

# Strategic Development Location – Nailsea North Somerset

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## 1.0 Location characteristics

### 1.1 Site location

Land to the south west of Nailsea.

### 1.2 Size

Approximately 157ha gross, 79ha net residential area.

### 1.3 Relevant planning status and designations

- Land to the east of the area is proposed Strategic Gap (SAP, Policy SA9). This area also includes four smaller areas proposed as Local Green Space (SAP, Policy SA7).

### 1.4 Current land use

Predominantly agricultural/open countryside.

## 2.0 Suitability (Constraints & Opportunities)

### 2.1 Strategic Opportunity

The JSP - Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy consultation identified Nailsea as accommodating up to a further 2,800 dwellings in the plan period (to 2036). However, further work indicates potential for around 3,300 dwellings depending on the extent of land included in the development and the approach to residential density.

### 2.2 Site characteristics

The site predominantly comprises agricultural fields on gently south facing slopes. The landscape rises from the railway to the southern edge of the town. The landform drops away to the west to the Tickenham and Kenn Moor that has a network of ecologically important watercourses that are designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The ecological attributes of the area are supported by important habitats and features that should be assessed, retained, and or enhanced through new development.

The road network in the area is rural including many single lane carriageways.

### 2.3 Physical & Environmental constraints

**Heritage:** historic coal mining in the area may need to be investigated to ensure any heritage assets/ features are appropriately safeguarded. Listed Buildings at Nailsea Court and Chelvey have the potential to be impacted and key parts of their settings are likely to include land to the south of the proposed growth area. Further investigations should be carried out during subsequent masterplanning (including visual analysis) and appropriate design choices made to safeguard. This could

include maintaining an open aspect around Youngwood Lane/ Netherton Wood Lane, or assuming a lower density form of development on the southern fringe. There may be an opportunity to create green corridors anchored on Nailsea Court and Chelvey that could provide a degree of safeguarding, as well as potential to set up some interesting visual corridors centred on landmark buildings/ features.

**Archaeology:** West End is identified as an area of moderate archaeological potential. It is therefore expected that there could be features of interest that may impact upon development.

**Landscape:** The development area sits on higher land and falls into the K1: Nailsea Farmed Coal Measures Landscape Character Area of strong character in good condition.

A Strategic Gap is proposed to be safeguarded in the emerging North Somerset Site Allocations Plan, and covers a large area of land to the south of Nailsea. It is identified to protect the separate identity of Nailsea and Backwell. The Concept Diagram shows the gap retained in its current proposed form. Options to reconfigure may be considered through the local planning process taking wider strategic development objectives into account including transport and the relationship of new development to the improved Nailsea/Backwell station.

**Ecology:** The area is known to be used by horseshoe bats for foraging and commuting, with activity at the West End area and flight corridors are expected around the south western edge of the town linking south to key habitats around Backwell<sup>1</sup>. The presence of bats may require specific mitigation within new development including for example the inclusion of 'dark corridors'<sup>2</sup>, and retention of habitat areas/ replacement habitat. One opportunity may be to provide a green corridor that links from the west of Backwell (and important bat habitat there), to the south of the Nailsea SDL, through the development on lower ground by Nursebatch and Batch Farm connecting Batch Farm Meadow Wildlife Site, and then through to open countryside to the north. (This suggested network is shown indicatively on the Concept Diagram in Appendix 1). This corridor provides a link to key habitats in the north of the district (woodland on the Tickenham Ridge), and south (woodland at Backwell Hill; important foraging habitat, and habitat near Yatton/ Cleeve).

The nearby SSSI network is also identified as a constraint. Surface water run-off into it is of concern (on water levels and quality) and will likely have to be addressed through an appropriate drainage strategy. Potential development areas to the west of the SDL are of particular relevance given their proximity to the SSSI and may require careful masterplanning to maintain a margin of open land to the SSSI and the inclusion of suitable environmental attenuation features. Lower density (gross and net) may also be appropriate on the western edge reflecting these issues.

Consideration will be given to the protection of nationally significant species and habitats, notably Section 41 habitats and species. Examples of Section 41 habitats include: species rich lowland meadows, wet woodlands, traditional orchards, and

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<sup>1</sup> The area to the south west of Backwell between Chelvey Road and the A370 is identified to be within a horseshoe bat Juvenile Sustenance Zone, an important foraging habitat for juvenile bats in close range of key roosts. The following links to Somerset County Council website and guidance on North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC: guidance on development: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/habitat-regulations/>

<sup>2</sup> Dark corridors typically comprise linear green spaces including hedgerow and possibly water features and are designed to specific specifications to maintain a certain level of illuminance.

reed beds. Examples of Section 41 species that have suffered sharp declines in population and/or distribution, include the Common Toad, Hedgehog, House Sparrow, Brown Hare and Skylark, as well as many insect species. Wildlife corridors and features such as 'stepping stone habitats' and other natural features need to be incorporated into new development to safeguard key habitats identified within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

**Flood risk:** Area of search for development located in flood zone 1. Areas of land at risk of tidal / fluvial flooding are located to the west of the area that coincides with a network of man-made watercourses required to manage surface water on the Tickenham and Kenn Moors landscape. Many of these are also designated SSSI and are highly important ecological features. High water table and poor water conveyance are recognised issues affecting the area and may influence the location, scale and suitability of development and the need for measures to ensure there are no adverse impacts on or outside of the development area. Further work is required to understand the flood risk issues associated with development and supporting infrastructure, notably roads, and to identify possible options to mitigate any impacts. These may include both site-specific measures e.g. sustainable drainage, and more strategic solutions to enable the local environment to more effectively manage long-term storage and surface water. This has the potential to provide some betterment to existing areas where poor water conveyance and drainage is an issue. Such works as required have the potential to reduce the overall capacity of the development and whilst there is some allowance for this already built in, further allowance may be required.

The delivery of green corridors through development located to channel surface water should be considered together with maintenance corridors for watercourses. These could have a functional role as well as place making benefits.

**Other constraints:** *National Grid works* - National Grid have a Development Consent Order for a temporary site compound in the area although this only takes a relatively small site. New electricity distribution lines are proposed to the west of the area.

#### *Utilities*

Electricity distribution powerlines cross the site and would require an open corridor to be provided within the masterplan, or alternatively relocation. High Pressure Gas Mains run across the site broadly following the same corridor. These have Health and Safety Executive Consultation Zones associated with them to enable HSE to be consulted on development proposals and to control development within them. There may be restrictions on new roads crossing over these that could result in the need for upgrading or diverting.

## **2.4 Existing development schemes and recent activity**

At the western end of the area are four proposed housing allocations – land at West End for 10; land west of Engine Lane for 183; land south of the Uplands for 50; and land at Youngwood Lane for 170. The first two have planning applications. The latter has a current application for a much larger site.

## **2.5 Opportunity**

Nailsea is one of the four main towns in North Somerset well connected to both Weston-super-Mare and only a short distance away from Bristol. It is located on the

main railway corridor with a station, and the A370. The area to the south west of Nailsea offers an opportunity to create a new development well linked to the existing town supported by improved transport infrastructure including MetroBus connection through the new development, linking through to the existing town, and beyond to Bristol via a new improved Nailsea/Backwell station and interchange. There is potentially an opportunity to achieve a higher density of development given that Nailsea is a main town in North Somerset and the enhanced public transport infrastructure potential.

Development in this area provides the opportunity to deliver new development at a critical mass, using best practice principles, with the full range of new services, facilities and employment opportunities, and an improved public transport offer.

### **3.0 Land uses, capacity, availability & viability**

#### **3.1 Mix of uses**

At this stage the mix of uses is proposed to include residential, mixed employment including office use (B1(a)), rail station improvement and interchange, retail, leisure, recreation, education, various community uses, ecological areas and public open space. Local Centre likely to contain mix of uses with location and scale to be confirmed through local planning process. Key requirement will be to connect MetroBus to the centre. Areas for surface water storage are also envisaged but these could be provided off/near-site.

#### **3.2 Employment (type/ha)**

Employment provision and location to be addressed through the local planning process. Assumptions and suggestions provided here are initial scenarios for testing. North Somerset Council are currently preparing an Employment Land Review that will inform employment planning at the SDLs through the local plan.

Compared to other areas of the West of England and in North Somerset, employment land availability is limited in Nailsea. Improvements to highway infrastructure, the station with improved rail frequency, capacity and MetroBus connectivity, may improve the prospects as a business location.

Potential for new B1 office park well connected to enhanced Nailsea/ Backwell station with MetroBus connectivity. Along with the Backwell SDL, initial scenarios to test are for around 10.5ha of B Class land, comprising 6.3ha B1a, 4.2ha B1b and B1c, that could translate to around 55125sqm and 22,050sqm respectively.

#### **3.3 Housing typology / density**

Medium density urban extension at an average 42dph. A range of densities should be considered to create variety and character within the new settlement. There is potential for the net density to be increased to reflect a higher density core and form of development, and this could bring about benefits to transport and wider sustainability, however this has to balance with environmental constraints. Lower densities likely to be required to west of development in response to context and environmental constraints.

#### **3.4 Capacity**

About 3,300 units.

### 3.5 Availability

Multiple ownerships/ development interests present, and majority of land being actively promoted.

### 3.6 Viability

Viability likely to be dependent upon alternative sources of funding. See viability evidence for further information.

## 4.0 Concept Diagram

See Appendix 1 –Concept Diagram

*The Concept Diagrams provide the broad location or area of search for growth in each SDL denoted by the diagonal hatching. The extent of this covers the **gross development area** within which the range of land uses and features necessary to support the new development could potentially be provided, including residential, employment, education, retail, leisure, community uses, green infrastructure, and water storage as required. Development areas to be refined through more detailed work through the local planning process.*

## 5.0 Draft policy expectations for location

### 5.1 Vision

- Creation of an urban extension to the south west of Nailsea.
- Residential densities considered around 40 to 45dph, applying the principles of ‘graded densities’. Higher densities are encouraged closer to the train station, local centre, and MetroBus route through the development.
- Development around West End, South Common Farm and other parts west of the existing pylon corridor should be at a reduced density and incorporate features to mitigate environmental impacts e.g. open spaces, drainage features as well as to respect the rural setting to the west of the area.
- Integration with existing community with connectivity between new development and existing town.

### 5.2 Housing capacity and other land uses

- About 3,300 units of a range of types and sizes including affordable provision.
- New employment development shall be investigated and masterplanned into the development. In particular opportunities to create a new business site well connected to Nailsea station should be explored with improved parking, MetroBus connectivity, rail frequency and capacity.
- Four primary schools on 2.4ha each. Located to be accessible to surrounding neighbourhoods to maximise walking to school opportunities along safe and attractive routes.
- A secondary school is required on 10ha site including sixth form provision.
- Primary care health facility.

- Mixed use local centre to be provided, to be accessible to surrounding residential neighbourhoods and well connected to main highway network and public transport routes.
- Community uses, to be identified and integrated through masterplanning.
- Land to be identified to accommodate strategic transport mitigations and other infrastructure including both on-site, near-site and off-site requirements.

### **5.3 Transport**

- The development will contribute to a strategic transport package including potential for a new or improved highway link connecting the M5 to the Nailsea SDL, with onwards connection to Bristol. Routes to be multi-modal including MetroBus provision with connection at an enhanced Nailsea and Backwell station. MetroBus connectivity to the station, new local centre, and back into Nailsea are required. Additional improvements to the local network required in addition.
- This is a summary headline of the key transport requirements, is not definitive of the required transport mitigations and further detailed work will be progressed on transport matters. See Joint Transport Study and background papers for further detail.

### **5.4 Green Infrastructure (flood risk/mitigation, ecology, heritage, POS)**

- Approach to green infrastructure to support the rural character of the area for example by creating 'soft' edges to the development blending well into the surrounding countryside particularly at the western end of development. Multiple roles encouraged including in relation to recreation, leisure, environmental and heritage safeguarding and sustainable drainage.
- The GI strategy should also seek to respect the setting of local heritage and provide an ecological corridor, provide for a sustainable drainage system and full range of open space including sports pitches, play areas and allotments.
- Retention of a Strategic Gap at the eastern end of the development between Backwell and Nailsea.
- An area of open space should be considered for retention around the Nursebatch Farm Fields SNCI and safeguarded for its ecological importance.
- Additional strategic green infrastructure to avoid significant impacts to Natura 2000 sites

### **5.5 Infrastructure requirements**

- Suitable drainage infrastructure including to reduce rate of run-off, and provision for long-term storage. In particular, potential impacts on the Tickenham, Nailsea, and Kenn Moors SSSI need to be addressed, including management of water quality and levels. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be explored.
- Ecological mitigation including features designed to safeguard habitats and species, retention of key habitats and replacement where necessary.
- Sustainable energy infrastructure including opportunities for heat networks explored early in order that any enabling measures can be secured to enable an efficient and effective delivery. The form and layout of development, and the distribution of land uses is likely to be a key issue in designing the infrastructure. Management of the infrastructure going forward should also be considered.
- Potential requirement for utilities upgrade.

### **5.6 Energy/heat**

- Opportunities to secure a zero carbon new settlement will be explored including incorporating a range of sustainable measures, including potential district heating, renewables, energy generation, passivhaus standard homes, homeworking measures and electric car charging facilities etc.

## 6.0 Barriers to delivery - critical interventions

### 6.1 Key identified risks to suitability, availability and achievability

The critical risks are:

- Un-coordinated piecemeal development that fails to secure necessary improvements to the range of services, facilities and infrastructure requirements and misses the opportunity to secure plan-led, comprehensive development. There may be a particular risk associated with the early release of development that is being promoted independently in the short-term.
- Delivery of strategic transportation improvements delivered at a suitable time to facilitate development within the JSP plan period. Early prioritisation / delivery would be required.
- Drainage constraints linked to impacts on water quality in adjoining SSSI.
- Ecological/ biodiversity impacts.
- Utilities on site may affect viability and capacity. Potential to hinder optimum development layout.

### 6.2 Key actions needed to reduce risks (e.g. investment in new infrastructure, dealing with fragmented land ownership, environmental improvement, or a need to review development plan policy)

- Collaborative approach between public and private partners to achieve planning policy framework through local plan process, subsequent masterplanning and development management processes to secure consensus on phasing of infrastructure and approach to delivery.
- Clear understanding of transport requirements, options, and costs supported by funding strategy and means of delivery. Consensus achieved with development partners on schemes required and means of delivery. Opportunities to link distinct sections of the transport route to distinct phases of development should be explored. This is expected to help support their delivery. Pursue opportunities for funding.
- Review of developer contributions and wider funding strategy as part of selection of appropriate development delivery model.
- Ongoing dialogue between flooding agencies. Further investigations are required to understand the existing drainage conditions of the area, the additional impacts of development including volumes of run-off, and the potential options for mitigation if required.
- It is expected that ecological issues can be addressed through masterplanning and the integration of suitable features/safeguarding on or off site. Further engagement with Natural England required to scope additional evidence required. Ecological issues, including impacts on the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC, to be addressed on a strategic basis across the Nailsea and Backwell SDLs.
- Further dialogue with utilities and testing of options through masterplanning process.
- Ongoing engagement between the LPA and development interests is necessary, with ongoing mechanisms for engagement identified. Should consider models of delivery at an early stage, legal aspects and matters such as equalisation of land

values to ensure the most effective masterplan and infrastructure provision can be achieved.

## 7.0 Indicative trajectory

7.1 Indicative lead-in time of 9 years assumed, to allow for strategic transportation measures to be funded and programmed; land to be assembled; and suitable delivery vehicle/structures selected, setup and implemented. Indicative build-out rate of 50-300 dpa. It is currently anticipated that the entire planned development will extend beyond the JSP plan period by an estimated 725. An average annual rate of 234 dwellings is estimated with a peak-year rate of 300 dwellings.

Critical dependencies include provision of strategic transport mitigations; achieving a critical mass of development required to support non-car modes including MetroBus; provision of suitable ecological/environmental mitigation including surface water storage, possible replacement habitat; land assembly, and legal/delivery structures in place.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Nailsea</b>										50	75

2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	2034/35	2035/36	Capacity within Plan period
150	200	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	2575

Post 2036	Total Capacity
725	3300

# Appendix 1 – Concept Diagram

