This assessment produced a clear ranking of the approaches in terms of which provided the most beneficial impacts in terms of the objectives with Urban Focus best, then Transport Corridors, then Retain Green Belt and Greater Dispersal worst (the first two were identified as being positive overall, the last two overall negative). Urban Focus scored the highest in relation to objectives 1 and 4, and equal highest in respect of objectives 2 and 3. The study also provided an analysis with regards to the carbon impact and Urban Focus also performed best.

3.13 At this point in the plan making process the assessment of the evidence and the response to consultation has highlighted a number of key issues which will need to be considered as part of the development of the preferred spatial strategy. In many areas there is national guidance to be followed but in others there is more scope for local discretion and the planning judgement made can influence the spatial strategy. The following section sets out a summary of the principal issues raised through the consultation process and by councillors, including the Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel (SPEDR)..

(a) How does the climate emergency and nature emergency shape the spatial strategy?

The overall objective of the planning system is to deliver sustainable development (a balance of economic, social and environmental objectives) and support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. The local plan will provide the local expression of what sustainability means for North Somerset and provides the spatial expression of the Corporate Plan's objectives where consistent with government guidance. The importance given to climate and nature emergencies is expressed in our strategic priorities which are used to inform the spatial strategy and the identification of the broad locations for growth. They emphasise the importance accorded to reducing the carbon impact of development, minimising car trips and the protection of sensitive environmental areas such as areas at risk of flooding.

(b) How can we create communities where people will aspire to live? How do we deliver excellent design and placemaking?

It is important to ensure that all new development of whatever scale or wherever it is located meets our objectives for high quality design. This is an aspiration which can be applied to strategic locations at the towns as well as in rural locations. The government has launched a number of initiatives to ensure 'beautiful' design and the detailed policies,

masterplans and design guidance will need to show how that will be delivered. In particular we need to set out a clear objective to create greener, more sustainable, low carbon lifestyles. It is important to create opportunities for smaller builders, self-build and innovative solutions, and to create developments which people will aspire to.

(c) How much development is appropriate in villages and the rural areas?

More dispersed development is less sustainable and infrastructure provision is less effective. There will be the need for some development at villages, but this should be proportionate and restricted to addressing local community needs or other specific opportunities and focused at the relatively more sustainable places. The scale of the housing challenge and concerns about delivery rates on large strategic sites will mean that there will be pressure to allocate a higher proportion of the growth at villages. The rural areas must not be seen as the contingency for growth that cannot be delivered elsewhere in more sustainable locations.

In the new plan it is suggested that a revised approach to development in villages is explored. Development within settlement boundaries would be acceptable in principle (subject to criteria) but outside settlement boundaries more restrictive policies will apply. This will require a review of all settlement boundaries and the identification of, where appropriate, allocated sites within new settlement boundaries. These sites could provide a useful source of supply for smaller builders. This approach would mean that there is no longer any distinction between service/infill villages and the potential which exists in the Core Strategy for development schemes to come forward outside settlement boundaries would be removed.

There may also be scope for identifying one or two larger villages for an appropriate scale of growth, particularly those with access to a relatively good range of facilities and public transport accessibility (eg rail stations). Elsewhere we should consider more limited opportunities for allocations at the more sustainable remaining villages, particularly where it addresses local needs such as for different tenures and sizes of housing.

(d) Should new settlements be part of the solution?

The climate emergency, technical work on sustainability and transport and the feedback from consultation provide a strong steer that free standing new communities remote from services, facilities and jobs and difficult to access with effective public transport, are a much less sustainable option. While they can provide attractive environments, they are likely to be predominantly car-based.

(e) Post-pandemic, what might change in terms of the requirements of a spatial strategy? Do electric vehicles and more working from home support a more dispersed pattern of development?

Working from home, or other local workspaces, may become more common in the future. This may see a rise in the need for more flexible workspace and a reduction in commuting to other centres. However, many jobs cannot be carried out by working from home, and work trips only comprise about 20% of all trips. It remains important to prioritise growth at locations where as many trips as possible can be made by alternative modes, including access to effective public transport (including the rail network). While electric vehicles are preferable to conventional vehicles in terms of their carbon contribution, they use scarce resources in their construction, and still cause congestion, accidents and produce particulates. It is important to prioritise walking and cycling on all new developments for

physical and mental health reasons. We would like to explore the designing of new neighbourhoods to function on the basis of 10-15 minutes' walk time to key facilities.

(f) Should we consider areas at risk of flooding?

Government policy is that plans must take into account the current and future impacts of climate change and direct development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding. It is possible to develop on some areas of flood risk subject to the sequential and exception tests set out in government guidance and this has taken place in North Somerset in the past. However, flood mitigation is likely to be expensive (and limit the funding available for other infrastructure provision) and climate change is predicted to increase the risks in the future.

On flood risk areas within the towns there are wider sustainability and regeneration benefits in terms of maximising the use of brownfield and other underused land in locations which are often protected by sea defences. It may also be possible to accommodate less vulnerable uses than residential in areas at risk of flooding such as employment.

(g) In what circumstances is it appropriate to amend the Green Belt?

The government attaches great importance to Green Belts and once established, they should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Green Belts serve five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

We must demonstrate that we have examined fully all other reasonable alternatives before identifying Green Belt locations. This includes maximising the use of brownfield and underused land, optimising densities in towns and other locations well served by public transport and after liaison with neighbouring authorities. If exceptional circumstances exist to consider Green Belt locations as part of the spatial strategy, then these should be limited in number to minimise the impact on the Green Belt and focused on the most sustainable locations well related to the urban areas and public transport opportunities.

Given the scale of the housing requirement and taking into account existing environmental and other constraints, the scope for optimising urban capacity and densities, the climate and nature emergencies, the need to identify sustainable patterns of development including safeguarding areas at risk of flooding, and assuming unmet needs cannot be accommodated in neighbouring authorities, the work undertaken to date indicates that an exceptions case for development in the Green Belt could be made. This will need to be tested through the plan-making process.

NPPF guidance is that plans should 'set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land' (paragraph 138).

It is possible to amend Green Belt boundaries to create additional Green Belt but this will require robust justification to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances. This may be more challenging when dealing with areas of countryside on the outer edge of the existing Green Belt which is difficult to justify in terms of Green Belt purposes.

(h) Are we maximising the capacity in urban areas?

There is a clear government expectation that we maximise opportunities within the urban areas through the use of previously developed land (PDL) and increased densities, and changes in the retail sector and relaxations around permitted development and changes of use will provide opportunities. We must also ensure that we set a high standard of urban design, greening and rewilding to enhance our towns. Placemaking studies should help to identify potential opportunities. There are however challenges in terms of maintaining a mix and balance of commercial land and premises in towns (such as pressure to convert employment use to residential) and also viability, land assembly and deliverability issues.

(i) How do we make effective provision for employment?

The Employment Land Spatial Needs Assessment will provide the evidence to support the spatial strategy in relation to jobs. Forecasting is currently particularly uncertain given the economic downturn, post-Brexit adjustments and recovery following the pandemic as are assumptions around future work patterns and the performance of different sectors. Early indications from the ELSNA is that there is likely to be a slowing down in the rate of job growth in North Somerset compared to previous forecasts and a smaller share of employment relative to the other West of England authorities. There may also be less demand for office space in the future and a need to consider more innovative ways of working. These trends could have implications such as in terms of increased pressure to convert employment land to residential. However, we will need to continue to review the evidence on future employment demand and identify an appropriate range of allocations and business opportunities. It will be essential that the plan addresses the need for grow on and flexible workspaces as well as a positive approach to the expansion in situ of existing businesses.

(j) Can we deliver the housing numbers required?

Large sites can have lengthy lead in times and may require complex and expensive infrastructure which needs to be delivered in step with development. The amount of growth on large sites which can be delivered within the plan period will need to be established and there will be pressure to identify a greater variety of types and sizes of site (a more dispersed approach) to provide short term supply and avoid market absorption issues (such as too many units being available for sale at one time). This is likely to increase calls to release a much wider variety of locations, regardless of how well they fit with the spatial strategy and our priorities.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies and assesses potential development opportunities put forward by landowners/developers. The identification of a site in SHLAA does not imply that it is supported by the local planning authority; it is simply a schedule of opportunities to be assessed through the plan making process. This will identify and assess broad locations followed by more detailed investigation of potential sites which may be considered for allocation through the plan. The current SHLAA indicates that there is unlikely to be sufficient capacity to meet the government's housing requirement at sustainable locations consistent with the spatial strategy outside the Green Belt and safeguarding land at risk of flooding, which supports the case for the need to consider Green Belt locations.

(k) What happens if we cannot meet our needs?

The housing required for North Somerset is no longer locally determined. It is established through the Government's national standard methodology and the output is extremely challenging. This raises a number of significant issues. On the basis of robust evidence, clear priorities and an understanding of the land available (such as through SHLAA) we

need to demonstrate that we have assessed all reasonable alternatives to deliver sustainable development. If we cannot deliver the growth or infrastructure required, and before we consider Green Belt locations, we need to engage in joint working with neighbouring authorities and other relevant bodies. We would also need to show why locations previously considered (eg through the Joint Spatial Plan) but possibly no longer being pursued are now not considered suitable.

The scale of the housing challenge facing North Somerset is substantially higher than the scale of growth which has been delivered previously. There are significant constraints affecting the district and uncertainties regarding whether the growth is deliverable over the plan period and the supporting infrastructure can be provided. While further testing and assessment is required through the plan-making process, the evidence to date indicates that it is likely to be concluded that the full requirement cannot be accommodated and that there will be unmet need which will need to be discussed with neighbouring authorities through the duty to co-operate. These issues also affect neighbouring areas and for similar reasons there may also be a request to North Somerset to accommodate growth arising from the WECA Spatial Development Strategy through the duty to cooperate.

3.14 There is a broad alignment between our Local Plan vision and priorities, the climate and ecological emergency objectives, the technical studies, the overall response to engagement and government guidance on delivering sustainable development. This can be summarised in terms the following key principles:

- Maximise brownfield and redevelopment opportunities at the towns.
- Prioritise locations close to the greatest range of services, facilities and job opportunities and public transport opportunities.
- Avoid sensitive areas, including land at risk of flooding.

3.15 The next stage is to identify the preferred spatial strategy. This will be a hybrid of the four approaches presented as part of the Choices for the future consultation but based on the principles set out above. A clear spatial strategy is important as it will provide the framework for the scale and distribution of the growth required. This will enable the broad locations to be identified which are best placed to deliver the growth in accordance with the spatial strategy and provide the context for the preparation of the Consultation Draft Local Plan containing the detailed policies and allocations for consultation at the end of 2021. Should additional sites be required in the future, the spatial strategy will guide the selection process.

3.16 The recommended preferred spatial strategy is as follows. This reflects the Strategic Planning Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel's considerations and subsequent discussions with senior Members.

Priority will be given to locating new residential and mixed use development in or close to urban areas where there is an existing or proposed wide range of facilities, services and jobs, and there are opportunities to encourage active travel, particularly at locations which are currently, or have the potential to be, well served by public transport. Employment opportunities will be encouraged at accessible locations well-related to the urban areas and where sustainable transport opportunities can be maximised. Residential development in areas at risk of flooding will be minimised outside the towns. The amount of development at villages and in the countryside will relate to local community needs.

3.17 The spatial strategy forms the starting point for the assessment of the broad locations for future growth. The following diagram indicates the broad steps which will then need to be followed. This process will be both sequential and iterative. Steps 3 to 6 relate to new development opportunities outside the Green Belt



3.18 The following is an initial high level assessment based on this approach. All locations and capacities will be subject to further investigation.

1. Existing planning permissions: Housing and employment sites with existing planning permission anticipated to be delivered during the plan period. This comprises some 3,600 dwellings.
2. Urban capacity: Opportunities within the four towns. This is currently expected to comprise some 2,000 dwellings on identified sites and 1,725 dwellings through small scale windfall.
3. Town expansion: Potential locations well located in relation to the four towns (outside the Green Belt). Subject to further testing, this could deliver up to around 3,000 dwellings at Weston where the main opportunity is a potential growth location north of A371 and east of the M5 linked to the delivery of the Banwell Bypass, and around 1,500 dwellings at Nailsea. There is potential for new employment provision at Weston-super-Mare, as part of new strategic developments and at locations well related to the urban areas.
4. Other sustainable settlements: Are there any other settlements outside the Green Belt with good accessibility/level of services which could accommodate a limited amount of growth? This is only likely to relate to one or two of the larger villages, particularly with rail stations. Potentially this could comprise development at Yatton and Backwell amounting to some 1,000 dwellings in total, although the potential locations and overall capacity would be subject to further assessment.
5. Rural areas: Development in most villages will be restricted and limited to local opportunities particularly where they address community needs. Small site windfall in the rural areas is expected to be about 900 dwellings. A limited number of allocations at the larger villages could comprise some further 500 dwellings. The appropriate scale and location of development will be subject to further investigation.
6. Other opportunities: As part of the process of assessing whether exceptional circumstances exist to consider Green Belt locations, we need to demonstrate that all other reasonable alternatives have been explored. This includes the assessment of the potential for development on land liable to flood, the promotion of new rural communities and opportunities in neighbouring authorities. Given the preferred spatial strategy is to avoid relatively less sustainable locations and safeguard land at risk of flooding, this is unlikely to result in significant additional capacity. Before using Green Belt land we need to consider potential opportunities in neighbouring areas through the duty to co-operate.

7. Green Belt: If there is still capacity to be identified, then the final step is to consider the potential for a limited number of sustainable and deliverable Green Belt opportunities well related to urban areas. Taking account of the potential capacity identified in steps 1-6 the initial indication is that this amounts to just over 14,000 dwellings meaning that there is likely to be a shortfall of just under 6,000 dwellings in relation to the government's housing requirement over the plan period of 20,085 dwellings. It is important to underline that this does not become a target for development in the Green Belt. The priority would be to consider sustainable sites which are deliverable, accord with the spatial strategy and cause least harm to Green Belt purposes. Given delivery and infrastructure issues the potential which could be delivered over the plan period will be subject to detailed investigation, including an assessment of land inside the South Bristol Link (Colliters Way) and then sustainable locations well related to the edge of Bristol and the towns of Nailsea and Portishead.

3.19 By applying a process of identifying the broad locations through the sequential steps, this is likely to lead to an outcome which (subject to further testing) is summarised as follows:

- Urban focused with growth concentrated at Weston and Nailsea outside of the Green Belt.
- Growth of an appropriate scale at other relatively sustainable settlements such as Yatton or Backwell.
- Development in villages and the countryside elsewhere where related to local community needs.
- Minimising development in areas at risk of flooding (except in the towns).
- Discounting of more remote freestanding settlements as being less sustainable (lack of higher order facilities, services and a range of jobs and encourages car use).
- Acceptance that given the scale of the housing challenge and the lack of sustainable locations elsewhere, exceptional circumstances exist which require the consideration of Green Belt locations, but these should be limited and focussed in the most sustainable locations well-related to the towns and urban areas.

3.20 The recommended preferred spatial strategy is summarised in the following table. All broad locations and capacities are illustrative and will be subject to further testing and assessment. The plan-making process will use the government's housing requirement as the starting point and assess all reasonable alternatives but the evidence to date indicates that there is unlikely to be sufficient sustainable and deliverable locations to accommodate the scale of housing required. If this is confirmed the Council will need to engage with neighbouring authorities to discuss if North Somerset's unmet need can be delivered elsewhere.

Housing requirement		20,085
Existing permissions	Expected to be delivered 2023-2038	3,600
Urban capacity	Small site windfall	1,725
	Large site allocations	2,000
Town expansion	Weston-super-Mare – primarily north of A371, east of M5	3,000
	Nailsea	1,500
Other settlements	Yatton/Backwell	1,000
Rural areas	Small site windfall	900
	Large site allocations within revised settlement boundaries of larger villages – locations to be determined	500
Total outside Green Belt		14,225
Residual		5,860

Green Belt	To consider opportunities well related to the urban areas with priority given to locations with least impact on the Green Belt. This will include the assessment of land inside Colliters Way (South Bristol Link), broad locations on the edge of Bristol, Nailsea and Portishead.	To be determined
Potential unmet need	For discussion with neighbouring authorities through the duty to co-operate.	To be determined

3.21 New employment growth opportunities will be identified using the ELSNA to inform the amount and type of provision required and guided by the spatial strategy. Employment should be located at locations which are accessible to their labour force by walking, cycling and effective public transport and to the wider transport network dependent on the needs of the business. The priority will be to identify locations within and adjacent to the towns where there is good accessibility for employees, customers and suppliers, then locations with good accessibility to the towns. The priority will be to identify new employment land at Weston-super-Mare and at strategic development sites and through the sustainable expansion of existing businesses. In addition, there is an opportunity to consider employment development opportunities in the Green Belt well related to Bristol, including as part of any strategic development area. These could be particularly attractive to businesses seeking a high-quality environment but with good access to the city using sustainable transport. The review of the Green Belt will also need to consider whether there are opportunities at the port and airport.

3.22 This report represents an interim conclusion and further work will be required to assess and test the spatial strategy and potential broad locations and we will work with communities and stakeholders to help refine our approach. However, the confirmation of the preferred spatial strategy and potential broad locations at this stage will provide a clear framework for progressing the plan-making process.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation and engagement will be undertaken throughout the plan-making process in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A consultation statement is prepared at each stage (see background papers for statements relating to Challenges and Choices).

4.2 The key issues and response to consultation were discussed at the Strategic Planning Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel (SPEDR) on 10 March 2021 where it was resolved that:

The Panel recommends that Executive Committee applies the following principles to inform their consideration of the Local Plan preferred spatial strategy:

1: Priority should be given to locating new residential and mixed use development in or close to urban areas where there is an existing or proposed wide range of facilities, services and jobs, and where there are opportunities to encourage active travel, particularly at locations which are currently, or have the potential to be, well served by public transport.

2: Employment opportunities should be encouraged at accessible locations well-related to the urban areas and on sustainable transport corridors.

3: Residential development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided outside the towns.

4: The amount of development at villages and in the countryside should be minimised and should relate to local community needs.

In addition, the Local Plan must ensure that new development demonstrates high quality design standards and energy efficiency.

4.3 The SPEDR recommendation has been taken into account in the framing of the preferred spatial strategy although with the following adjustments following discussion with senior Members:

- Residential development in areas at risk of flooding is amended from should be 'avoided' to 'minimised' to clarify that the spatial strategy is not discounting any opportunities entirely.
- In relation to the amount of development at villages and in the countryside, the phrase 'should be minimised' is removed to clarify that the spatial strategy will seek to respond to local community needs where appropriate.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Plan will be progressed using existing budgets.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The North Somerset Local Plan is a statutory development plan. Local plans are prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The new local plan play an important role in defining and delivering the Councils' response to the climate emergency. It will set out the approach to climate change and environmental issues in terms of, for example, the location and form of development, renewable energy, minimising car use, encouraging green infrastructure and biodiversity, avoiding sensitive areas such as areas at flood risk and minimising waste.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The absence of an up-to-date development plan incurs risks related to the uncertainty of future investment decisions and speculative proposals potentially leading to less sustainable development solutions.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The local plan will be subject to an equalities impact assessment.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The new planning framework has significant implications for a wide range of Council services in terms of, for example, the future location of population, jobs and infrastructure.

11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11.1 It is not essential to clarify the preferred spatial strategy at this stage in the plan-making process but this will provide a clear framework for future work.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Challenges for the future consultation document.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/Local%20Plan%202038%20-%20Challenges%20for%20the%20Future.pdf>

Challenges for the future consultation statement.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/Local%20Plan%202038%20Consultation%20Statement%20October%202020.pdf>

Choices for the future consultation document.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/North%20Somerset%20Local%20Plan%202038%20challenges%20and%20choices%20part%20two%20-%20Choices%20for%20the%20future.pdf>

Choices for the future consultation statement.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/Choices%20Consultation%20Statement.pdf>

Choices sustainability appraisal interim report.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/sustainability%20appraisal%20-%20interim%20report.pdf>

Choices alternative approaches methodology paper.

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/alternative%20approaches%20methodology%20paper.pdf>

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment interim report

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/strategic%20housing%20land%20availability%20%E2%80%93%20interim%20report.pdf>

SPEDR report 10 March 2021

<https://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/Meetings/document/report/NSCPM-34-40>

Transport Assessment (AECOM) March 2021

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