West of England
Strategic Development
Location Assessment
Methodology Paper

NOVEMBER 2017
1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper documents the work carried out to inform the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) Publication Plan. Its purpose is to set out the further work that has been undertaken to refine the assessment of potential for development at the Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) identified in the previous draft of the JSP – Towards an Emerging Spatial Strategy (TESS) published in November 2016. This paper should be read as an update to the previous method note which is available at https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/gf2.ti/-/756738/23264869.1/PDF/-/Towards_the_Emerging_Spatial_Strategy_Assessment_of_Strategic_Development_Locations_Beyond_Settlement_Boundaries_Methodology_Paper.pdf

1.2 At this stage, the technical work has focussed on the delivery challenges and opportunities faced at each SDL and the approximate scale of development potential achievable. This paper explains how that technical exercise has been undertaken and the scope of the work which will support further technical studies and policy formulation through the local planning process.

1.3 This phase of work provides evidence to continue the engagement with wider interests who will be critical to delivery including infrastructure providers, utilities, statutory agencies, and development sector as part of each unitary authorities local plan. It has also been closely developed with reference to the emerging transport infrastructure work to ensure development potential is aligned to thinking on strategic transport opportunities and requirements.

1.4 In addition to this work, the Sustainability Appraisal process has systematically considered the JSP spatial strategy, including the Strategic Development Locations, against environmental, economic and social objectives.

2.0 Strategic Development Locations (SDLs)

2.1 Table 1 of the JSP TESS set out the schedule of selected locations to accommodate strategic growth (SDLs) and included for each,

- the typology of each SDL;
- the indicative number of dwellings;
- the rationale for inclusion in the emerging spatial strategy; and,
- the likely transport mitigations identified at that stage.

2.2 The TESS identified nine Strategic Development Locations for accommodating up to 21,500 homes (see table below).

2.3 During the preparation of this phase of work, Brislington was added to the SDLs and south of Chipping Sodbury identified as a potential contingency location. In relation to the North Somerset SDLs, Nailsea and Backwell have been assessed as two separate opportunities and Banwell and Churchill/ Langford have been explored for the ‘M5 to A38 Transport Corridor’. See Topic paper 2 which sets out how & why locations selected for inclusion in the Publication JSP.
3.0 Focussing on the broad location for growth

3.1 This phase of work has more clearly established the general area of search for strategic growth at each SDL and the potential scale of development. This has been informed by consideration of constraints, opportunities and the context present at each location, as well as opportunities afforded by strategic transport interventions, and place-making principles.

3.2 However, the JSP does not allocate specific sites for development as this will be the role of the respective unitary authorities local plan making process informed by public consultation, and further technical work to establish a more detailed policy formulation, land allocation and safeguarding processes.

3.3 This phase of technical work therefore sought to focus on the assessment of potential development at broad locations rather than necessarily identifying precise geographic extents. This is therefore a pre local plan allocation stage and no decisions are yet made as to the specific layout, and distribution of land uses within each SDL.

Explaining the Concept Diagrams

3.4 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 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, transport infrastructure, green infrastructure, and surface water / flood infrastructure as required.

3.5 The areas identified in the diagrams are indicative and additional or fewer land parcels may be required for the development. This will be informed by further detailed technical evidence and master planning through the local plan making process. The technical evidence presented reflects the degree each SDL has progressed to date. Given the role of the JSP in defining a strategy for the broad distribution of development this is considered appropriate.

3.6 At this stage the mix of uses and infrastructure requirements for each proposed SDL will need to be refined through the Local Process to establish the precise land use requirements. For example, these developments are expected to require surface water drainage features to control the rate of run-off from these new developments. The scale and location of these is not yet known and could therefore be required ‘off-site’. This could be true of other requirements also, for example, habitat mitigation and replacement, and renewable energy provision.

3.7 The diagrams show the general location of growth, and a basis for further work through the local plan process informed by further technical work, detailed master planning and community engagement.

Employment provision within the SDLs

3.8 The gross development areas could also include provision for potential strategic employment. This phase of work has not generally defined the quantum or location of employment provision. However, it has provided a mechanism to explore
opportunities e.g. linked to wider transport interventions and consideration of existing economic centres and land supply.

3.9 For some SDLs where appropriate a standard approach was used for consistency to generate employment hectarages and floor space assumptions. These assumptions will be further tested through the local planning process including through Employment Land Reviews to support local plans.

3.10 The figures produced through this assessment have informed the policies for each SDL see policies 7.1 to 7.12 in the Publication Version JSP but are to be treated as being subject to refinement through local plans.

Other land uses

3.11 Consideration has been given to the range of other land uses that would be expected at each SDL. However further refinement will be needed to establish a detailed land budget. That will be required when making detailed land use allocations in local plans. It is considered that the assumptions for non-residential uses outlined below provides sufficient capacity to accommodate the range of uses as required.

4.0 Exploration of constraints identified

4.1 Constraints identified through the previous phase of work, and others identified since, have been considered focussing on the extent to which they affect strategic development potential, and opportunities for mitigations. At this stage, work has focused on further exploring the constraints and responding with more refined estimated of capacities / timing of development.

4.2 This process has been informed by taking account of conservation, drainage, ecology, landscape, transport and archaeological constraints, to consider any gaps in information or understanding and the need for further work. This process has also benefitted from consultation with external interests such as Natural England, Mendip Hills AONB unit to ensure that there is sufficiently robust evidence and information available to support the JSP Publication Plan.

4.3 It is noted however that due to the scale of these strategic developments and the inherent long-term nature of their planning and development, that not all issues will be identified at this stage and that further evidence gathering and testing will be required to support their implementation through the local planning process, for example, following physical site surveys and legal searches. This is a usual occurrence with strategic development sites.

5.0 Review and calculation of development potential

5.1 The JSP TESS provided an indicative dwelling capacity based upon the previous technical work undertaken. This has been further reviewed and considered in greater detail through this phase. As a result, in some cases this has resulted in a
refinement of the capacity as set out in the table below. These revised capacities represent the overall capacities attributed to each SDL. Work has also identified the scale that could come forward within the plan period up to 2036, sometimes resulting in revisions to the dwelling provision for each SDL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDL</th>
<th>TESS Capacity</th>
<th>Publication Plan Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nailsea/ Backwell</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>4,000 (3300 Nailsea (2,575 in plan period); 700 Backwell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5 to A38 Transport Corridor</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>4,700 (1900 Banwell; 2800 Churchill (2675 in plan period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornbury</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charfield</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckover Garden Village</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>3,000 (1,500 in plan period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitchurch</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>2,500 (1,600 in plan period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yate strategic corridor</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>2,000 (1,000 in plan period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and east Keynsham</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>1,500 (1,400 in plan period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalpit Heath</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brislington</td>
<td>Not identified in TESS</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment of dwelling capacity

5.2 In order to inform the potential dwelling capacity broad assumptions about the mix of uses and residential densities have been considered as a starting point. The benchmark scenario for each SDL was considered as a starting point as follows:

**Gross site area x 0.5 x average density of 40dph**

This applies a typical (developer model) dwelling density in the West of England, that makes reasonable provision for non-residential uses and allows for variation of density across the development. This method is particularly applicable at this stage as the overall requirements for non-residential uses is not identified and therefore a complete land budget cannot be identified.

5.3 The benchmark scenario was revisited for each SDL. Development potentials were refined where further information was available on the likely mix of uses or the context suggested a higher housing density than the benchmark approach. At this stage to provide a degree of resilience to the JSP and flexibility for local planning, it is considered that there is sufficient ability to vary the assumptions either in density and or site coverage to achieve the overall planned dwelling capacity as yet
unidentified requirements that could reduce the net residential area could be offset by an increase in density to still achieve the planned dwellings and vice versa.

5.4 These assumptions provide a robust basis to support the planned provision in the Publication Plan, and upon which to develop the technical work and options through the local planning process that may subsequently refine the capacity further.

6.0 Barriers to delivery and development risks

6.1 For each SDL, the key risks to delivery are identified. Many of these risks are common to all such as the dependency on strategic transport infrastructure, and suggested mitigation.

6.2 This will require partnership working and collaboration across the public and private sector to deliver development. While this is beyond the scope of this work its role is to identify key risks and barriers and to inform the judgments around the overall achievability of development over the JSP plan period.

7.0 Assessing prospects for delivery

7.1 The table below outlines the delivery aspects that have been considered to identify an indicative development trajectory for each SDL to inform how much development might come forward in the JSP plan period.

| Indicative lead-in time to initial completions | Lead-in time is assumed to cover the period up to the first housing completion and will cover the JSP and Local Plan process (including allocation of site), and planning application process. The period is likely to include extensive enabling activity including infrastructure provision, site works, and other delivery factors including land assembly. |
| Indicative start date | For initial development completions. |
| Indicative build-out rate | Annual dwelling build rate. Assumes a single development profile based on a phased approach to entire development. |
| Number of developers (sales outlets) | As known at this stage actively engaged in process. |
| Critical dependencies | Related aspects critical to the delivery of the development e.g. provision of key enabling infrastructure. |
7.2 This assessment has informed the scale of development identified in the Publication Plan and identifies a number of dwellings that could come forward after 2036.

7.3 Estimating development trajectories at this stage is inevitably an inexact science as there are many unknowns e.g. number of developers/ sales outlets attributed to each SDL once commenced. This phase of work has considered broad potential and annual build rates considered to be reasonable to the location and scale of development. Various sources have been considered to inform this assessment.