

Statement from Backwell Parish Council (BPC) for Residents about potential housing developments in our Village

Introduction

There have been various different communications about possible developments affecting our village. This statement attempts to update those interested or concerned in as factual a way as possible as understood in November 2018.

In 2018 BPC formed a Working Party including representation from Backwell Residents' Association and Backwell Resistance. This statement is on behalf of the BPC and the Working Party. The positions and statements are still changing frequently and so it is expected that this statement will rapidly be superseded, and so further updates and information will therefore be provided by BPC and the Working Party in due course and be published on our website (www.backwell-pc.gov.uk).

Joint Spatial Plan

Four regions of the South West of England (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire) combined to produce a **West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)** in order to set out "*a prospectus for sustainable growth to help the Region meet its housing and transport needs for the next 20 years, to 2036*". Their report in Autumn 2017¹. Included allocating 700 houses to the Backwell area and several thousand to Nailsea. They opened a consultation on the JSP, and BPC responded (available²), expressing grave concerns about the policy and making suggestions to improve/ change it. The JSP was then submitted to government for examination in April 2018, and a public examination hearing could be held in May 2019. We speculate that the decision of the examination may be available by Autumn 2019 but would not be surprised if it were later. Your Parish Council expects to be called to give verbal evidence to the examination and have been preparing for that with the Working Party.

Local Plan: Issues and Options

Until any change in the overall plan is implemented, the Backwell Village Neighbourhood Plan approved a few years ago remains the key planning policy. If the JSP is approved and becomes the overall policy, North Somerset Council will need to develop a new "Local Plan" (local meaning the whole of North Somerset) and that includes being precise about the locations of developments of over 500 new houses (called Strategic Development Location (SDL)). Before the JSP has been examined, North Somerset published a consultation document called "Local plan: issues and options"³. This is NOT a new local plan, but if the JSP is approved without major changes, it seems that this document and the associated consultation responses will be used as the basis for the next definitive Local Plan and SDL.

BPC has been very critical of the 'Local Plan: Issues and Options' document for many reasons as can be read in our initial response to the consultation⁴. We are currently finalising a more detailed further response, containing additional information gained from the professional advice of a Planning

¹ <https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti>

² <https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult.ti/JSPPublication/listRepresentations?objectoruid=18413185&findbutton=Y>

³ <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/planning-building-control/planningpolicy/local-plan/new-local-plan-2036/about-the-new-local-plan-for-2036/>

⁴ <http://consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/issuesandoptions/viewRepresentation?repid=10061717&nextURL=%2Fconsult%2Eti%2Fissuesandoptions%2FlistRepresentations%3FagentUID%3D%26objectorUID%3D%26byUID%3D%26byCommonName%3D%26docid%3D%26repid%3D%26partId%3D%26repidstyle%3D%26dexact%26repstatusList%3DM%26repType%3D%26lastModifiedDateStr%3D%26searchterm%3D%26searchchildren%3DY%26hasAgent%3D%2D%26hasAttachments%3D%26pageaction%3D%26%26sort%3Dsubmitdate%26dir%3Ddesc%26startRow%3D121>

Consultant, together with Traffic and Ecology experts. Our response will be submitted by the deadline of 10 December 2018. Everyone is welcome to comment on this document by this deadline⁵; however we would like to highlight that this is not the final Local Plan but a preliminary document. We would, however, encourage responses to the final document whenever that is available.

Grove Farm

After rejection of Farleigh Fields for development, one possible location for the housing development in Backwell is on Grove Farm in West Town, and some land there is already controlled by developers. There are many issues of concern regarding possible development there, including inadequate roads, ecology, flooding, and schooling, but at the time of writing no planning application has been submitted by anyone. If an application is made, the Parish Council will ensure that people are informed, so that those who wish to respond / comment will be able to do so.

Next steps:

1. The next deadline is for the response to the Issues and Options document by 10 December 2018 as described above. Please respond to North Somerset now to give your views if you wish, but be aware you may be asked to do this again later in the process.
2. The JSP examination in Spring 2019 should consider the comments and representations made, as well as the “soundness” of the plan. We hope to give oral evidence to that examination in collaboration with our expert advisers.
3. If the JSP is approved, the North Somerset Local Plan and Strategic Development Area allocations will need to be reviewed and responded to, but we cannot at this point predict when that will be.
4. A planning application for building on Grove Farm could be received, and those with views should be prepared to comment on that.
5. At some point we may seek donations of funding to help pay for professional advice in the above process.

Peter Soothill Chair and on behalf of Backwell Parish Council

28 November 2018

⁵ <http://consult-ldf.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/issuesandoptions/consultationHome>