By 2036, the West of England will be one of Europe’s fastest-growing and most prosperous areas, with the gap between disadvantaged and other communities closed and a rising quality of life for all.

The area’s rich and diverse environmental character will be integral to health and economic prosperity. Patterns of development and transport will support healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Communities will be well integrated, attractive and desirable, supported by the necessary infrastructure. New development will be resilient to, and reduce the impacts of, climate change.

OBJECTIVES

The development of the Joint Spatial Plan will be guided by some key objectives:

• Housing and wellbeing: The plan should account for enough new and affordable homes to meet needs until 2036 whilst ensuring enough short term supply to provide flexibility and choice on a local level. The pattern, location and nature of development should promote healthy lifestyles.

• Economy: It should support economic growth of existing employment centres and in new locations able to support the scale and type of job generation identified in the Strategic Economic Plan for the West of England.

• Transport and infrastructure: It should ensure new development is provided with the necessary infrastructure and should not exacerbate existing pressures.

• New housing and employment locations should facilitate public transport and active travel methods, rather than exacerbate unsustainable travel patterns.

• Environment: It should maintain and enhance the environmental quality, attractiveness and character of the West of England’s towns, cities, villages and countryside and respond to the challenges of climate change. The use of brownfield land should be maximised.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The scenarios all have their pros and cons and we want people to tell us what they think. Here are some of the questions we’re considering:

• Have we identified all the issues that we will need to consider? Are there any issues missing?

• Do you have any comments on the proposed vision?

• Have we identified all the objectives that we will need to consider? Are there any others you would like to see?

WHAT NEXT?

This is just the start. We want to hear your views on the Joint Spatial Plan. Your views are important in shaping the Plan as we go forward to prepare the Draft Plan next year.

Comments can be made on anything relating to the Plan until 5pm on Friday 29 January 2016.

Find out more and make comments via our website: www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk

You can also email any comments to: comments@jointplanningwofe.org.uk

Alternatively, information is available from main council offices, any of our libraries and one stop shops. All completed response forms or any other correspondence should be posted to:

West of England Joint Planning Consultation, c/o South Gloucestershire Council, PO Box 239, Corporate Research and Consultation Team, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood Bristol, BS15 0DQ.

NOTE: All comments will be published and made publicly available. Please note that the name of the person or organisation responding cannot be kept confidential. Once the consultation period closes, all responses will be carefully considered and used to help prepare the next stage of the Plan – the Draft Plan, which we aim to publish during Autumn 2016.

This will be another chance for you to have your say before the four local authorities agree on the Joint Spatial Plan that will be submitted to government. Again, this will go out to consultation, before submission in early 2017. Following examination in public, the Joint Spatial Plan could be adopted in early 2018.

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The West of England is an economically successful area, and is worth around £28bn to the UK economy every year. But it faces challenges in delivering new housing and bringing forward transport programmes and other infrastructure that will create strong communities and support future prosperity.

There is a real and growing need for new and affordable homes to be built in the West of England. Estimates state that the area needs at least 85,000 new homes by 2056, nearly 29,000 more than what’s already planned.

If we are to continue to prosper economically and enjoy the good quality of life and environment, these are things that make the West of England so successful.

The West of England’s four local authorities are working together to prepare a new Joint Spatial Plan, which will set out its ambitions for new housing and associated infrastructure needed to secure its continued economic growth and create stronger sustainable communities.

Launched in June 2015 alongside a Joint Transport Study, the plan will see Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council work together to deliver a prospectus for sustainable growth.

By developing a joint strategy that integrates with a transport plan, the four local authorities are leading the way in tackling what is now a serious issue across the UK.

The plan provides you with a chance to tell us how you think homes, transport and infrastructure should be provided in the West of England over the next 20 years.

It’s essential that people take this early opportunity to get involved in shaping this plan. It will play such an important part in the future of our area. Find out more and have your say, visit www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk
Taking into account national planning policy, here are five different scenarios for the way that this development could potentially be delivered. Each of the scenarios is urban-focused but it is clear how it would impact in five main areas: housing and wellbeing; economy and transport; and the environment.

#1. PROTECTION OF THE GREEN BELT

BACKGROUND: There is a Green Belt around Bristol and Bath which covers nearly half of the West of England. This green space attaches great importance to Green Belt areas and boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Our Green Belt is highly valued and has made a substantial contribution to the character and sense of place within our area.

In addition to development within our urban areas there are areas outside the Green Belt where growth could be located.

THE CASE FOR:
- Retention of the Green Belt prevents urban sprawl, demarcates existing towns and villages in the Bristol and Bath area and encourages regeneration and the re-use of brownfield land.
- However, it is possible that not all the new homes required can be provided elsewhere within the area, which could lead to some changes to the Green Belt.

The impact on things like the supply of affordable housing, investment in transport and potential increase in commuting are all factors that would need to be considered.

There remain significant areas where sustainable growth could be located, particularly around the traditional urban area of the West of England.

OTHER LOCATIONS:
- There are various forms of development which could deliver the needs for new homes and employment. These feature significantly in the ideas set out here. These are:
  - **URBAN INTENSIFICATION:** Opportunities to deliver additional development within urban areas.
  - **URBAN EXTENSION:** A planned expansion of the urban area into adjacent countryside.
  - **TOWN EXPANSION:** Planned expansion of existing towns which are detached from our main urban areas.

TOWN EXPANSION:
In parts of South Gloucestershire to the north and east of Bristol, there are areas that could be expanded.

South West Bristol, an area taking in land in Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council, is also a possibility. An extension to Weston-super-Mare could also be considered.

Within the Bath and North East Somerset local authority, there are potential locations on the south eastern edge of Bristol.

TOWN EXPANSION:
- Planned expansion of existing towns which are detached from our main urban areas.

URBAN EXTENSION:
- A planned expansion of the urban area into adjacent countryside.

OTHER LOCATIONS:
- There are other locations for urban development in our larger urban areas where sites once used for other purposes could be repurposed for housing.

Developments within urban areas are able to benefit from existing transport systems although this has to be balanced with the potential impact on congestion.

#2. CONCENTRATION AT BRISTOL URBAN AREA

BACKGROUND: Bristol is an important and vibrant regional economic centre, and the main focus for jobs, housing, facilities and services in South West England. It is thus seen by many as the main economic driver of the growth for the whole area. The objective of this scenario is to test the implications of focusing as much growth as possible within Bristol.

THE CASE FOR:
- By focusing as much growth as possible in and around the urban Bristol area, it will maximise accessibility to jobs and services.

CONCENTRATING development in Bristol would mean less impact on rural parts of the West of England.

ALTHOUGH:
- Housing would be delivered in large sites, potentially reducing choice.

KEY IMPACTS:
- This could change the inner edge of the Green Belt which would have a significant impact on the countryside surrounding Bristol.

THE impact on transport could be mixed, with shorter travel times and alternatives to the car available, although it has the potential to increase congestion and may require significant infrastructure investment.

#3. TRANSPORT-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND: This scenario is focused on locations judged to work well in terms of provision to their access to sustainable transport options – urban locations that already have good travel choices are the priority for development.

Although:
- There has been widespread recognition of potential sites, many of which had housing yet to be developed.

This could be a combination of urban intensification, South Bristol urban extensions and public transport focused development.

THE CASE FOR:
- This scenario considers opportunities to concentrate development into a single or small number of strategic new locations which would complement the overall functional plan of the area.

ALTHOUGH:
- The impact of development on congestion is a factor that cannot be ignored, and means that a package of transport measures is essential to support this scenario.

THE need for transport investment first means it might be more difficult to deliver transport in the short term. It could also mean changes to the Green Belt.

#4. A MORE EVEN SPREAD OF DEVELOPMENT - BRISTOL AND OTHER TOWNS

BACKGROUND: This scenario explores the benefits of a more even spread of development across the area, rather than focusing mainly on Bristol – recognising the West of England is a diverse area with a range of towns, villages and cities each possessing different qualities and offering different opportunities. This scenario could use different locations for development, potentially including a mix of urban extensions, town expansions and development in other settlements.

THE CASE FOR:
- A greater variety of locations could mean homes are built more quickly and could help to support development in different areas.

It could also respond to local community needs in locations beyond the West of England.

ALTHOUGH:
A greater range of sites is also likely to have higher delivery costs, and therefore delivery may be slower, although this may have economic benefits in terms of providing more choice and increasing housing levels.

#5. FOCUS ON A NEW SETTLEMENT OR A LIMITED NUMBER OF EXPANDED SETTLEMENTS

BACKGROUND: This scenario considers opportunities to concentrate development into a single or a small number of new settlement locations which would complement the overall functional plan of the area.

THE CASE FOR:
- The scenario would see settlements – villages and small towns, existing or new – spread over the West of England.

ALTHOUGH:
- This scenario may be less effective in transport terms and some alteration to the Green Belt may be necessary.

KEY IMPLICATIONS:
- Potentially long lead-in times of transport and infrastructure investment. It does rely on the local economy however, as it has the potential to deliver new employment.

How can we deliver the homes we need and where can they go?

Nothing has been decided yet as to where the local economy and housing and employment sites for the next 20 years will go.

The Joint Spatial Plan is strategic, rather than specific, and it will identify broad locations for growth. Following testing and further research, some of these locations may be deemed inappropriate, whereas other locations not detailed here may come into consideration. Not all the locations identified will be developed.

There are various forms of development which could deliver the needs for new homes and employment. These feature significantly in the ideas set out here. These are:

**URBAN INTENSIFICATION:** Opportunities to deliver additional development within urban areas.
- **URBAN EXTENSION:** A planned expansion of the urban area into adjacent countryside.
- **TOWN EXPANSION:** Planned expansion of existing towns which are detached from our main urban areas.

There could be potential for expansion of our towns in North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and the Bath and North East Somerset area.

OTHER LOCATIONS:
- This generally covers smaller opportunities, such as village expansion or a cluster of sites being brought together to form a strategic option.

We have also identified that housing growth could be delivered through development of new settlements – although no specific locations are currently identified.

**GREEN FIELD:** Green fields close to Bristol is retained, but development beyond the belt would be potentially less effective at supporting subsequent growth than other scenarios and could lead to a rise in commuting.