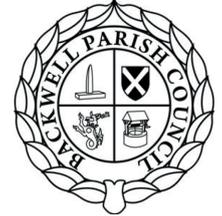


# From Backwell Parish Council to all Backwell Residents



**Dear Neighbour,**

North Somerset Council (NSC) are working on a "Local Plan" (<https://tinyurl.com/2k554dus>) which could have significant implications for Backwell.

In response, Backwell Parish Council formed a Working Party to consider how our village might be affected (<https://tinyurl.com/h3y4eseu>). This Newsletter outlines the steps being taken by North Somerset, our responses so far, and how you can be involved in the process over the next few months.

## NSC strategy for development

The government is calling for more house building to address a national shortage. NSC's spatial strategy for the next 15 years previously focused on development close to existing urban areas. It also allowed for building in villages close to those urban areas, as long as they had a good range of facilities and travel to work options.

Unfortunately, the latest draft proposal (see below) introduces the possibility of wider step-by-step building across the district, which we **oppose**.

## Sequential Approach

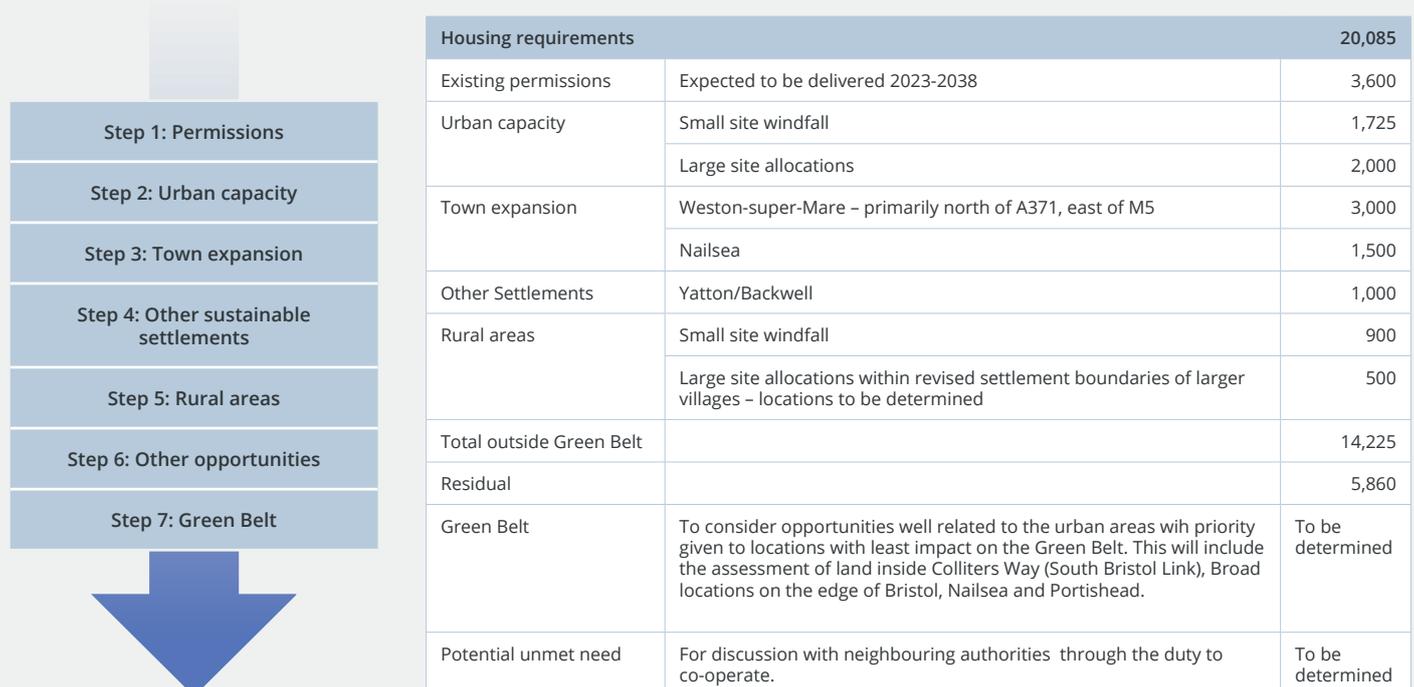


Figure 1: Sequential approach to housing in North Somerset

## Allocation of over 20,000 houses to North Somerset

Local Planning Authorities (in our case NSC) must use the national standard methodology for calculating housing requirement and use a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for. That has resulted in an estimation of over 20,000 new homes across North Somerset. But this number could rise:

**a)** NSC is committed to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in housing provision, and recent changes to the standard methodology have increased Bristol's housing requirement by about 35%. This puts greater pressure on NSC to accommodate some of the overspill from Bristol. This means there is a risk that our allocation may **increase** rather than decrease.

**b)** The draft proposals published by NSC outline possible locations for just 14,000 houses, meaning that sites for at least 6,000 more homes still need to be found. This increases the likelihood of implementation of steps 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the above diagram. So we could start off with what seems like a modest target for building in Backwell, but this could rise rapidly as more sites are identified.

Over recent months, we have spoken to North Somerset Planning Department, Dr Liam Fox (our member of Parliament) and Bridget Petty (our NSC councillor), putting the case that over 20,000 is too many and pointing out that NSC has not been able to meet national targets in the past.

### Allocation of 1000 houses to Yatton / Backwell

We are concerned that the draft plan calls for "1000" homes to be allocated to "Yatton and Backwell" without any indication how this total will be divided between the two villages. Of even more concern is the danger that a combination of Green Belt and Flood Plain risk could prevent building in other areas, and lead to excessive development in places like Backwell.

### Timeframe

Timescales may be relatively short. The draft plan is expected in October 2021 and the proposed housing numbers, distributions and site allocations within Backwell may be included in that document. This will be followed by a period of consultation and examination in 2022.

### Transport

Difficulties with the A370 is a constraint on building in Backwell, especially to the west of the Backwell traffic lights. The transport assessment produced in April 2021 for the Local Plan (<https://tinyurl.com/b893ee2b>) implies a possible shift to less road building in future. So, we should consider how we feel about new housing in Backwell **without** road improvements. The current standards of sustainable travel include car sharing, buses, working from home etc.

## What happens next, and how you can help.

**1.** Sadly we must share with you our significant concern for the potential of major building in Backwell during the next few years, against the expressed opinion of BPC and its residents. NSC have not adopted the Urban Development option within the Choices and Challenges consultation for the Local Plan 2023-2038 which we supported. The provisional allocation by NSC of "1000" houses to Backwell and Yatton, with no indication of how these might be distributed between the villages is also a concern. Further updated information will be available at the URLs given above.

**2.** Once the local plan has been published and we have had a chance to study it we will have an open day (probably in the Parish Hall). In that meeting we aim to give verbal presentations and have posters showing key points as well as chances for residents to feed-back their views. We will also make it clear how you can respond to the consultation if you wish to. We are committed to working with all our residents to ensure that wherever possible, our response to NSC carries the broadest possible support from our fellow villagers.



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