



## Report

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# Nailsea Town Council Baseline Review October 2015



## Contents

### Executive Summary

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	The Existing Situation.....	2
3.	Policy Consideration .....	1
4.	The Future .....	16

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**For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Ltd**

## Executive Summary

This document has been commissioned by Nailsea Town Council to act as part of an evidence base created in order to assist in understanding the ways in which Nailsea is developing, and to act as a supporting document in the planning process.

## The Past and Present

Nailsea is now a town with a population of approximately 15,630. It has grown rapidly since 1951 when it was home to only 3,000. However, in the period since 1991 growth has stagnated and the town has marginally reduced in population, despite the development of The Elms on its eastern border. Technically The Elms is in Wraxall not Nailsea, but it functions as part of the Town and therefore analysis has attempted to infer where possible the additional effects of the Elms development upon any results. Without taking The Elms into consideration, the number of people in all groups below 44 years of age declined between 1991 and 2011.

Over the period 2001 – 2011 the average household size fell in line with national figures. There was a marked increase in one person households for the people below pensioner age, however the number of pensioner age people living in one person households decreased. The number of jobs in Nailsea has seen a decline between 2001-2011, a figure which was attributed to the global economic crisis and not purely down to Nailsea's economy.

Over the past few years, Nailsea has seen very little growth in the number of new homes being built, with only 116 homes built between 2002 and 2012. Due to this there has been little movement in the variations of housing available.

With the recent policy remittance of the North Somerset Core Strategy being agreed with by the Secretary of State there is now a marked increase of approximately 7,000 houses being required by North Somerset. The Core Strategy makes provision for new development at Nailsea. On this basis it is expected that North Somerset Council will seek to identify sites for new residential development in the Town to contribute to the district's overall housing need.

## Future Projections

Should the general trends observed continue the Nailsea area is likely to have a large aging population with little inflow of younger people. The average size of households is likely to continue to fall, meaning that more households will be formed and pressure for housing will increase. The overall impact of the changes may be;

- Increased demand for health provision for older people
- Reduced demand for school and educational facilities
- Potential change in demand for leisure provision to meet the requirements of the older generation.
- Increased demand for housing
- Reduced affordability for first time buyers
- Reduced economically active population
- Potentially reduced level of out commuting

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced on behalf Nailsea Town Council in order to act as a basis for discussion and provide a sound baseline for the preparation of an action plan for the future of The Town.
- 1.2 This document follows on from and develops previous pieces of work undertaken by Atkins in May 2005 (The Atkins Report) and by Baker Associates in 2006. The documents were prepared as part of the process of responding to the North Somerset Local Plan and were submitted to the Inspector considering the Replacement Local Plan.
- 1.3 The Atkins Report considered all aspects of Nailsea and provided an insight into the settlement at that point in time. Similarly the Baker Associates report sought to give an insight in to the Nailsea demographic trends looking at the past, present and future.
- 1.4 This new document is an update to the Baker Associates document and will perform three functions.
- 1.5 Firstly, to provide a greater analysis of the current town, most notably its population structure.
- 1.6 Secondly, it provides an update on the relevant policies and strategies which might shape Nailsea in the future.
- 1.7 Finally, it considers how the changing population structure and the relevant policies/strategies may shape The Town in the future, considering periods of 5 years (2011 – 2016) 10 years (2021) and 20 years (2031). These are summarized in the final section.
- 1.8 The report is therefore in three sections:
- Section 2 - The existing situation which considers the current demographics of The Town
  - Section 3 - Policy background
  - Section 4 - Projections for the future

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## 2. The Existing Situation

### Brief History

- 2.1 The Atkins Report (2005) provided a concise history of Nailsea and its development (Section 2 Background). As no major changes have taken place in Nailsea in recent times it is not considered necessary to replicate that section in this document other than to reiterate that the town has generally grown rapidly in the period since 1958 with increasing housing provision throughout most of the period.

### Definition of Nailsea

- 2.2 The study needed to identify the most useful statistical area to represent The Town in the data analysis. Initially two options were considered, the first was to use Office of National Statistics (ONS) data available for the wards of Nailsea East and Nailsea North & West which covers the majority of the Town. The second option was to use data derived from smaller super output areas (SOA) to enable the Elms development to be incorporated into the statistical unit.
- 2.3 Although the previous document created by Baker Associates sought to utilise information for both areas, including the Elms where possible, it was observed that accurate and comprehensive data for the Elms development was largely unavailable and therefore the data analysis would be more accurate in comparison when focusing solely on the Nailsea Wards. In addition to the lack of accurate data the report also notes that at the time of the Baker Associates report being written the process of bringing the Elms development in to the Nailsea boundary was underway. However since the completion of the previous report the attempt from Nailsea Council to redraw the town's boundary was rejected. Despite this, sections of the analysis undertaken in this updated report will attempt to make note of the effect that the Elms development has had on the town.

### A Picture of the Town - The Existing Situation

- 2.4 The analysis below sets out a picture of Nailsea. The objective of this analysis is to establish The Town's existing position and identify issues affecting Nailsea. The section sets out information on the following topics:
- Population
  - Employment

- Housing
- Travel to work

## Population

2.5 Nailsea is now one of the principal towns within North Somerset.

2.6 Table 2.1 below sets out population growth since 1881 for North Somerset.

**Table 2.1: North Somerset Population Growth 1881 to 2011**

Year	North Somerset Population
1881	49,280
1891	52,770
1911	68,410
1931	82,830
1951	102,120
1961	119,509
1971	139,920
1981	160,350
1991	179,828
2001	188,560
2011	202,566

Source: Vision of Britain

2.7 Over much of this period Nailsea was a relatively small village and by 1951 had a population of only 3,000. Since this time there has been significant population growth, as shown in the Table 2.2 below.

**Table 2.2: Nailsea population change 1951 to 2011**

Year	Nailsea Population
1951	3,000
1961	4,173
1971	8,630
1991	17,230
2001	16,546
2011	15,630

Source: Vision of Britain (Note: Figures Exclude the Elms Development)

- 2.8 The tables illustrate that the population of North Somerset has increased by 83,057 people in the 50 years between 1961-2011. Whilst over the same period the population growth in Nailsea saw an increase of 11,457 from 1961 population. For North Somerset this represents a 69% increase in 50 years, in contrast for Nailsea this represents a 421% increase.
- 2.9 More recently Table 2.2 shows that the population of Nailsea, excluding the Elms, has seen a decrease since 1991 by 1,600 people. It is interesting to note that with the Elms development included the population of Nailsea would be 17,432 in 2001 and is 16,462 in 2011. This indicates a general decline despite the new development. The decline is most likely to be attributed to decreasing household size, as discussed later.

## Age Structure

- 2.10 Overall the population of Nailsea has decreased, but it is important to understand the current age structure of The Town, how this is changing and the implications of particular age groups growing or declining.
- 2.11 Table 2.3 below sets out how the age structure of The Town has changed since 2001.

**Table 2.3: Age Structure Change 2001 to 2011**

Age Band	Nailsea 2001	Nailsea 2011	Change
0-4	797	658	-139
5-9	968	857	-111
10-15	1,482	1,094	-388

16-24	1,561	1,421	-140
25-44	4,079	3,092	-1005
45-64	4,857	4,865	+8
65-74	1,499	1,964	+465
75+	1,303	1,679	+376
Total	16,546	15,630	-916

Source: ONS. Note statistics for Nailsea Wards only 2001

- 2.12 The information shows that since 1991 all age categories between 0-44 have declined, whilst the population in categories 45 and over, have increased. This has particularly been the case in the 65+ categories which accounts for 99% of all population growth.
- 2.13 In regards to the Elms development, there is no denying that it has contributed to increasing the population of Nailsea, and as seen in the previous Baker report, it contributed to reducing the decline in the younger age categories. Despite this, the general trend towards an aging population is still ongoing as the population that moved in to the Elms circa 20 years ago is now approaching the older age categories. Since the Elms development there has been no large scale residential development which would have served the purposed of attracting new generations of people to the town.

## Household Size

- 2.14 The table below sets out the change in households between 1991 and 2011. Household size is a significant issue for Nailsea. A decreasing size results in less people occupying the same number of properties. The implication is potentially most significant on existing services that require population levels to be maintained at their current level. A falling population might result in the closure of existing services and the reduced likelihood that new services and facilities might be provided.

**Table 2.5: Household Size Change**

	Nailsea 1991	Nailsea 2001	Nailsea 2011	Change 2001-2011
Population	17,230	16,546	15,630	-916
Households	6,384	6,701	6,778	+77



Average Household Size	2.7	2.47	2.31	-0.16
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Source: ONS 2001. Note average household size data excludes the Elms.

- 2.15 The information shows that whilst the population has declined since 1991, there has been a growth in new households. This has resulted in a decline in household size from 2.70 in 1991 to 2.31 in 2011, which is in line with the National Average household size at 2011 of 2.3.
- 2.16 In regards to The Elms, household size in these new dwellings was on average 2.90 persons in 2001. Therefore the inclusion of this area would marginally increase the overall average for The Town. Although current data is unavailable it is likely that the newly developed area will start to reflect more closely the profile of the remainder of The Town and household size is likely to reduce further.
- 2.17 This trend of decreasing household size reflects a national trend and is likely to continue in the future.
- 2.18 Decreasing household size will have a major impact on Nailsea in the future. It will increase the demand for new housing, reducing affordability and potentially affect community services.
- 2.19 The table below goes into further detail regarding how one person household statistics have changed since 1991.

**Table 2.6: Growth in One Person Households**

	Nailsea 1991	Nailsea 2001	Nailsea 2011	Change 2001-2011
One Person Households	528	657	796	+139
One Person Pensioner Households	748	1,308	1096	-212
Total	1,276	1,965	1892	-73

Source ONS 2001. Note Nailsea excluding the Elms. The term pensioner is used as a shorthand for 'person of pensionable age'. Pensionable age is 65 and over for males and 60 and over for females.

- 2.20 The table shows that the total of one person households in Nailsea has decreased slightly since 2001, however the number of one person households below pensioner age has seen an

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increase, this increase is most likely due to the changing family structure and adults below pensioner age staying independent for longer.

## Employment

- 2.21 The following paragraphs set out the existing situation on employment. Analysis includes changes in the employment structure of The Town and the level of economically active people.
- 2.22 Due to changes in categorisation between the 2001 and 2011 Census the two data categories cannot be directly compared. Despite this a number of categories are similar enough to be comparable, and therefore this next section will seek to draw a number of overall conclusions.
- 2.23 The table below sets out the 2001 employment structure.

**Table 2.7: Employment Structure 2001**

Job Title	Number of jobs
Agriculture and Fishing	73
Mining	22
Manufacturing	990
Electricity, Gas and Water	134
Construction	457
Wholesale, retail trade and repair motor vehicles	1386
Hotels and Catering	283
Transport Storage and Communications	566
Financial Intermediation	849
Real Estate, Renting and Business	1221
Public Admin and Defence	514
Education	620
Health and Social Care	821

Other	429
<b>Total</b>	<b>8365</b>

In contrast to the table above the next table sets out the 2011 Employment Structure.

**Table 2.8: Employment Structure 2011**

Job Title	Number of jobs
Agriculture and Fishing	30
Mining	18
Manufacturing	509
Electricity, Gas and Air	47
Water Supply and Sewage Waste Management	130
Construction	558
Wholesale and Retail, trade, repair of motor vehicles	1287
Transport and Storage	328
Accommodation and Food Services	270
Information and Communication	319
Financial and Insurance	570
Real Estate	116
Personal, Scientific and Technical	565
Admin and Support	331
Defence, Social Secretary and Public Admin	544
Education	776
Health and Social Work	880
Other	403

2.24 It can be seen that more primary industries such as Agriculture, Fishing and Mining have seen a decline over the past 10 years. Despite this the most rapid comparable decline can be seen in the manufacturing industry with a loss of 481 jobs over the decade (2001-2011). This pattern of decline can be seen throughout most categories, the results of this section are most likely due to the effects of the recession that saw economic spend decline and in turn saw many people lose their jobs. Due to the slight alteration in response options within the 2001 and 2011 census data<sup>1</sup>, these results are not as reliable as others throughout this report.

1. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-user-guide/comparability-over-time/2011-2001-census-questionnaire-comparability.pdf>

## Economically Active People

2.25 An important factor in the continuation of Nailsea as a vibrant town is the level of economically active people, with an ageing population it is important that economic activity is maintained at a sufficient level to resist the possible increased trend towards Nailsea becoming a dormitory retirement town.

2.26 Table 2.8 below shows the change in the level of economically active people between 1991, 2001 and 2011.

**Table 2.8: Economically Active People**

	Nailsea 1991	Nailsea 2001	Nailsea 2011	Change
All people aged 16-74	12,638	11,996	11,342	-624
Economically Active aged 16-74	8,764	8,576	7,953	-623
Economically Inactive aged 16-74	3,874	3,420	3,389	-31

Source: ONS 2001 & 2011. Note excludes the Elms

2.27 The table above shows that the level of people aged 16 to 74 has steadily decreased since 1991; this is expected as the population continues to age. Due to this the both economic categories have declined.

2.28 In 2001 unemployment in Nailsea was at 1.8% of economically active persons, below the North Somerset figure of 2.1% and the national average of 3.4%. Meanwhile the percentage of retired residents was 20% compared to 16.1% in North Somerset and 13.6% in England and Wales. In contrast unemployment in 2011 Nailsea is now at 2.7% with North Somerset's figures rising to 4.4% and the national average reaching 7.5%. This result is most likely due to the economic downturn, with the economy now on the rise it could be speculated that these

figures are likely to be lower. Additionally the loss of economically active people will have had a negative effect on the result,.

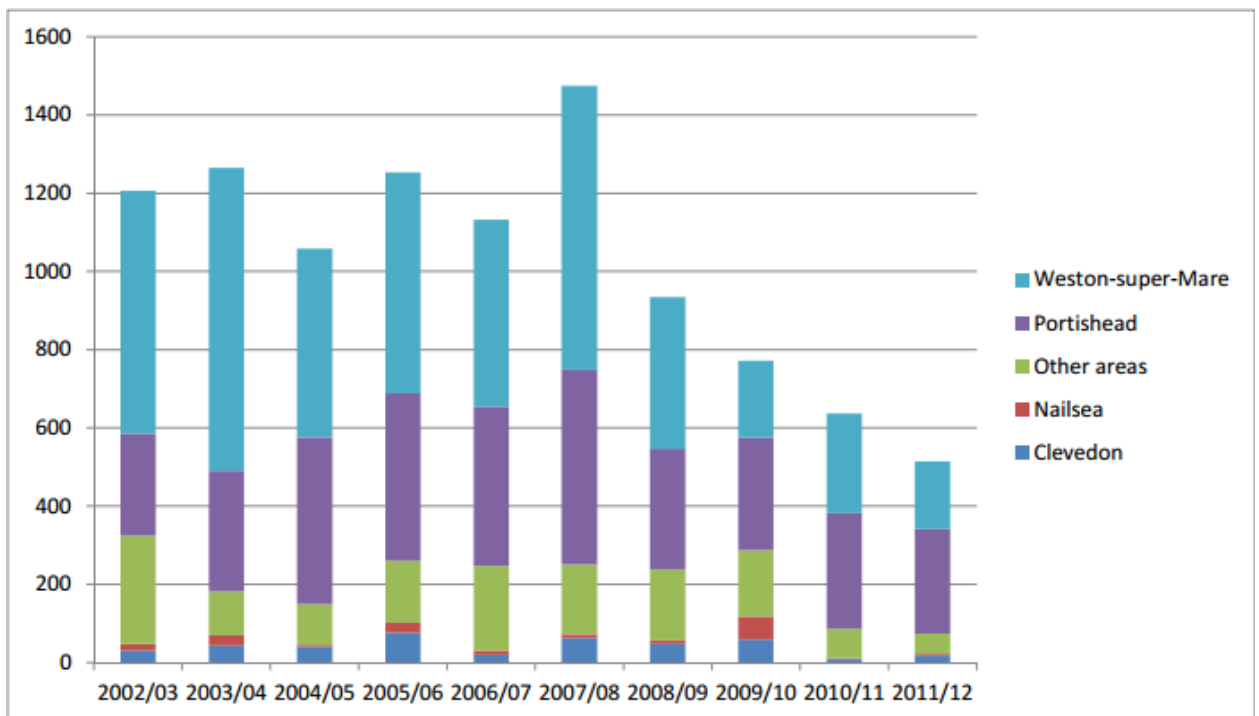
## Housing

2.29 The following paragraphs set out information on Housing. The analysis includes information on housing completions, accommodation type and affordability issues.

### Housing completions

2.30 The graph below shows the number of housing completions over time by area. Over the course of the 10 years between 2002 and 2012 Nailsea, including the Elms, saw the completion of 166 new houses, equating to 1.6% of North Somerset's Total. This calculates to be 16.6 houses being developed per annum. This number is far below the comparable areas identified in North Somerset's 2013 Sites Policies and Development Plan Document (below).

Table 2.9: Housing Completions North Somerset



Source: Nailsea Evidence Paper (DPD) 2013

## Household Accommodation Type

2.31 The table below sets out information on the types of accommodation present in Nailsea. The information shows that the majority of all accommodation in Nailsea is detached and

semidetached housing and that outside of the Elms development the area has seen a relative stagnation of the housing market.

**Table 2.10: Accommodation Type**

	Nailsea 1991	Nailsea 2001	Nailsea 2011	Change 2001-2011
Detached homes	2,855	2,994	2,923	-71
Semi Detached	2,289	2,436	2,453	+17
Terraced	962	900	858	-42
Purpose Built Flats	425	410	459	+49
Converted Flats	37	83	81	-2

Source ONS. Note excludes the Elms

## Affordability

- 2.32 Information on affordability has been taken from the West of England Sub Region Housing Needs and Affordability Assessment 2005. Unfortunately no further up-to-date data is available; however the section still contains valid points that have required addressing.
- 2.33 The Assessment was produced at a sub regional level and therefore the figures for Nailsea are not provided individually but group together Nailsea, Backwell and Long Ashton.
- 2.34 The study does however provide the best guide to affordability in the Town available.
- 2.35 House prices are relatively high in Nailsea and Backwell compared to other locations in North Somerset, but incomes in this area are also relatively high for North Somerset. The table below sets out the percentage of new households able to buy property.

**Table 2.11: Percentage of new households able to buy**

	2002	2004	2006	2009
North Somerset	47.1	37.2	41.1	46.0
Nailsea-Backwell- LA	43.6	31.9	35.8	40.9

Source: WEST OF ENGLAND HOUSING NEED AND AFFORDABILITY MODEL 2005

- 2.36 The information shows that affordability has fluctuated over time, but only a minority of new households will be able to afford to buy property and fewer households in Nailsea will be able to afford to buy than the average for the District.

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**Table 2.12: Number of new for affordable housing per annum**

	2002	2004	2006	2009
Nailsea-Backwell-LA	204	254	239	197

Source: WEST OF ENGLAND HOUSING NEED AND AFFORDABILITY MODEL 2005

2.37 Table 2.12 shows the number of affordable dwellings required to meet demand per annum between 2002 and 2009, the figure fluctuates around the 200 dwellings per annum mark.

## Travel to Work Analysis

2.38 Analysis of travel to work patterns can provide an understanding of how a place functions as an employment destination. As referenced previously since 2001 the questions contained within the Census have been altered and travel to work information is no longer available.

## Summary

2.39 From the analysis of published statistics the main facts on the existing situation are:

- Nailsea has seen a population decrease of 1,600 people between 1991 and 2011
- The age structure of Nailsea is ageing, seeing a 30% increase in the number of 60+ residents since 2001.
- The number of younger residents has decreased in both number and percentage of the population over the period
- The number of people of working age also decreased as a percentage.
- The Elms development resulted in the population of The Town increasing rather than decreasing between 1991 and 2001 and served to mask the overall decline in the rest of Nailsea.
- There has been a larger increase in households (77) than overall population (-916) over the period
- Household size has decreased from 2.47 to 2.31 since 2001
- Nailsea has seen a decrease in jobs in the town over the period since 2001; this has been mainly attributed to the recession.
- The number and percentage of economically active residents has stayed relatively similar as a proportion of the 16 to 74 population

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- The Town has had 116 dwellings completed between 2002 and 2012.
  - Affordable housing demand for Nailsea, Backwell and Long Ashton is over 200 dwellings per annum.



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## 3. Policy Consideration

### Background

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The Development Plan in question comprises the North Somerset Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and Saved Policies from the Replacement Local Plan (adopted 2007).
- 3.3 Material considerations comprise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the emerging North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan Development Plan Document (DPD), and the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs).
- 3.4 This section therefore will give an overview of the national and local policies that are likely to shape Nailsea in the future.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

#### Section 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- 3.6 To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should:
- use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;
  - identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under

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delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;

- identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- for market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target; and
- set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.

3.7 Local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five-year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends, and should not include residential gardens.

3.8 Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

3.9 To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and
- where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to

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the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.

3.10 The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such new development.

3.11 Local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.

#### Section 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land

3.12 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

3.13 Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.14 Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

3.15 Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider

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the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

3.16 When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary

3.17 When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;
- satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

3.18 As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

3.19 When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

3.20 A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt.

Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

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- 3.21 Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- 3.22 Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.
- 3.23 Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.
- 3.24 Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards. Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:
- applying the Sequential Test;
  - if necessary, applying the Exception Test;
  - safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;
  - using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and
  - where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.

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3.25 The aim of the Sequential Test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will provide the basis for applying this test. A sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding.

#### Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 3.26 The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
  - recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
  - minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
  - remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 3.27 In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.
- 3.28 Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. Local planning authorities may continue to consider the case for setting a locally appropriate target for the use of brownfield land.
- 3.29 Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

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- 3.30 Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, 24 so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.
- 3.31 Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.
- 3.32 Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

#### Section 12 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 3.33 Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
  - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
  - opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
- 3.34 In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the

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heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

- 3.35 Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 3.36 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

## North Somerset Core Strategy

- 3.37 The Core Strategy sets out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset up to 2026. It is more than just a land use plan; its scope is wider, focusing on place shaping and the creation of sustainable communities, and demonstrating links to related issues such as health, education and wellbeing.
- 3.38 Following a successful legal challenge against North Somerset Council, some policies contained within the Core Strategy were remitted to the Plan Examination Stage and Policy CS13 which sets out the district's housing requirement over the Plan period was re-examined. The Inspector appointed to deal with the remitted housing policies concluded that Policy CS13 which made provision for a minimum of 14,000 dwellings over the plan period was not based on a full, objective assessment of housing needs in the housing market area and was therefore not sound. In response the Council proposed that the North Somerset housing requirement be increased to 20,985 dwellings 2006-2026 which was considered by the Inspector to provide a potential basis for moving the Examination forward. However ahead of the Council consulting on a series of Main Modifications to the Core Strategy, the Leader of



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the Council requested that the Secretary of State (Eric Pickles at the time) intervenes in the decision made by the planning inspector in his report into the re-examination of the North Somerset Core Strategy. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015, Brandon Lewis MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning wrote to the Leader of the Council to advise that the Government had undertaken a thorough review of the conclusions of the Inspector appointed to re-examine Policy CS13 and agreed with his recommendations that a housing requirement of 20,985 over the plan period is appropriate and therefore approved policy CS13 as amended (see appendix 1 for letter). The policies affected are:

- CS6 (Green Belt)
- CS13 (Scale of new housing)
- CS14 (Distribution of new housing)
- CS19 (Strategic gaps)
- CS28 (Weston-super-Mare)
- CS30 (Weston villages)
- CS31 (Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead)
- CS32 (Service villages)
- CS33 (Smaller settlements and countryside)

3.39 According to the North Somerset Council the proposed increase is “challenging to deliver and will lead to unsustainable development pressures, including greenbelt”, with that in mind it can be assumed the remitted policies will come under further scrutiny during the development process. Furthermore the council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land against a housing requirement figure of 20,985. The impacts of this increase will mean that Nailsea, identified as an area for additional development, will come under increased pressure to absorb a proportion of the additional housing requirements.

3.40 Due to the alteration from the initial core strategy the relevant policies may require adapting, until formally altered it can be assumed that 'appropriate weight' can continue to be afforded to these policies (except for policy CS13), though they do not currently carry the weight of adopted policies. All other policies remain adopted in full. While it should be remembered that these policies are affected by the decision, these are likely to still guide the LPA's overall approach to development across the district'. There is at present no definitive timescale in place for altering the Core Strategy document.

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- 3.41 With the alteration in mind the document will review all relevant policies, bar CS13, as if they are still in place.

CS2 – Delivering Sustainable Design and Construction

- 3.42 New development both residential (including conversions) and non-residential should demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design and construction, increasing energy efficiency through design, and prioritising the use of sustainable low or zero carbon forms of renewable energy generation in order to increase the sustainability of the building stock across North Somerset.

3.43 CS3 – Living Within Environmental Limits

- 3.44 Development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, water or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level by other control regimes, or by measures included in the proposals, by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

CS4 – Nature Conservation

- 3.45 Internationally Important European Sites or Nature sites include the Severn Estuary SSSI, a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), an outstanding area for its migratory and over-wintering birds. The other SACs are the North Somerset and Mendip Bats which supports rare greater and lesser horseshoe bats, the Mendip Limestone Grasslands and the Avon Gorge Woodlands.
- 3.46 Development proposals will be carefully assessed to ensure protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including retention and incorporation of important features, using conditions and or planning obligations to mitigate any potentially adverse impacts.

CS6 – North Somerset's Green Belt (Remitted)

- 3.47 Within North Somerset the boundaries of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt will remain unchanged during the plan period. Further amendments to the Green Belt at Bristol Airport will only be considered once long-term development needs have been identified and exceptional circumstances demonstrated.
- 3.48 With the added pressure that the growth in minimum housing targets has added, the potential for development in the greenbelt may be larger due to an amplified need.

CS9 – Green Infrastructure

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- 3.49 The existing network of green infrastructure will be safeguarded, improved and enhanced by further provision, linking in to existing provision where appropriate, ensuring it is a multi-functional, accessible network which promotes healthy lifestyles, maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character and contributes to climate change objectives.

CS12 – Achieving high quality design and place-making

- 3.50 North Somerset Council is committed to achieving high quality buildings and places across all of North Somerset. Proposals of all scales will be required to demonstrate sensitivity to the existing local character already established in an area and should take the opportunity to enhance the sense of place and local identity through a well thought out design. Where the existing design characteristics are not considered of a high quality, new development should actively aim to enhance the area through good design. Schemes must be based on a thorough site appraisal.
- 3.51 At Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead and other settlements throughout North Somerset, development should respond to the local context and enhance the distinct identity. Characterisation work may take place to identify the defining characteristics of places in North Somerset to support decisions on how new developments should enhance. In many places parish plans are invaluable in terms of a source of guidance on character, distinctiveness and local priorities.

CS13 – Scale of New Housing (To be altered)

- 3.52 A supply of deliverable and developable land will be identified to secure the delivery of a minimum of 14,000 dwellings within North Somerset 2006–2026. The Core Strategy will identify the policy context for the delivery of the residual housing requirement over the remainder of the plan period through the settlement strategy and the strategic allocation at Weston. Policy CS14 sets out the distribution of the proposed housing supply.
- 3.53 Note: Due to the Secretary of State agreeing with the inspector's comments the new housing figure is 20,985.

CS14 – Distribution of New Housing (Remitted)

- 3.54 Outside Weston, most additional development will take place in the towns of Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead on existing site allocations or through new development within their settlement boundaries, or in Nailsea through site allocations outside the Green Belt.
- 3.55 Priority will be given to the re-use of previously developed land. In all cases, new housing development must not conflict with environmental protection, Green Belt, nature

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conservation or any other relevant policies of the Development Plan and should provide any necessary mitigating or compensatory measures to address any adverse implications.

#### CS15 – Mixed and Balanced Communities

- 3.56 Creating mixed and balanced communities is one of the Government’s aims for sustainable development. This means providing sufficient good quality housing of the right types and mix, in the right places, which will be attractive to and meet the identified needs of different groups in society. The types of housing include market, social rented, mixed tenure, lifetime homes and special needs housing for groups such as older people.

#### CS19 – Strategic Gaps (Remitted)

- 3.57 The council will protect strategic gaps to help retain the separate identity, character and/or landscape setting of settlements and distinct parts of settlements. The gap between Nailsea and Backwell has been identified as a possible designation for a strategic gap.

#### 3.58 CS31 – Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead (Remitted)

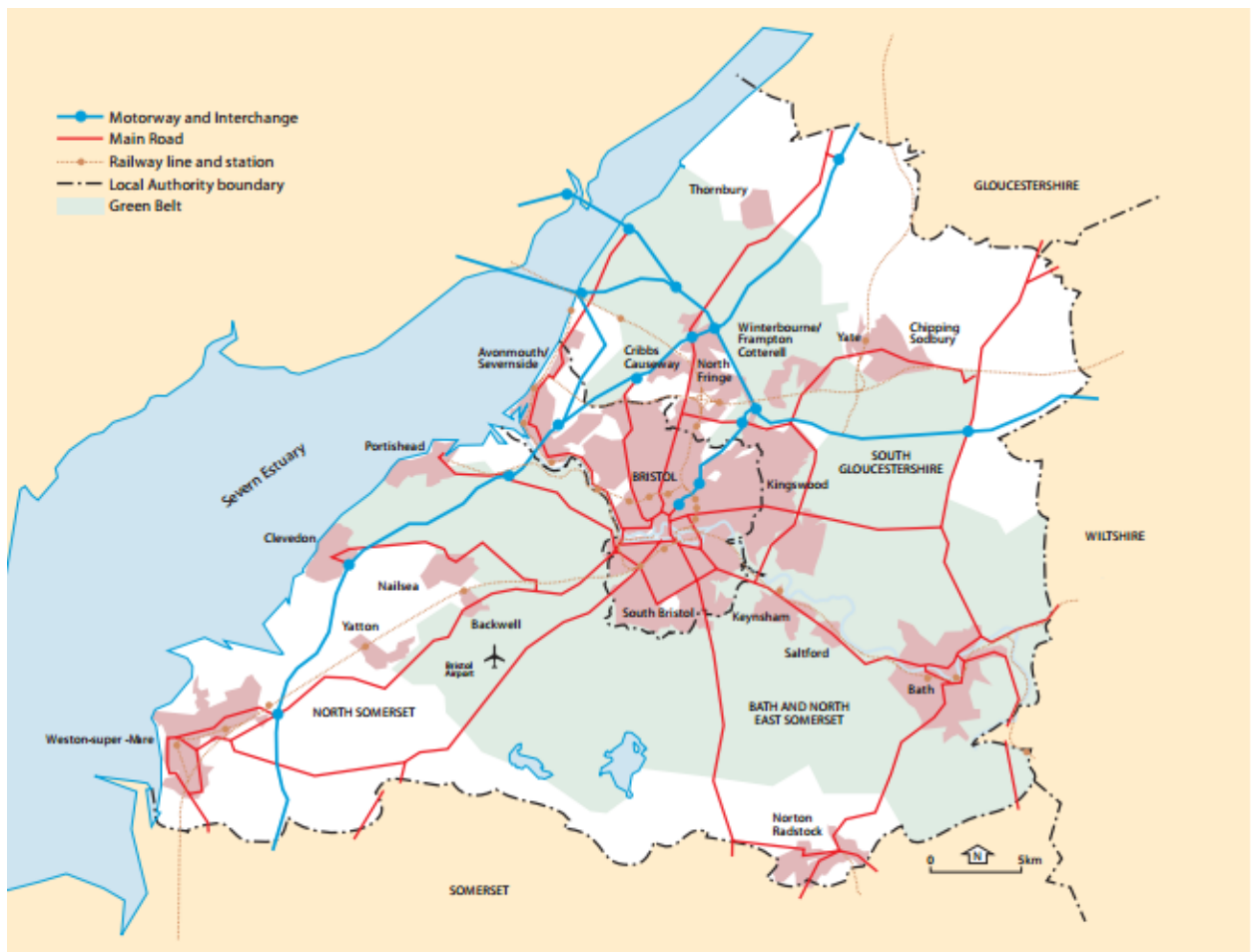
- 3.59 Residential development within the settlement boundaries of the three towns will be acceptable in principle provided it reflects the character of the local environment and doesn't cause any adverse impacts. Within Nailsea proposals which improve the mix and balance of housing types and tenure to encourage a more balanced age structure will be supported.

- 3.60 Proposals at Nailsea for new mixed use schemes adjacent to the settlement boundary to meet identified local needs will be supported provided that the site is not in the Green Belt, it is supported by the local community and any necessary site allocations and changes to the settlement boundary have been addressed in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

## **Joint Local Transport Plan**

- 3.61 The Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) was created by the four councils of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire in order to deliver transport improvements in the West of England. The JLTP3 does not exist in isolation; it works alongside the Local Enterprise Partnership, Core Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships of the four councils alongside many other organisations.

The image below identifies the current key routes within the JLTP counties.



Source: JLTP

- 3.62 Within the JLTP the main rail line connecting Nailsea with the South West and Bristol is identified for a rolling stock increase and a line speed increase. Although Nailsea is not directly mentioned within the document, the overall goals of the plan are clear; there is a focus on supporting economic growth whilst reducing carbon emissions and promoting quality of life and the natural environment.

## Emerging Sites and Policies Plan

- 3.63 The Sites and Policies Plan brings forward the detailed development plan policies which complement the strategic context set out in the Core Strategy. The plan is now at the examination stage and it is anticipated that any hearings held as part of the examination process will be in the autumn 2015. The appointed inspector will study the submission documents and, if necessary, will come forward with a list of issues and invite participants for the hearings.
- 3.64 Unfortunately the process of re-examination of the remitted Core Strategy policies has delayed progress of the Sites and Policies Plan. Given continuing uncertainties over new housing allocations to meet the increased housing requirement, the Development Management policies are taken forward in advance of the remainder of the Sites and Policies

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Plan. Within part 1 of the plan policies are set out focusing on the environment, heritage, transport, communities, the elderly and vulnerable, countryside dwellings, the economy, agriculture, retail and health.

- 3.65 Policy DM23 states that land shown on the Proposals Map is safeguarded for the existing and proposed expansion of park and ride and bus interchange facilities at Nailsea and Backwell Station. Development on safeguarded land will only be permitted if it would not prejudice the provision and expansion of facilities including the ability to provide for projected growth in rail passenger demand and proposals promoted by national rail policies, by Network Rail, by train operators or by the council.
- 3.66 Policy DM35 states that The council will require new housing developments of 5 or more dwellings within the administrative boundary of Nailsea town council to provide a mix of housing types to meet the needs of current and future populations, create a balanced age structure which will support the sustainability of the town and enable existing residents and future generations to stay within the local area. This position is in an attempt to counter the aging population referenced within section 2 of this document.

## Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 3.67 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a work programme for the preparation of the council's suite of planning policy documents. It sets out details of which documents will be produced, in what order and when. It is the starting point for residents and other stakeholders to find out what planning policies relate to their area and how these will be reviewed.
- 3.68 The only relevant plans yet to be put in place are the Neighbourhood Plans. Currently Neighbourhood Plans are in preparation for Backwell and Long Ashton parishes. Because they are a neighbourhood initiative, they are not listed as part of the Local Development Scheme. However, the policies contained in any Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan once it has been formally adopted by North Somerset Council.

## Supplementary Planning Advice

- 3.69 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) and provide greater detail on policies in the Local Plan and support decisions on planning applications. Adopted SPDs carry more weight than other guidance.
- 3.70 North Somerset currently has 14 adopted SPD's and 3 in the draft stages. The SPD's cover aspects such as affordable housing, biodiversity, sustainable buildings, landscape character assessment, residential design and travel plans. These documents are crucial when applications are looked at in further detail. In light of the recent. In regards to the landscape

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character assessment SPD the only specific mention of Nailsea relates to the Coal Measures Geology.

## 4. The Future

- 4.1 For Nailsea to positively move toward 2026 and beyond it is important for the objectives of 'The Town' to be considered, consulted upon and established.
- 4.2 To inform the vision of Nailsea in the future this analysis has looked at the existing situation to establish how The Town has changed over the last decade and reviewed the existing planning policy context to establish where The Town is today.
- 4.3 This section aims to take this process one step further by looking into the future and identifying what might happen to the population, economy, commuting levels and community facilities.
- 4.4 This analysis looks at the future from two points of view; the first identifies the implication of the ageing population structure and decreasing household size and the second looks at the impacts that the remitted policy will have, in particular focusing on the possible increase in Nailsea's younger population.

### The Likely Effects of Population Change

- 4.5 What might happen if the population structure changes or the population of Nailsea declines? The following paragraphs set out a few key implications:
- Increase demand for health provision for older people
  - Reduced demand for school and educational facilities
  - Potential change in demand for leisure provision to meet the requirements of the older generation.
  - Increased demand for housing
  - Reduced affordability for first time buyers
  - Reduced economically active population
  - Potentially reduced level of out commuting

### Health

- 4.6 Nailsea has two doctors' surgeries in The Town, located on Stockway North and Brockway. The Department of Health (DoH) recommends a minimum of one GP per 1,818 residents as a minimum standard. If the population of Nailsea was to increase as a result of additional housing being built from CS13 or the percentage of elderly residents increase then the demand for health provision will increase. The area currently has roughly 11 doctors serving the population, giving an

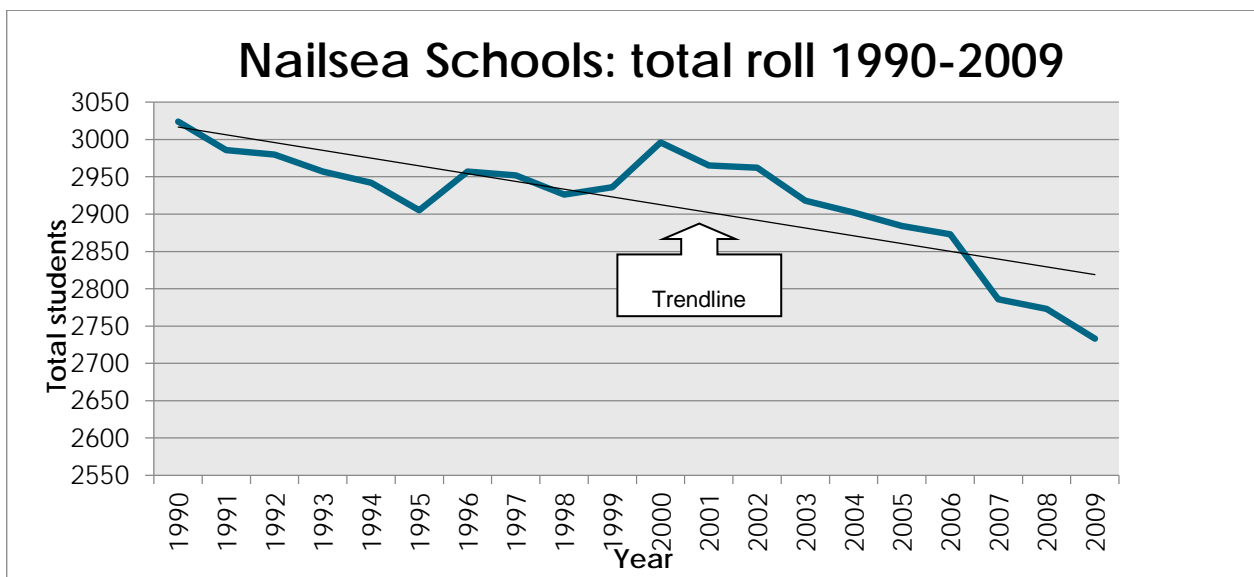


appropriate figure in line with DoH policy, with an approximate capacity to hold a further 2,000 residents the area is assumed to be able to serve a potential increase in population.

## Education

- 4.7 Education facilities are critical to maintaining the long term sustainability of a town. Schools are very dependent on the fluctuating level of young people over an extended period of time. If the younger population of Nailsea continues to decline, as it has in the past then the capacity and roll of the established schools (primary and secondary) will be affected. The table below sets out existing school figures (primary and secondary).

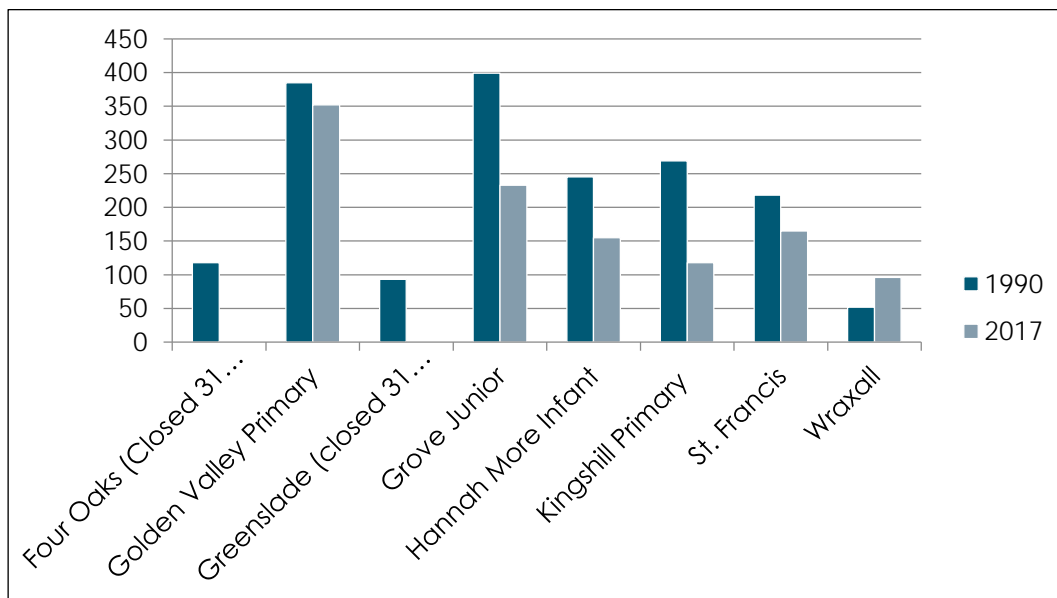
Table 4.6 Nailsea Combined Schools Roll (Figures and Trend Line)



Source: Data Provided by Nailsea Town Council

- 4.8 The information aligns with the declining population statistics referenced in sections 2 and 3 of this report, and in this case show a significant decline in school roll numbers since 2001. Should the downward trend carry on Nailsea's schools may be at risk of closure due to lack of pupils or the catchment for the Nailsea schools will increased requiring pupils to travel in from neighbouring settlements. Table 4.7 exemplifies this point by showing the total on roll for Nailsea's infant, primary and junior schools. It can be seen that between 1990 and 2017 each one is expected to decline, with two of these schools (Four Oaks and Greenslade) having already closed.

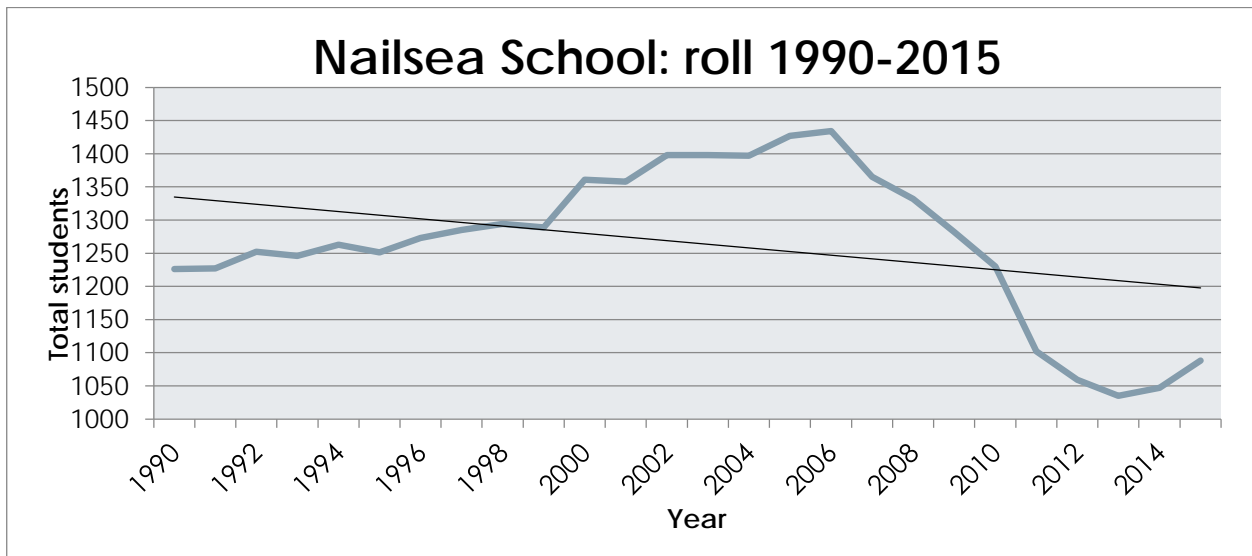
Table 4.7: Nailsea's Primary Schools Total on Roll 1990 – 2017



Source: Data Provided by Nailsea Town Council

4.9 In regards to the Elms development, in Table 4.8, the coloration of new development to improving school rolls. In 2001, a clear injection of new families through the Elms development served to boost Nailsea Secondary School's population around 2001 as new homes became occupied. Once the housing estate was established, the trend of new families into the town plateaued and then declined. The implications for the school roll, was a steep decline from approximately 2006 onwards. This data goes to show how in order to maintain a sustainable community the addition of new housing can be seen as a positive factor for the area's development.

Table 4.8: Nailsea Secondary School Roll



Source: Data Provided by Nailsea Town Council

## Leisure and Sports Facilities

- 4.10 The aspiration of The Town to increase leisure provision could be undermined by future population decline, changing age structure or altered to reflect the preferences of adult and elderly recreation, rather than the requirements of young people. An increase in the town's population would therefore support and justify the provision of the new facilities while potentially increasing pressures on the area's green leisure spaces based on the need to identify suitable new sites for residential development. Developer contributions stemming from new development may also be directed towards improvements of existing facilities or the creation of new facilities in order to accommodate a larger population and respond to the needs of existing residents.

## Housing Demand and Affordability

- 4.11 Decreasing household size is likely to continue to fuel the demand for residential properties within Nailsea and potentially displace those who cannot afford property within The Town to other locations. This situation could further exacerbate the population structure as younger people who have not yet climbed on to the property ladder will be unable to do so. Although this is the situation at the moment, should new housing developments be created the requirements for affordable housing and a mixture of tenures is likely to have a positive impact on the younger and poorer sides of the local population.

## The Economy and Commuting

- 4.12 An ageing population could potentially impact upon the number of economically active people. The population projections do not indicate this as the population growth and increased economic activity rates may be sufficient to maintain existing employment levels.
- 4.13 Should creating a decrease in out-commuting to other locations within the West of England Sub Region be possible, this effect is potentially beneficial to The Town as a decrease in the level of net out commuting, and possible increase in total employment over the period could help Nailsea increase its self-containment and sustainability.

## Retail

As of August 2013 GOAD data indicated that Nailsea's centre was comprised of 9 convenience stores, 46 comparison stores, 43 service stores and 17 vacant units. The figure of roughly 15% of Nailsea's units being vacant can be considered high compared to the 2013 UK vacancy rate of 12%. New residential development and associated influx of economically active new residents would result in increase in footfall and spend in the area. This economic boost that a new population can bring to the area is likely to improve the overall retail standards within Nailsea.

Appendix I  
Inspectors  
Letter



**Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government**

**Brandon Lewis MP**  
*Minister of State for Housing and Planning*

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Government**  
Fry Building  
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[www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

**18 SEP 2015**

*Dear Cllr Ashton*

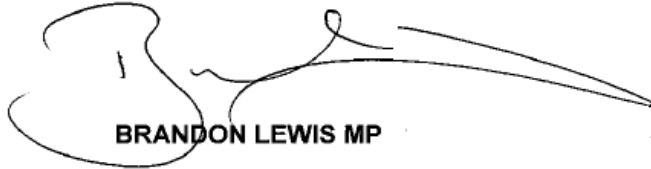
On 27 March 2015 the then Secretary of State, in exercise of powers under section 21(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, directed that Policy CS13: Housing requirement and supporting text of the North Somerset Council Core Strategy is submitted to him for his approval.

I am very aware of the importance of ensuring that there is maximum clarity for the community at the soonest opportunity as to what level of housing is appropriate in North Somerset, in line with the Government's planning policy. This is in the context of a complex and protracted examination of North Somerset's Core Strategy at a time of transition in national planning policy. I would also note that there has been complex evidence put forward at examination relating to a range of potential levels of housing need as high as 25,950 under certain assumptions.

The Government has undertaken a thorough review of the conclusions of the Inspector appointed to examine the policy. I am satisfied that the inspector's recommendations, set out in his report of 11 March 2015, apply and reflect national policy correctly. I am satisfied that the inspector has taken a pragmatic approach to establishing the housing requirement for North Somerset in the context of national planning policy as a whole and I agree with his recommendations, chiefly that a housing target of 20,985 over the plan period is appropriate.

Therefore, in exercise of the powers under section 21(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and having regard to the Local Development Scheme, I approve 'Policy CS13: Housing requirement' and supporting text of the North Somerset Core Strategy without modification. This has the effect of making policy CS13 part of the development plan for North Somerset in accordance with section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The Government now expects North Somerset Council to move forward with the other elements of its Local Plan and to deliver the homes its communities need.



**BRANDON LEWIS MP**

*Copied to: John Penrose MP and Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP*