

# **South Gloucestershire Core Strategy**

## **Implications and changes to the Core Strategy and supporting documents arising from the proposed redevelopment of Filton Airfield**

**January 2012**

## Introduction

1. This report is the Council's response to the Inspector's request received in his letter of 15 August 2011 to:

*Indicate what consequences arise from the redevelopment of Filton Airfield for other parts of the Core Strategy e.g. housing supply, employment provision and locations, cross-boundary issues etc;*

2. This report, therefore, draws together the various references in the Core Strategy to Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood which have changed as a result of confirmation of the Core Strategy Post-Submission Changes December 2011 by South Gloucestershire Full Council at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011. The report reviews the consequences for those other parts of the Core Strategy arising from the redevelopment of Filton Airfield with regard to:
  - i. Development Strategy
  - ii. Housing supply
  - iii. Employment land
  - iv. Transport
  - v. Town Centres and Retailing
  - vi. Cross Boundary issues
3. This report explains the Council's approach and the references to Filton Airfield as they now appear in the Core Strategy and supporting documents. It does not present the advantages or disadvantages of the identification of Filton Airfield as a strategic development site That analysis can be found in separate reports that support the Core Strategy, principally the– [Sustainability Appraisal Report December 2011](#) and [Review of Aviation Options Report](#) Comments on this issue should therefore be made with reference to these documents accordingly.

## Background

4. South Gloucestershire Council submitted its Core Strategy to the Secretary of State on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The Submission Core Strategy (March 2011) in Policies CS25 and CS26 continued the approach taken by the Council, in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, to safeguard the operation of Filton Airfield.
5. In April 2011 BAE Systems announced its intention to close the Airfield at the end of December 2012. Subsequently, the company has indicated that the Airfield site will be released for redevelopment. The North Fringe is identified as being of strategic importance to the delivery of the Core Strategy, but the spatial strategy was drawn up in the expectation that the Airfield would be remaining as an operational facility. Given the amount of land which potentially would be released, and its location within the North Fringe of Bristol, the Inspector undertaking the Core Strategy EiP requested the Council, by letter of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011, to undertake further work to establish the direction and detail for how the availability of this land should be addressed in the Core Strategy. This work has been completed and was considered by Full Council as part of its approval of the amendments to the Core Strategy.

**i. Development Strategy**

6. The Submission Core Strategy, in accordance with the Plan's overall vision, spatial strategy and commitment to community based strategic planning, concentrates development within and adjoining existing urban areas, in particular the north and east fringes of Bristol and Yate/ Chipping Sodbury as this promotes sustainable communities, self containment and the efficient use of brownfield land.
7. As with previous stages of the Core Strategy's preparation, the Sustainability Appraisal process has assessed reasonable alternative development sites. When appraised against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework objectives, Filton Airfield and land west of the A4018, as part of the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood, together with intensified capacity for housing on the land south of the Airfield, have been found to be more sustainable than other reasonable alternatives. This also supports the community led development strategy in the Submission Core Strategy of concentrating development within and adjoining existing urban areas, as set out in Chapter 4, Policies CS5 and CS26.
8. The Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report December 2011 demonstrates that the redevelopment of Filton Airfield will not undermine the spatial strategy. Rather, it will provide the opportunity to create a more sustainable development with the removal of the airfield as a significant barrier to movement in the North Fringe, increase the critical mass of development to support the redevelopment of Cribbs Causeway and Patchway and the provision of transport and education infrastructure, and provide greater opportunity for social infrastructure (e.g. open space) that is currently lacking across the North Fringe.

**ii Housing Supply**

9. The Submission Core Strategy identified future housing provision for 21,500 new dwellings, together with a spatial strategy to deliver this housing. However, to address the Inspector's concerns about ensuring sufficient flexibility in housing provision to respond to rapidly changing circumstances, and to address the Government's priority of promoting economic growth, which was introduced after the Submission Core Strategy was drawn up, the Council has re-evaluated its approach to future housing provision. This is set out in the Supplementary Housing Paper December 2011. As a result of this work, the Council is proposing a higher housing provision figure of 26,400 new dwellings to provide flexibility in supply. In the Core Strategy December 2011, incorporating Post-Submission Changes, the revised housing figures are set out in Policy CS15 and the supporting text, and are also referred to in paragraphs 1.36 and 4.4. The change in housing numbers is appraised in paragraphs 4.2a – 4.2f of the Sustainability Appraisal December 2011.
10. The uplift in the housing figures provides the opportunity for Filton Airfield to come forward for redevelopment without undermining the Council's approach to future housing provision. There is, therefore, no requirement to consider the Filton Airfield site as a replacement for any site or sites identified in the Submission Core Strategy. This position was confirmed by South Gloucestershire Full Council at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

### **iii Employment Land**

11. In the Submission Core Strategy, Filton Airfield was safeguarded for economic development use under Policy CS12. The Airfield in total comprises 141 ha. of land, although only supporting in the order of 90 jobs as most of the land is runway and could not, therefore, be developed for other economic development purposes. Around 50 ha. of this land is to continue in the Post-Submission Changes to the Core Strategy as land safeguarded for employment. However, it now has the potential to provide for new businesses and additional jobs.
12. As set out in Policy CS26, the aim is to consolidate the existing centre of excellence for advanced engineering and aerospace by providing land for new businesses or the expansion of existing businesses. Other appropriate employment uses will also be considered on their merits including small scale, start up and general industrial, although the Core Strategy vision directs warehousing to Severnside. The approach to employment land and housing development in the Post-Submission Changes to Policy CS26 will support the Core Strategy vision for the North Fringe to continue as a major economic driver for the sub-region, whilst providing opportunities for people to live near to where they work.

### **iv Transport**

13. The expansion of the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood, from 1,750 new dwellings in the Submission Core Strategy to 5,700 new dwellings in the Post-Submission Changes, has required the transport infrastructure to support this additional growth to be reviewed. This is set out in Policies CS7 and CS26 and also in the supporting [Delivery Statement](#) which sets out the transport opportunities, including heavy rail.

### **v Town Centres and Retailing**

14. The update to the Town Centre and Retail Study has provided the opportunity to review the distribution of future floorspace requirements to take account of the uplift in housing figures. As a consequence, Policy CS14 has been amended with Post-Submission Changes and an indicative distribution of future floorspace is set out in a new Table 3A. This identifies 2,000 sq.m. net of comparison floorspace to go to a new local centre to serve the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood. Policy CS14 also sets out a revised strategic policy framework for managing land use change at The Mall, Cribbs Causeway as part of the comprehensive planning for the Cribbs/ Patchway New Neighbourhood.

### **vi Cross Boundary Issues**

15. Filton Airfield is located at the heart of the Communities of the Bristol North Fringe. It also has a strong influence and relationship to Bristol. Much of the northern area of Bristol is identified in the adopted Bristol Core Strategy as a regeneration area, referred to as the Northern Arc. Within this Northern Arc, Policy BCS3 emphasises "*promoting improved access and linkages to neighbouring areas*". The inclusion of Filton Airfield within the Cribbs/

Patchway New Neighbourhood provides the opportunity to create and improve connections with the Bristol area to the south, and extend these connections across the new neighbourhood into the Patchway area to the north. These connections will improve access to employment and services for both existing and new residents in the Northern Arc, and thereby help in achieving one of the objectives of regeneration for this part of Bristol.

16. In Policy BCS10 of their Core Strategy, Bristol City Council supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Henbury Loop railway line which runs between Avonmouth and Filton. This is also an aspiration of South Gloucestershire Council, as set out in paragraph 13 above, with the inclusion of Filton Airfield within the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood.
17. The inclusion of Filton Airfield within the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood has the potential to assist in the delivery of two particular objectives and policies of the Bristol Core Strategy. Further information with regard to cross boundary working with Bristol City Council will be set out in the supporting Topic Paper to be produced as part of the EiP.

### **Conclusion**

18. This report sets out the various references in the Core Strategy which have changed as a result of identifying Filton Airfield for redevelopment as part of the Cribbs/Patchway New Neighbourhood. As demonstrated, the Council is confident that this redevelopment can be delivered within the context of an overall uplift in the housing figures to provide flexibility, without compromising the Plan's vision and overall spatial strategy in accordance with the Council's commitment to sustainable communities.