

NORTH SOMERSET CORE STRATEGY CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES EXAMINATION JUNE 2016

Nailsea Town Council is not opposing North Somerset Council's proposed housing numbers for the town nor the proposal that they should be delivered as part of the five-year land supply. Given the declining and ageing population of the town, the type of housing is a more significant issue than the numbers per se. The Council is concerned by the risk that certain types of development could compound the demographic issues in the town, which is why it is pleased that its Housing Mix and Type Policy has been adopted in the Core Strategy.

There are two linked issues causing concern to the Town Council relating to the impact of development in the town, namely the consequence on the allocation of sites of a refusal to conduct a Green Belt review; and secondly the pressure on unallocated sites. The Town Council has particular concerns about the deliverability of the proposed site for 450 dwellings at North West Nailsea as part of the five-year land supply, and the pressure any delay in delivering this site will create on less suitable sites elsewhere.

It is crucial to highlight that the refusal to have a Green Belt review precludes the extension of this protection as well as not allowing for the assessment of sites currently within the Green Belt.

The Strategic Gap between Nailsea and Backwell is an important visual and physical feature between the two settlements. In the Town Council's opinion, the land south of the bridleway on the edge of the settlement boundary fulfils the purpose of Green Belt, and should be included in it.

The consequence for Nailsea of this land not being protected, which was entirely predicted by the Town Council, is that the first major planning application for residential development is expected on a site around Youngwood Lane, in the area that the Town Council wants protected, and is not in the proposed site allocations. It is likely that this site is being brought forward early partly in anticipation of a Green Belt review at a later stage, when more appropriate development sites will come under consideration.

The Town Council is concerned that given the pressures on five-year land supply, North Somerset Council will find it hard to refuse inappropriate development sites.

The Green Belt Review of Land North of Nailsea by The Environmental Dimension Partnership conforms with Town Council policy since 2006 on the analysis of development sites. Green Belt is usually described as if it is a single homogeneous area of land, but this report highlights distinctions that can be made between the characteristics of different parcels of land by assessing them against the specified purposes of Green Belt. This is a persuasive argument for a **selective** review of the Green Belt taking account of the specific features of settlements and adjacent designated land.

For Nailsea, there is an urgent need for additional housing of suitable types in appropriate locations. This is coupled with the need to develop a plan for employment and leisure facilities in the town. A rigid employment-led approach to the development of the town is unrealistic in the context of Bristol as a major centre for jobs.

Regarding the Inspector's question 8, the wording "residential development within the settlement boundaries" **is** an impediment to the bringing forward of reasonable schemes, but this subject can only be rationally considered at the same time as a Green Belt review.

In relation to question 11, a further delay in addressing the Green Belt creates unnecessary pressures on the future of Nailsea. Deferring a Green Belt review until the Joint Spatial Plan is delaying the inevitable, for no discernible benefit, but with demonstrable disadvantages for our town.

Ian Morrell, Clerk to Nailsea Town Council

22 June 2016