

North Somerset Council
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Topic paper
Sustainable Urban Extension
South West Bristol

NORTH SOMERSET PRE-PRODUCTION EVIDENCE

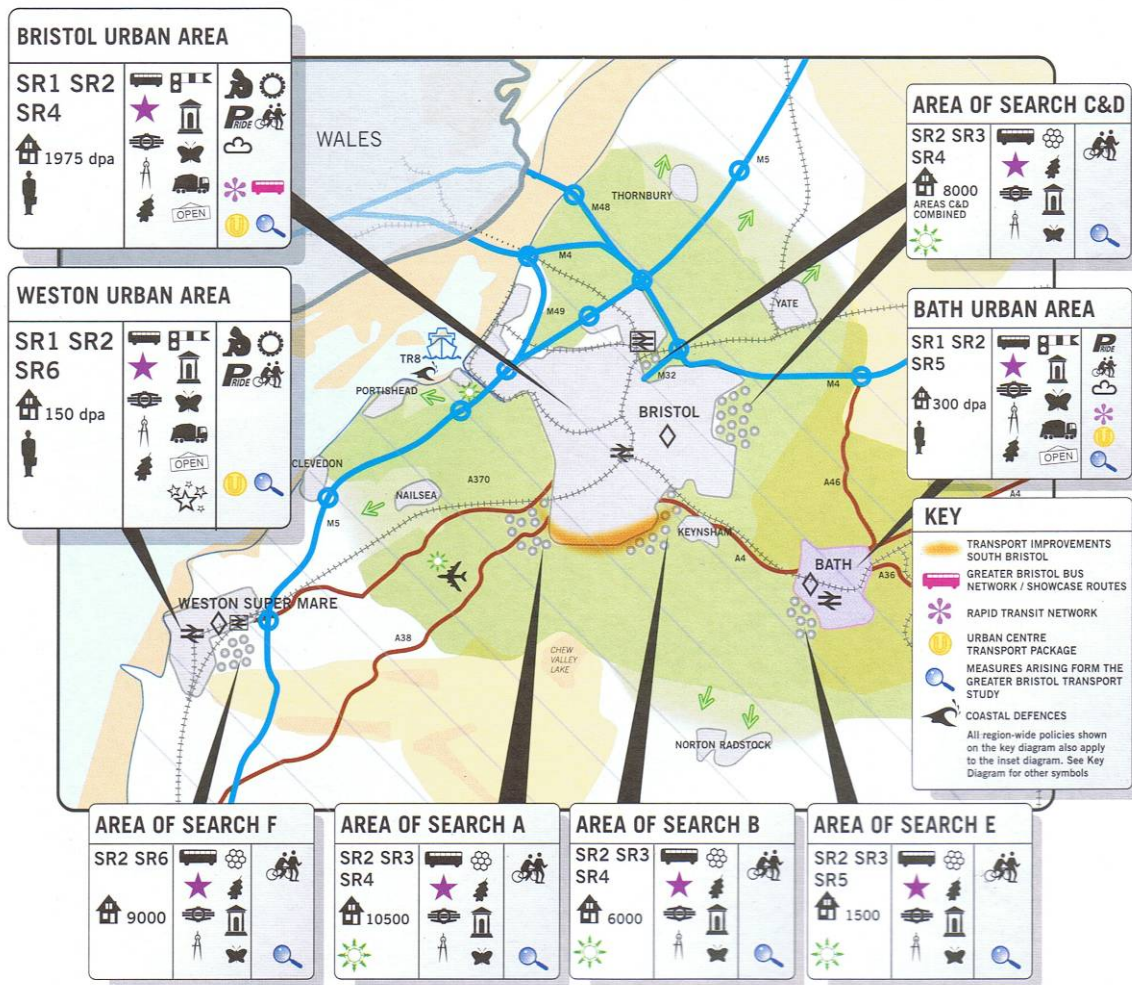
TOPIC PAPER: Sustainable urban extension

Introduction

- 1 North Somerset is required through the draft Regional Spatial Strategy to accommodate an additional 26,000 dwellings up to 2026, around 18,000 of which (70%) are proposed to be accommodated in two urban extensions; one at Weston-super-Mare and one at south west Bristol¹.
- 1.1 This paper will explore the defining characteristics of the area of search at south west Bristol and inform future policies and strategies for development, in particular different expansion options. This involves an appraisal of the existing area looking at various aspects including the landscape, transport infrastructure, land uses and built environment; preliminary work on urban design strategies and principles of place making; and insight into the pressures and opportunities present in south west Bristol and more generally North Somerset. Four strategic options have been devised based on an understanding of the context and relevant design principles and these are presented in section six.
- 1.2 The initial Development Plan Document being produced is the Core Strategy which will set out the spatial framework and strategic objectives across North Somerset. At the Issues and Options consultation stage (October to November 2007) the four broad options are being put forward and are intended to stimulate discussion on the future direction of south west Bristol. These are four spatial options and the fundamental essence of them is in beginning to explore what the physical form of development may take. It is not expected that these options are exhaustive or indeed mutually exclusive; however they begin to hint at some of the potential variances in form from a dispersed pattern to more of a free standing settlement pattern. These options have been developed in line with evidence set out in this paper and discussions on particular issues. To structure debate, the four options have been themed for example, the *heritage led* strategy and the *transport led* strategy.
- 1.3 This work will provide a basis for further more detailed work on south west Bristol. Relevant principles set out in this paper will need to be carried through in order to set out clear guidance for future development.

2 Area of Search and Area Analysis

¹ See draft Regional Spatial Strategy for more detail at www.southwest-ra.gov.uk

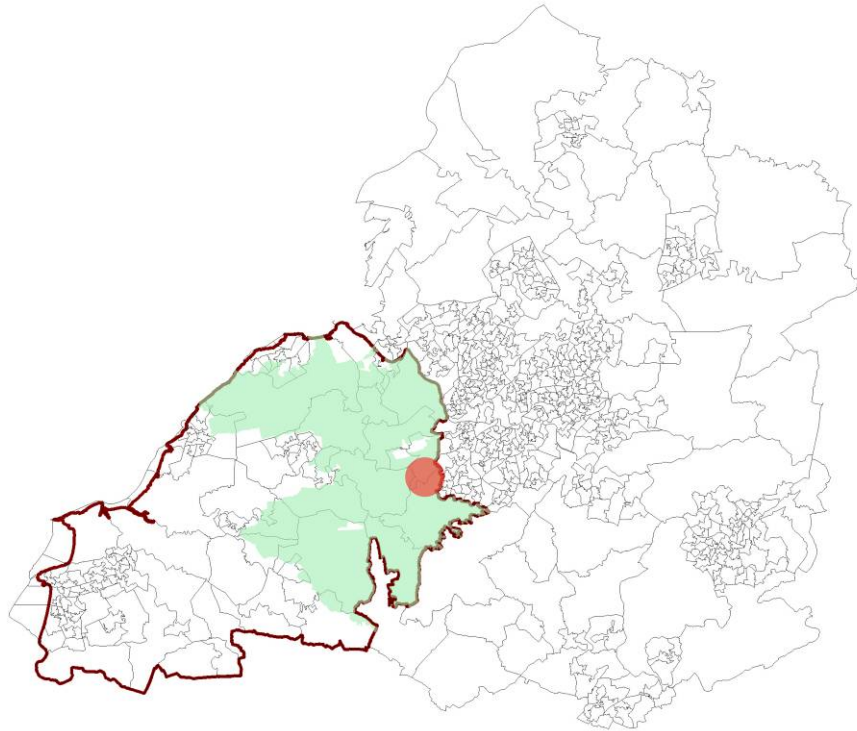


Draft Regional Spatial Strategy diagram indicating south west Bristol extension (Area of search A)

- 2.1 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy has indicated an urban extension to the south west of Bristol for 10,500 new homes, 9,000 of which is to be located within the administrative boundary of North Somerset.

Green Belt

- 2.2 The landscape within the broad area of search is designated Green Belt land which gives an indication of the openness and rural qualities of the area. Long Ashton and the David Lloyd Leisure Centre form an inset within the Green Belt; Long Ashton is defined by the settlement boundary and the Leisure Centre is on the boundary to Bristol. The boundaries to the Greenbelt are to be reviewed through the Local Development Framework process and will largely be influenced by the shape of the urban extension.



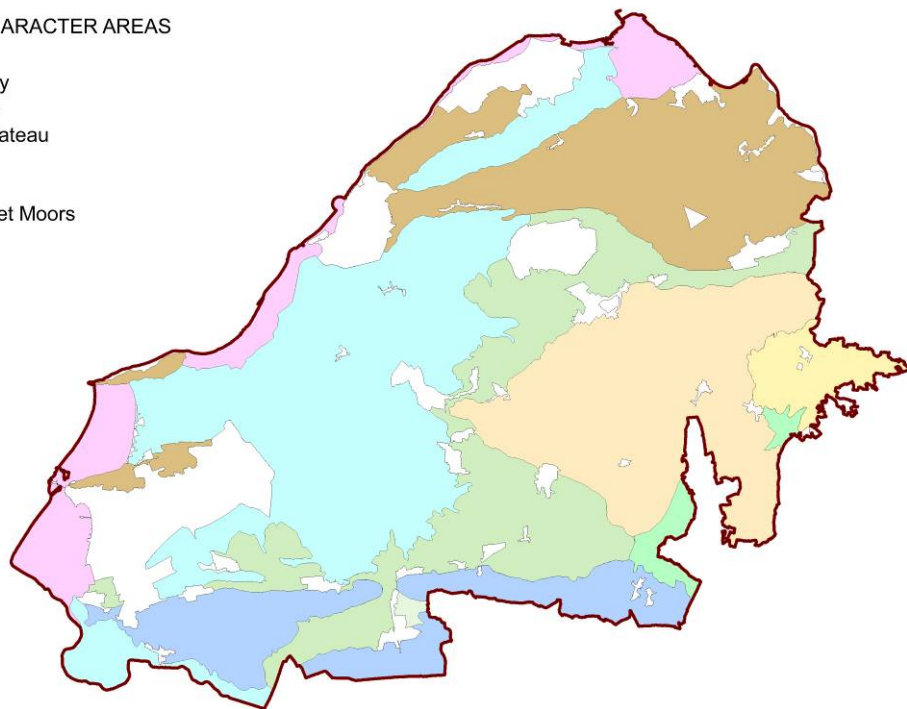
Location of Green Belt in North Somerset

Landscape

2.3 The diagram below shows the Landscape Character Areas in North Somerset. The following text in sections 2.5 to 2.10 refer to the landscape types within these areas as detailed in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment SPD.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- Severn Ridge
- Severn Estuary
- Lower Valleys
- South Avon Plateau
- Chew Valley
- Mendip
- North Somerset Moors



SOURCE: North Somerset Council

2.4 The various recognised landscape types within the area have been comprehensively detailed within the Landscape Character Assessment². A *description, evaluation and strategy* for continued care is included for each area, and an extract from each strategy is set out below.

Cleeve Ridges and Coombes

2.5 The strategy is to “...*conserve the peaceful and remote character of the area and its rich ecological, archaeological, and geological heritage.*” (page 95).

Broadfield Down Settled Limestone Plateau

2.6 The strategy is to “...*conserve the existing positive features such as the blocks of woodland and to enhance the rural pastoral nature of the area by improving management of the hedgerow network and by careful design and management of the airport infrastructure such as signage and fencing.*” (page 110).

Failand Settled Limestone Plateau

2.7 The strategy is to, “...*conserve the wooded, rural character of the area and enhance elements in decline, particularly the field boundaries and woodland belts and taking opportunities to increase grassland biodiversity by changes in management for instance in mowing regimes along the edges of the sports fields.*” (page 114).

Dundry Settled Hill

2.8 The strategy “...*will be one of conservation and enhancement.*” (page 119).

Colliters Brook Rolling Valley Farmland

2.9 The strategy is to “...*strengthen the character of the area, weakened by urban fringe activities, enhancing the positive aspects of the area such as the woodland and pastoral farmland to build a sense of continuity and place and taking opportunities for improvement for instance by creating new grassland, wetland and woodland habitats and better public access to the woods and reservoirs.*” (page 140). The Landscape Character SPD has indicated that this area of landscape is declining as opposed to ‘good’ and is in need of enhancement.

Land Yeo and Kenn Rolling Valley Farmland

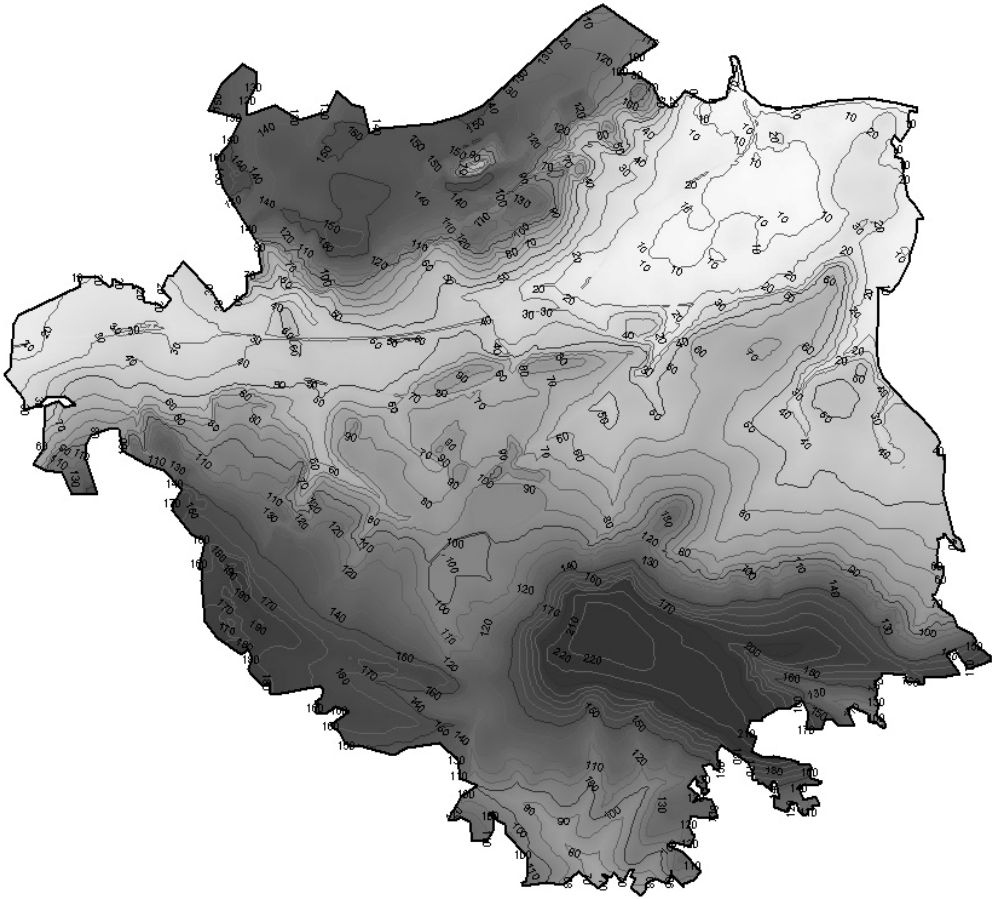
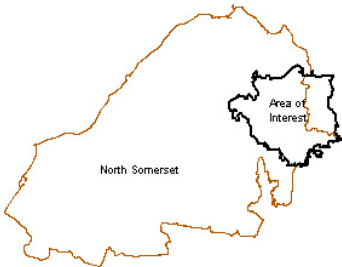
2.10 The strategy is to “...*conserve the intact pastoral landscape with hedgerow network, winding rural roads and stone farmsteads while strengthening the elements of weaker character such as the village edges and restoring elements of declining condition most notably the orchards.*” (page 144).

2.11 All of the strategies advocate conservation and enhancement in the south west Bristol area reflecting the high quality landscape and the need to protect the existing rural character.

Topography

² North Somerset Council Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

2.12 The topography of the area is quite dramatic, rising from around 0-25 meters on the A370 approach into Ashton Gate, Bristol, to around 200 to 243 meters at Dundry Hill. The topography elsewhere in the area is undulating with a ridge running perpendicular to the hamlet of Yanley. The location and shape of the new extension will be largely influenced by the topography of the area. Further work on the topography of North Somerset can be found in the North Somerset Landscape Character Assessment referred to above.



Existing Land uses

2.13 Land uses in the area consist of mainly suburban and rural residential development. Leisure and recreation facilities include the Woodspring and Long Ashton Golf courses and the David Lloyd Leisure Centre. Three reservoirs known locally as the 'Barrow Tanks' are situated to the south of the area of search and take up around 50 hectares. These contribute to leisure including

Angling as well as fulfilling their role as reservoirs. The former Barrow Hospital and its associated buildings just south of the Long Ashton Bypass and east of Wildcountry Lane, take up a large area and are largely surrounded by designated Ancient Woodland including Barrow Wood, Church Wood, Barrow Big Wood, Ridings Wood and the Fillies. The hospital, constructed in 1938 comprises approximately 38 hectares of land, with a collection of villa type buildings located spaciouly around the site. It is noted that the site has outline permission for a mixed use scheme including a large office element, and the contribution this could make to the wider urban extension.

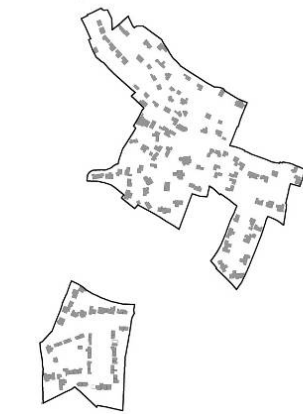
- 2.14 Existing employment areas include the Ashton Gate industrial estate, employment premises at the former Long Ashton Research Station, employment associated with local schools, the David Lloyd Leisure Centre, Bristol Water Treatment Works and Ashton Court. The outline planning permission at Barrow Hospital includes a large area of employment floor space including offices and workshops as part of a mixed use scheme.
- 2.15 In terms of agricultural use the majority of land is grade 3 agricultural land and as such has moderate limitations to its use for agricultural purposes. The woodland and meadowlands are home to various types of deer in the location.

Land Designations

- 2.16 There are a number of land designations within the area (listed below) all of which are illustrated within the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan.
- Major Development Site in the Greenbelt which refers to the former Barrow Hospital.
 - Regional Wildlife or Geological site.
 - Former Coalfield Area.
 - Greenbelt
 - Floodplain
 - Conservation Area at Yanley, and Long Ashton
 - Various Scheduled Ancient Monument sites
 - Unregistered Historic Park or Garden

Built Environment

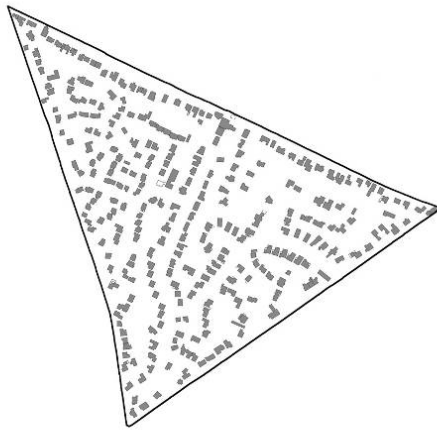
- 2.17 In relation to the built environment the existing context is characterised by a dispersed collection of villages and hamlets including Yanley, Barrow Gurney, Dundry, Failand, Flax Bourton and Long Ashton, the latter being the largest having a population of around 3,659 (2001 census). All of the villages are shaped by the transport routes connecting them and all tend to be characterised by a rather informal layout of development apart from the more regimented grouping of houses that line particular roads for example in Long Ashton and Failand. These latter patterns of development are typical of estate development including that of the 1930s.



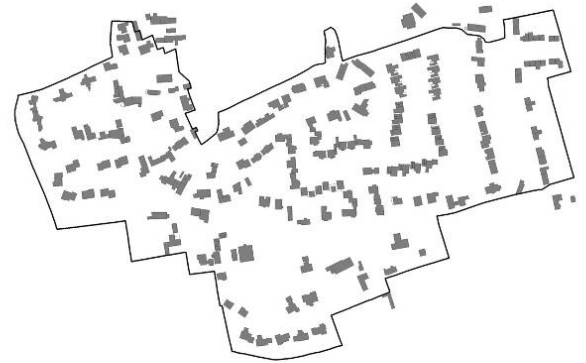
DUNDRY



BARROW GURNEY



FAILAND



FLAX BOURTON

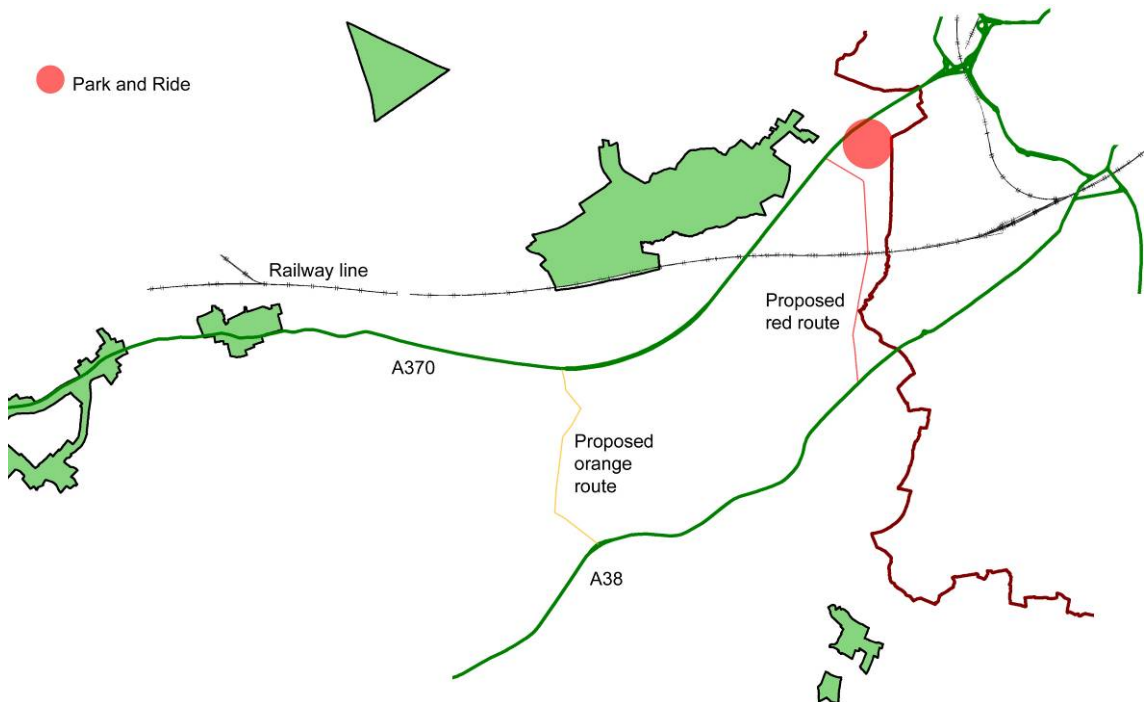
Figure Ground plans showing buildings in relation to open space (settlement densities)

2.18 At Barrow Gurney the built form has developed along informal lines (in terms of the organisation of buildings) with individual buildings occupying large plots of land. This organic pattern of development complements the rural character of the area, and is common to other villages in the area notably Dundry and Flax Bourton which also show a low density informal 'grain' of development. Some areas of residential development in Failand and Long Ashton have higher densities due to more compact forms of development.

2.19 The urban edge of Bristol is heavily defined by residential estate development at Bishopsworth, Highridge, and Ashton Vale, as well as more fragmented piecemeal industrial estate development. Besides this the next substantial built up village is Long Ashton.

Transport Infrastructure

- 2.20 The broad area of search for the urban extension lies over two main roads in the strategic transport network, the A370 that connects Weston-super-Mare to Bristol, and the A38. These routes are heavily trafficked at peak times throughout the day as they are main commuter routes in addition to the M5 motorway. A 'park and ride' facility is situated close to Ashton Vale highlighted on the diagram below, which provides around 1,500 car park spaces.
- 2.21 The railway line approaches Bristol just south of Long Ashton and bypasses Yanley Quarry and enters Bristol at Bedminster. At present the nearest stations are Nailsea and Backwell, Parsons Street, Bedminster, and Temple Meads in Bristol. The location of these in relation to future development is important if new communities are to have effective access. Currently the closest station would be Bedminster for journeys to other towns in North Somerset, Bristol, and elsewhere.



3 Pressures and opportunities

- 3.1 The urgency to deliver housing (including affordable) for which there is a recognised shortage of supply nationally is putting pressure on the release of land for housing. So is the need to reconcile development with the existing, largely rural environment and at the same time minimise any adverse impacts. It is also essential to ensure infrastructure is delivered alongside new development and to ensure a comprehensive approach to development in order to achieve environmental, social and economic sustainable objectives.

- 3.2 Opportunities include the potential to enhance the south Bristol regeneration efforts and act in synergy as a wider regeneration mechanism; enhancing services and facilities of existing towns and villages; and providing a high quality development that is sustainable and well designed. Given the recognised need to strengthen and enhance the existing Colliters Brook landscape area³, the new development is an opportunity to renew the area and enhance the existing recreational and landscape value.
- 3.3 An opportunity to deliver high quality spatial planning which addresses the need to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change.

4 Development Principles and Options for growth

Key principles

- 4.1 This section is an initial review of some of the key principles that need to be considered for south west Bristol and if appropriate taken forward into the Core Strategy. They are based on national planning policy statements and best practice guidance but also start to incorporate more local considerations which need to be carefully considered in order to achieve the distinctive and tailored response required. These principles will then set the policy framework for further Development Plan Documents and provide guidance for design guides and/or Masterplans as necessary. Importantly these principles begin to describe ways of achieving sustainable places that function well. It is emphasised at this stage that these principles do not represent planning policy.
- 4.2 Government has set out the overriding objectives for the design of places,

“Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.”⁴

“Development plans should ensure that sustainable development is pursued in an integrated manner, in line with the principles for sustainable development set out in the UK strategy. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should ensure that development plans promote outcomes in which environmental, economic and social objectives are achieved together over time.”⁵

Creating Successful Neighbourhoods

³ See Landscape Character Assessment SPD available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk

⁴ Planning Policy Statement 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development*, paragraph 34

⁵ Planning Policy Statement 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development*. paragraph 13.(i)

- 4.3 *“Achieving compact, walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods is as much a part of sustainable development as reducing energy consumption in new homes. Neighbourhoods that are developed at an appropriate density and with the appropriate mix of dwelling types will contribute to creating communities that are self-supporting and socially diverse, and therefore likely to prove sustainable.”*⁶

4.4 **Local Identity**

“Experience has shown that the design of the built environment alone cannot create a neighbourhood in the sense of a fully functioning community. However, good urban design – in other words, responsive to the existing context, compatible mix of uses, appropriate buildings to accommodate activities at the right rent, appropriate location and levels of accessibility, all brought together in a place which is attractive and feels safe – can create the conditions where a sense of neighbourliness and belonging is more likely to develop.”

(Barton, Grant, and Guise, 2003, page 184)

- 4.5 With regard to architectural design particularly of residential development, it can be suggested that “good architecture is less to do with a particular style and more to do with the successful co-ordination of proportions, materials, colour and detail.”⁷ This is a useful principle to carry forward in order to nurture an element of freedom towards design styles. As long as it is emphasised that design policy should ensure design responds to existing context, a degree of interpretation and variation in style can be achieved contributing to local distinctiveness whilst at the same time developing a climate of competitiveness as different developers build out different parcels of land.

Linked New Settlements

- 4.6 The Town and Country Planning Association has concluded in its report on urban extensions that there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that there is a case for linked new settlements- *“...a new interpretation of the new town conception of the past.”*⁸ Key principles of this strategy set out in section 8 of the report include an effective network of public transport linking the new settlement, not just the private car. It highlights less need for self containment which is an important consideration in south west Bristol given the likely out commuting into Bristol. However this principle is based on the premise that there should be an effective public transport system in place which would reduce the number of commuting journeys by the private car, a recognised problem at present across North Somerset. The report suggests a critical mass of 5,000-10,000 dwellings to support the necessary services and facilities in a sustainable way. The benefits that could be gained from this concept should be considered in relation to the south west Bristol development.

⁶ CABE (2007) Actions for housing Growth

⁷ CABE (2007) Building for Life. Page 2.

⁸ Communities and Local Government (2007) *Best Practice in Urban Extensions and New Settlements A* report by the Town and Country Planning Association

Density

- 4.7 In a report by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment the case is made for building at higher densities with mixed uses⁹. Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing*, suggests local planning authorities devise a range of densities to suit their particular area. Higher densities can be achieved around key public spaces for example a public square or a key transport interchange. With other uses including employment and retail, high densities can work towards achieving sustainable objectives. However there are concerns surrounding the quality of high density environments. In some recent research published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Communities and Local Government), it was found that the large majority of people surveyed would rather live in a country village (37%) compared to 28% in a small city or town, 15% in a suburb and 5% in a big city¹⁰. It is evident that high quality design is required to successfully achieve higher density, mixed use developments.
- 4.8 The densities applied to the new development will have a direct relationship to its compactness. Higher densities translate to more compact settlements and vice versa. More compact settlements are considered more sustainable and are less land intensive than more spread out types. However any proposals on density will need to take into account the impact on the surrounding area.

Employment

- 4.9 The quantity and type of employment premises needs to be considered early, and in particular what strategy will be applied to developing the local economy and in relation to the wider sub region including Bristol. North Somerset is about to commence work on its Employment Land Review which will contribute to an understanding of the types and quantity of employment floor space required at south west Bristol.
- 4.10 Local varied employment opportunities should be provided to enable future communities the choice to work close to where they reside with obvious benefits of reducing reliance on the private car, and encouraging healthy lifestyles as more people walk or cycle to work. As people walk there is more opportunity to build social networks and build a community ethos. This also helps to ensure a resident population 'around the clock' in employment areas. Mixed uses can have an important role to play here including homes and/or offices over shops. This can provide an efficient way of using land reducing the need for increased amounts of land and additional journeys required. This may be particularly important for the south west Bristol area to maintain as much open space as possible and the existing rural character. Also enterprise can be enhanced by grouping particular employment uses (see economy topic paper).
- 4.11 The emergence of live:work units and home working policy may in the future have a significant impact on the development of urban areas. Strategically located hubs of live:work units could be an effective way of nurturing particular industries which benefit from clustering in addition to a portfolio of allocated

⁹ CABE (2005) *Better Neighbourhoods: Making Higher densities Work*

¹⁰ ODPM, (2006) *State of the English Cities*, Volume 1. London: HMSO

employment sites. The Core Strategy provides an opportunity to develop live:work policy further.

Mixed Uses

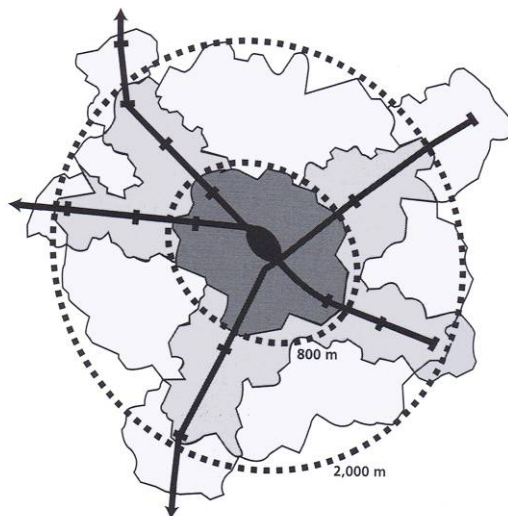
- 4.12 Mixing uses is recommended as a way of increasing the vitality and viability of places particularly town centres. Through effective mixed use development there is a reduced need to make lots of journeys as there are increased services and facilities in close proximity, with obvious benefits to reducing carbon emissions. Mixing uses also gives people the **opportunity** to live and work in close proximity.
- 4.13 A mix of uses will be required at the urban extension including employment, retail, and community. Initial work has indicated that based on 9,000 dwellings (or 10,500 for the urban extension as a whole), assuming an average residential density of 50 dwellings per hectare and factoring in other land takes for other uses, the total land take could be in the region of 365 (or 430) hectares. The actual figure would depend on the form of development and densities applied.

Planning for movement

- 4.14 Barton, Grant and Guise set out five objectives for movement¹¹:

- *encouraging healthier lifestyles-more walking and cycling,*
- *improving access to local facilities and to public transport, especially for those who do not use a car and for less-mobile people,*
- *enhancing the viability of local facilities and employment opportunities,*
- *reducing accidents, street crime and fear of crime, and*
- *educing energy use, air pollution and CO2 emissions.*

- 4.15 To further encourage walking and cycling each part of the new development should be within **400m** of a local centre, and **1,500m** of the town centre. The term 'ped-shed' has been used to define an 800m distance (10 minute) within which most residential should be located around a town centre to achieve most accessibility.



¹¹ Shaping Neighbourhoods A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality

SOURCE: Barton, Grant and Guise 2003

- 4.16 The diagram shows a sustainable retail catchment area and represents accessible distances to town centre facilities. It is recommended that in order to promote more sustainable patterns of behaviour, the majority of housing should be located within the 800m catchment of the town centre. A network of these could constitute various neighbourhoods which could be linked with green space, public transport networks, and opportunities for walking and cycling.

Green space network

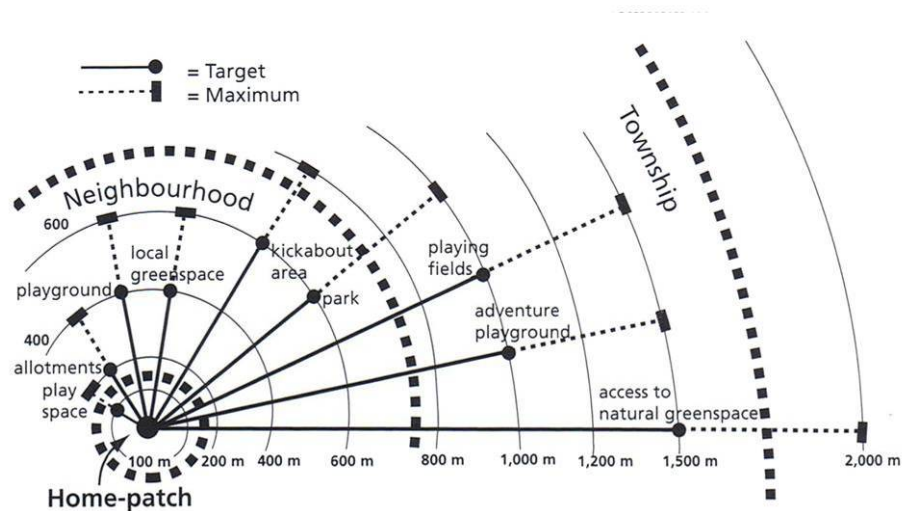
- 4.17 A network of green space has many benefits including for the quality of life for future residents and visitors. Green space is valued for its wildlife diversity, recreational value, natural beauty, and can be best integrated within new development as a connected network of natural features. These can include;

- green corridors such as rivers and substantial hedgerows,
- green stepping stones, linking into the built-up areas from the countryside.

- 4.18 With regard to adapting to climate change open spaces can behave as 'urban coolers' providing a cooling effect on more built up areas, due to the microclimatic functioning of open spaces. It has been found that urban areas are significantly warmer than green spaces¹² which may seem obvious, although the implications for building at higher densities and mixing uses become more complex as the impacts of climate change become evident and new strategies to 'adapt' are required.

- 4.19 Existing green spaces and natural features can be enhanced providing a characteristic setting for new neighbourhoods. For example the rolling hillside that elevates towards Dundry Hill could be brought down into the development forming a green corridor. Enhancement could involve additional tree planting to increase biodiversity. The diagram below shows distances to local green space in relation to neighbourhood centres.

¹² Shaw in Town and Country Planning Journal, Volume 76, number 9, September 2007



SOURCE: Barton, Grant and Guise 2003

Eco-development

- 4.20 As discussions develop on the development at south west Bristol, there is a clear view that any new development, in particular residential development, should be designed and constructed to meet aspirational targets for sustainable buildings and minimise their impact upon the environment. These views are reinforced by the strong agenda to reduce carbon emissions and counter climate change (all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016).
- 4.21 Principles of environmental design should be built into the development proposals from the outset, including considerations of large-scale renewable, locally produced energy such as a combined heat and power scheme (for example CHP linked to sustainable forestry-Forest of Avon). The location and mix of uses to facilitate sustainable patterns of living is essential as individual buildings and schemes cannot be solely relied upon to achieve a sustainable development. However standards of design and construction should be set out to ensure the new development is of a high quality.
- 4.22 A strategic approach to energy infrastructure is required to ensure the necessary features are set out in plans in order to inform future development.

Urban Design

- 4.23 Good urban design should underpin the approach to any urban extension from the most strategic, town scale, to the design of individual parcels of land. A master plan or Area Action Plan is the ideal delivery vehicle to take this principle forward ensuring that the overall development will be coordinated and phased as necessary.
- 4.24 English Partnerships and the Housing Association have recently published an Urban Design Compendium 2: Delivering Quality Places, which follows on from the first compendium which looked at the principles of urban design. The updated version gives good advice on achieving urban design on the ground.

- 4.25 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in association with the House Builders Federation (HBF) have produced a document, *Building for Life* which sets out 20 criteria that should be used to assess new housing developments as well as to plan them. Criteria such as this need to be applied in order to prevent mediocrity and encourage the delivery of high quality successful places.

Generic Spatial (place making) Principles

- 4.26 Listed below are a collection of key principles all options should consider. The list is intended to promote discussion and in time be developed into a set of agreed aims and objectives on which the development will be based. These will form a section of the strategic objectives and aims within the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report.

Community development

South West Bristol should:

- Be an exemplar sustainable community(ies) including socially, environmentally, and economically,
- Incorporate a variety of housing types and tenure including affordable and sheltered housing,
- Provide appropriate community facilities and infrastructure phased as appropriate and integrated – schools, retail, cultural and leisure uses, health services,
- Ensure schools are an initial focus of communities as a hub of the community, (Potential for other Campus style community buildings as at Weston-super-Mare)
- Make good use of existing facilities and services where appropriate,
- Integrate with existing communities *and* preserve local identities where appropriate.

Health and safety

- Promote a healthy living environment, including places for play, walking and cycling, access to green space including countryside and well designed built environment,
- Avoid areas liable to flood risk,
- Provide safe environments that deter crime with a network of permeable public spaces that encourage walking and cycling, and where the built form acts as an informal means of surveillance e.g residential accommodation overlooking public spaces.

Green space and heritage

- Create a distinctive environment based on local characteristics and culture,
- Respect and respond to the natural topography –e.g. Dundry Hills, Ridge north of Long Ashton,
- Ensure important views of key landmarks e.g. the Suspension Bridge are part of the overall design,
- Respect local characteristics - Estate/parkland settings, important and valued local habitats including the Ancient Woodland and 'Barrow Tanks' to be conserved and enhanced where possible,
- Incorporate green space for recreational, and environmental purposes 'Urban cooling' etc,
- Plan in strategic green infrastructure (possibly including a community/country park) linked with formal outdoor sports use, open spaces, play areas, woodland and hedgerow, river corridors, allotments, tree lined avenues, etc. Also to encourage biodiversity through creation of habitats,
- Facilitate access to the countryside and a range of outdoor recreational activities on the urban fringe.

Movement

- Reduce car dependency,
- Cars will be welcomed and parking incorporated but streets are designed to prevent excessive speeds and protect and encourage pedestrians and cyclists. Buildings should take precedence over highways in development layout.
- Set out a positive framework for quality public transport with clean efficient public transport prioritised. Deliver various initiatives to encourage public transport use, e.g. subsidised bus use, electronic information systems at bus stops, no home more than 400m away from bus stop all of which could be achieved through S106,
- Ensure public transport and access to services for those without cars and those less mobile,
- Provide better than usual accessibility – bus stops within 300m of all homes,
- Ensure quality public transport to Bristol and Bristol International Airport,
- Ensure walkable neighbourhoods – 'daily needs' within 5 min walk,
- Walkways/cycleways for work and leisure integrated into scheme,

- Improve and integrate with the existing and proposed road network – South West Bristol Link Rd, Barrow Gurney Bypass.

Energy and Environment

- Use minimum energy, generate minimal waste and aim for zero carbon (Code for Sustainable Homes level 6), exceeding current performance standards as set out in Building Regulations,
- Ensure local renewable energy generation and waste recycling incorporated into design – plan strategically for sustainable energy and other resource needs,
- Incorporate efficient sustainable urban drainage systems that encourage wildlife and habitat creation,
- Ensure buildings are adaptable and the environment capable of adapting to, and mitigating the impacts of climate change,
- New development should integrate features to reduce environmental impact.

Urban Design

- Plan for legible neighbourhoods in terms of each having distinctive styles, materials and colour ranges and a recognisable hierarchy of public spaces and landmarks,
- Ensure overall minimum density requirements are met,
- Organise built environment to provide opportunities for key landmark buildings at 'gateway' points into new development and into Bristol from North Somerset and vice versa,
- Achieve high quality, inclusive design that contributes to a sense of place,
- Ensure mixed use, 3-dimensional planning (maximising opportunities to place compatible uses one above the other). This will link to density and the compactness of the urban/ neighbourhood centres.
- A distinctive character should be developed through good architecture, and well defined and structured urban/ rural layouts.
- Promote adaptability in buildings capable of change over time to respond sustainably to evolving needs in society primarily through conversion and extension,
- Provide a focus for community life with civic and commercial activities at the heart of the neighbourhoods. Civic buildings to serve as landmarks, and nodal points including integration with squares/piazzas/market places.

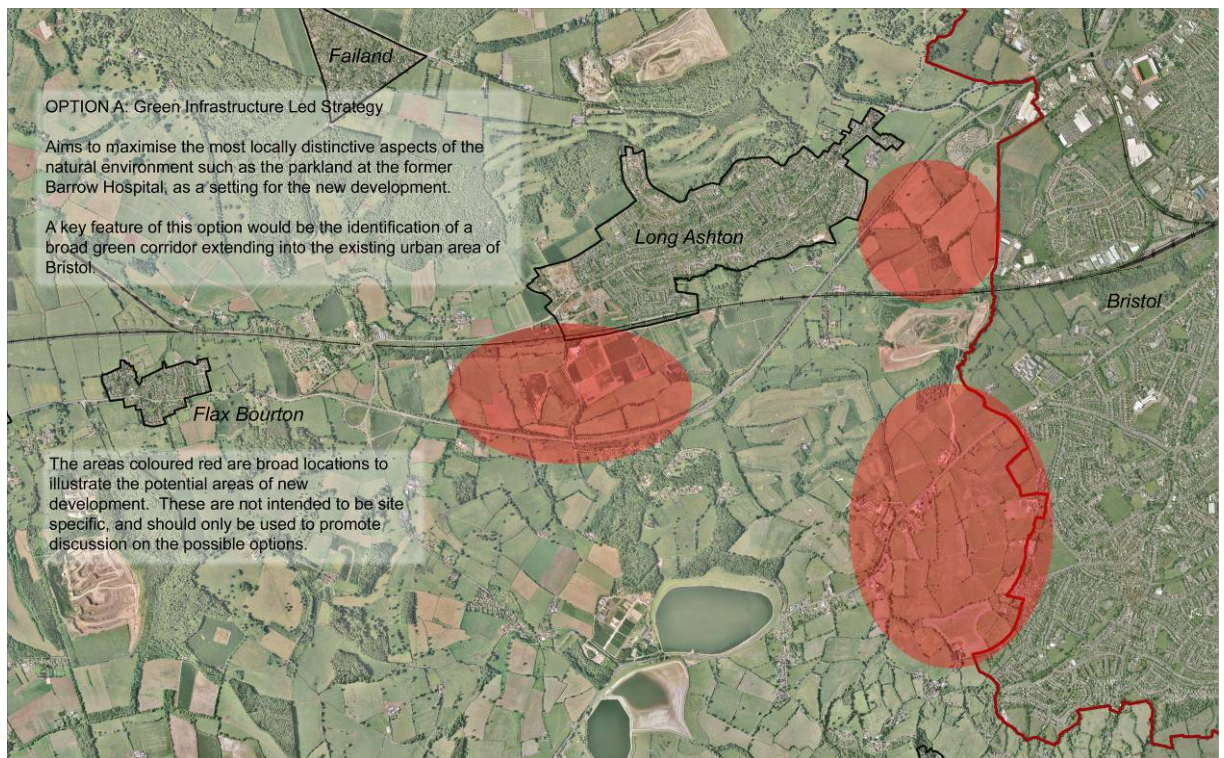
Many questions remain. Listed below are some that need to be addressed in order to progress to identifying the form and possible location of the overall development and facilities within it.

- An extension to the city **or** stand alone site(s)?
- How to deal with the urban edge/fringe of Bristol?
- How much employment? What sort? Where?
- Centre hierarchy – New town centre, series of smaller neighbourhood centres?
- What facilities are required?
- Street hierarchy – and movement?
- Size of neighbourhoods - how do they connect-public transport linkages?
- How do densities vary? Nodes and corridors. In terms of walkability, densities should decline with distance from the centre. But in terms of public transport viability, the highest densities should be *furthest* from the centre.
- Spreading costs – ring-fenced area with ‘roof tax’ – any cross-boundary pooling?
- Is a new train station feasible?

5 Initial Concept Options for South West Bristol

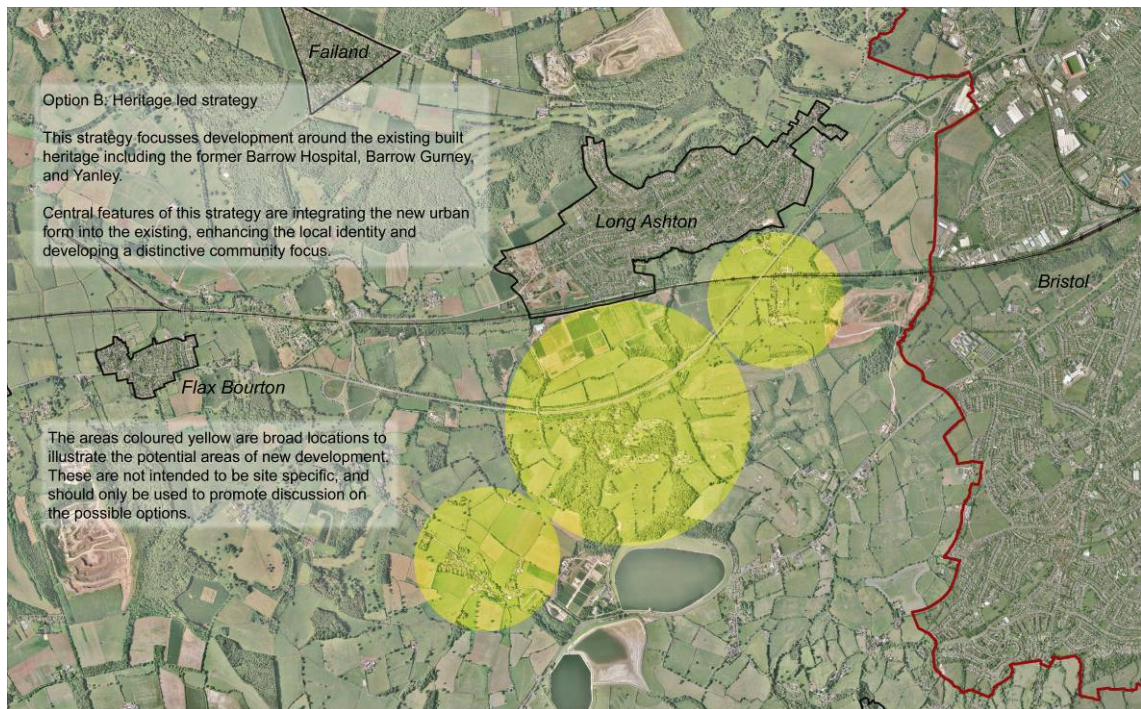
- 5.1 The four options set out below are derived from an initial examination of the context and study of design principles. They have been put forward in the Issues and Options stage of consultation for the Core Strategy in order to begin discussion. The Core Strategy is expected to set out the strategic principles and main objectives of the south west Bristol urban extension, and will provide the context *and principles* for more detailed work.

Option A: Green infrastructure led option



- 5.2 This option is based on a dispersed pattern of development and aims to maintain the existing landscape character surrounding the former Barrow Hospital. Whilst this option does not deal with particular land hectares required, it does show a large amount of development located adjacent to the boundary of Bristol as a direct urban extension. A key aim of this option is to maintain a scale of development that is not too large in comparison to the existing settlements.
- 5.3 A central idea with this option is to allow the new development to define a 'green corridor' from North Somerset into the urban area of Bristol. It would ensure the land around the Barrow Common, Barrow tanks, Barrow Hospital, the Woodspring Golf Course, Yanley Landfill and into Bedminster Down is maintained, enhanced and becomes more accessible for both new and existing residents and would provide the setting for the new development as well as have benefits for biodiversity including encouraging wildlife.
- 5.4 The option shows development located to the south west and east of Long Ashton.

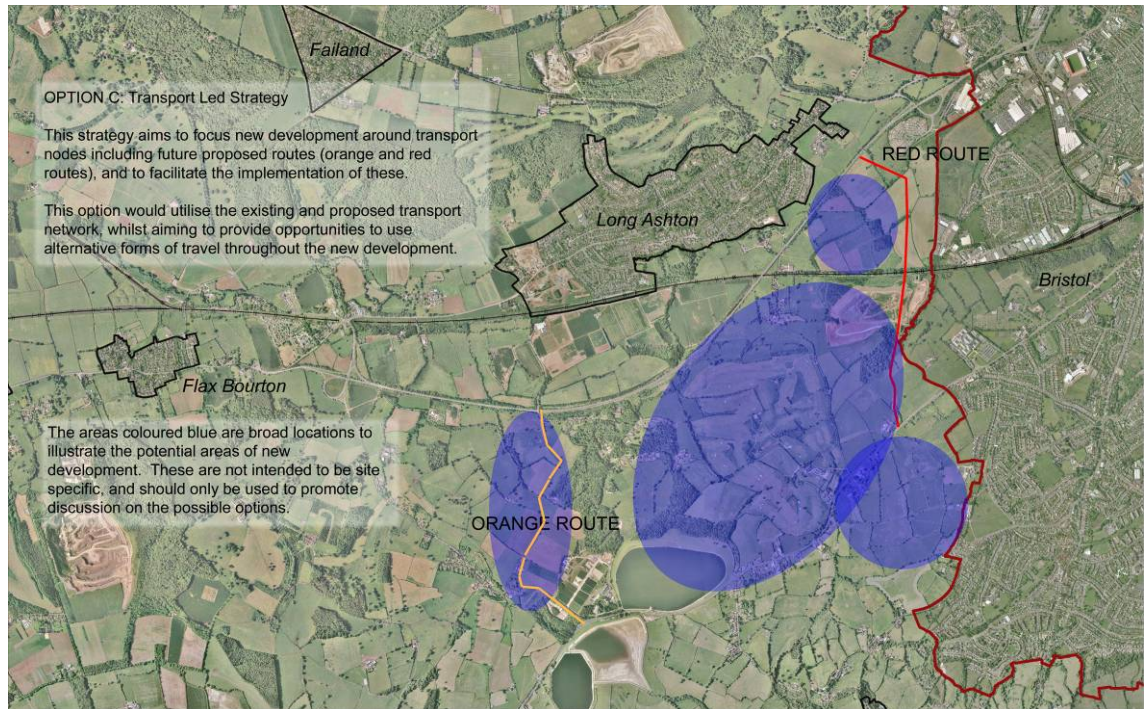
Option B: Heritage led strategy



- 5.5 This option shows all development located in one freestanding settlement, and follows similar principles to those referred to in section 4.6, *linked new settlements*. This is a scale and pattern of development that would suggest a comprehensive new town.
- 5.6 An initial idea with this option is that the focus for new communities would be the existing rural communities and heritage including Barrow Gurney, the former Barrow Hospital, and Yanley hamlet. The new development would use the existing grain and local distinctiveness to inform the new development. There would need to be higher densities introduced throughout the new development but these would be graded away from existing rural settlements. Additional services and facilities could be dispersed throughout the new development with the potential for new village centres or economic hubs situated in strategic positions to encourage sustainable living.
- 5.7 Existing attractive buildings and features would become the central focus and historic parkland and woodland would need to be incorporated into the layout. This could prove to be a very challenging option in terms of design if old and new buildings and layouts and communities are to be successfully integrated and the small scale nature of the existing settlements not swamped by new building. However if successfully designed it may also help to establish identity and a sense of place which would otherwise be difficult to achieve from scratch.
- 5.8 Part of the early discussion of this option also considered the benefits that could be gained by opening another train station located within the northern most yellow circle. This would need further investigation, as it would depend on the

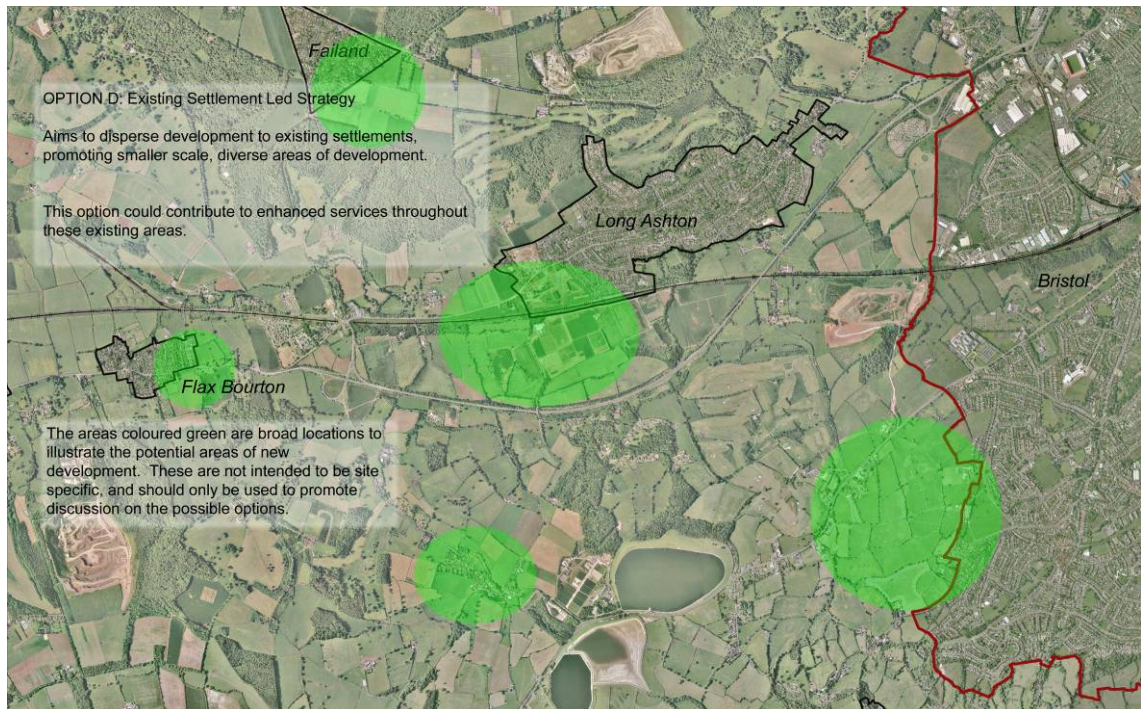
scale and timing of projected investment in signalling at Temple Meads, as well as further funding and partner involvement. The Local Development Framework provides an opportunity to set out the spatial framework for delivering such infrastructure including energy and employment infrastructure.

Option C: Transport led strategy



- 5.9 This option sees large scale housing development focussed around existing and future proposed transport corridors. The red route is the first phase of the south Bristol Ring Road and the orange route is planned to bypass Barrow Gurney and relieve congestion in the area. These routes along with the existing strategic routes would provide key access points into the new development, whilst at the same time the new development should be planned to encourage more sustainable travel within.
- 5.10 The Bristol Flyer currently provides a service linking Bristol International Airport to Bristol. This may serve new communities in south west Bristol and linking through to Phase 1 of the south Bristol Ring Road, although enhancements to the service may need to be achieved to ensure neighbourhoods in south Bristol are not affected.
- 5.11 A likely outcome of the scheme will be that a large portion of the new development will be located adjacent the existing boundary of Bristol. An early idea discussed is that the new development would act as a transition softening the urban edge of Bristol into the rural character of this part of North Somerset rather than appear as an ‘overspill’ from south Bristol. This would require a careful approach to masterplanning the area on a comprehensive basis.

Option D: Existing Settlement led strategy



- 5.12 This option shows a dispersed pattern of development with new development being located around existing settlements in North Somerset. The delivery of this option may be somewhat problematic as an increased number of delivery partners would be required. However this option may have benefits including through supporting the existing communities by facilitating new services and facilities. This option also reduces the scale of development being much more like the existing structure of villages in the area. In addition the green corridor concept (see option A) could be pursued here too.

Gaps in evidence

- 5.13 Further work testing density variations and levels of compactness. Start by superimposing different existing areas onto south west Bristol.
- 5.14 Employment Land Review.
- 5.15 Additional work is required to explore the required quantities of other land uses for example schools, playing fields and community uses. Also the types of employment required.

Next steps

- 5.16 The Core Strategy Issues and Options stage is currently being consulted on (October to November 2007), including the four options set out within this paper. Certain principles will be developed in addition to the gaps identified above in order to develop options for the Core Strategy. **Consultation on the four broad options set out in this paper is currently being held on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document which can be downloaded from the North Somerset Council website- www.n-somerset.gov.uk**

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