

**MATTER 7 – SPATIAL STRATEGY (Chpt 4), LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT (CS5)**

**Main issue:**

**Is the Council's strategy founded on an appropriate vision for the area and is it capable of accommodating the various pressures and challenges facing it over the course of the plan period?**

**Main issue:**

**Is the spatial strategy the most appropriate one for the area and will it deliver the sustainable development objectives promoted in the Planning Framework?**

- 1.1 BAE Systems supports the vision for the North Fringe, and agrees that the council acted appropriately to revise its core strategy to recognise the impending closure of Filton Airfield. The allocation of the airfield site as a strategic-mixed use allocation is supported and accords with sustainable development objectives.
- 1.2 The scale and strategic nature and location of Filton Airfield makes it an extremely important allocation in this Core Strategy (CS). To maximise the potential of the site and the opportunity to tackle existing local constraints and allow the comprehensive master planning of the North Fringe to the benefit of all, it is essential that the site be fully integrated into the CS.
- 1.3 BAE Systems is committed to the delivery of the Filton Airfield site and is currently undertaking the necessary work to submit and secure outline planning consent in 2013 to enable delivery from 2014.

**Q1 Is the overall strategy consistent with sustainable development principles as contained in the Planning Framework?**

- 1.4 Yes. The strategy for development within the North Fringe is in accordance with the sustainability development principles contained in the NPPF, including the objectives of promoting and supporting economic growth whilst delivering new housing to meet local housing need, the development of sustainable mixed use communities and encouraging the effective use of land.
- 1.5 In accordance with the NPPF principle for plan-making to respond positively to wider opportunities for growth the CS responds positively to the impending closure of Filton Airfield, (the airfield will close in December 2012) and embraces the opportunity this presents to deliver growth as advocated by the NPPF.

1.6 The site's shortly to become vacant and brownfield land status, size (extending to some 142 hectares) and excellent sustainability characteristics derived from its location, surrounding land uses and lack of environmental constraints makes Filton Airfield a very significant site for the area. The delivery of Filton Airfield will assist the council deliver the housing, jobs and growth needed within South Gloucestershire in a sustainable, timely and properly phased manner. It will help deliver a better balance and mix of uses in the North Fringe, delivering significant social, community and infrastructure benefits, particularly with respect to public transport improvements in accordance with sustainable development principles.

1.7 See also response under Matter 1 Q2

**Q2 Are there other spatial options which would be more likely to deliver better outcomes for South Gloucestershire during the plan period?**

1.8 No comment

**Q3 Is the overall balance of growth between identified settlements clearly founded on the evidence base and is it likely to be effective in promoting sustainable development across the Borough?**

1.9 Yes. The redevelopment of the airfield offers the opportunity for a better spatial strategy for the North Fringe, providing a more sustainable balance between jobs and housing. As identified in the core strategy the North Fringe currently supports in the order of 70,000 jobs, which is twice as many jobs as resident workers, (paragraph 4.7). The delivery of the CPNN will help address this balance.

1.10 The focus of development within the North Fringe at a relatively high density will also offer opportunities for improved transport and improved access to facilities, enabling increased emphasis on public transport and generating a switch away from reliance on the car.

1.11 See our response to Matter 9 paragraphs 1.9 – 1.15

**Q4 Is the spatial strategy deliverable in the plan period and have the risks to delivery been properly assessed.**

- 1.12 The phasing scheme proposed has been informed by a series of detailed technical studies and a credible evidence base that demonstrates that the site and scale of development proposed is deliverable.
- 1.13 The site is wholly within the ownership and control of BAE Systems who has considerable track record in regenerating and bringing back into economic use redundant or surplus land holdings.
- 1.14 In respect of the 'take-up' or the rate of sale of the residential units during the life of the scheme the 'market', in terms of density, mix, and take up rates these will vary and there are many external factors which are unpredictable in terms of their ultimate influence.
- 1.15 However based on the current market, demand, supply and current trends advice from Alder King would suggest a number of volume builders being active simultaneously on a site of this scale (i.e. four 'sales outlets'). Taking account of the supply implications, a sales or 'take up' rate in a range of between 150/200 units per annum (including affordable housing at circa 30% of unit numbers i.e. 105 -140 Private 45-60 affordable) at current (2012) levels of demand (which are slightly improved on 2011) could be anticipated.
- 1.16 On a scheme of this scale there will undoubtedly be an 'ebb and flow' of sales 'take up' rates, and from Alder King research we know that during more 'bullish' market periods large scale developments in the Greater Bristol area achieved a maximum sales/'take up' rate of circa 300/400 units per annum (including affordable housing 30% of unit numbers).
- 1.17 Whilst it is not suggested that these take up rates will be replicated in the plan period the take-up rates outlined at paragraph 1.17 above are reasonable and achievable. The take-up rates will be further influenced / enhanced by the success of the employment zone and new business growth.
- 1.18 BAE Systems has considerable track record in regenerating and bringing back into economic use redundant or surplus land holdings. These case studies include a range of previous uses from large manufacturing facilities, airfields, agricultural land holdings and residential houses. Each case is unique however the BAE Systems model of delivering a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to the delivery of infrastructure can aid and enhance delivery rates. Given the scale of the site this approach of delivering primary infrastructure early can enable multiple starts across the site and improved deliverability rates.
- 1.19 Chorley in Lancashire highlights a recent example of BAE Systems delivery track record. Job creation on the final development is expected to be significantly greater at any time since the 1960's, something which has been achieved within the context of a mixed-use scheme which will also deliver real

amenity benefit to existing and future residents as a part of a mixed use, sustainable community.

**Q5 Is there sufficient flexibility in the CS to allow for change or unforeseen events?**

- 1.20 The development of the Filton Airfield site over the next 20 years will take place during a significant period of social, economic and environmental change. Policies relating to the airfield and its development, together with the emerging master plan will need to be both fixed in terms of strategic direction, yet sufficiently flexible in their approach and delivery to respond to the opportunities that change will bring. Maintaining flexibility to respond to change and opportunity over the plan period will be paramount to maximising development opportunities and delivering the vision and CS objectives.
- 1.21 In order to deliver the opportunity offered by the Filton Enterprise Area, in a timely manner and make it attractive to the industries that will provide maximum benefit to the area, a flexible approach and innovative planning approaches may also be appropriate.
- 1.22 The council has set out its preferred delivery approach for the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood (CPNN) which requires the production and adoption of a SPD. Whilst BAE Systems acknowledge it will be important to ensure the area is comprehensively planned, and that each individual site within the new neighbourhood does not prejudice another, the requirement for a single master plan for the entire new neighbourhood area (to be adopted as an SPD) causes concern regarding timely delivery and inflexibility. We refer back to our comments at paragraph 1.18 above and BAE's track record and comprehensive approach to delivery on comparable sites of this scale.
- 1.23 Given the detail of Policy CS26 (see further comments under Matter 22) and the strategic framework provided by Figure 6 it is unclear what the SPD process would add particularly in terms of a strategic framework master plan. For the reasons outlined in our formal representations the previous approach of site-specific concept statements and individual applications appeared robust and allowed maximum flexibility. See paragraphs 14.7 – 14.10 of our previous formal submission.
- 1.24 We also note that chapter 19 Implementation has not been updated to reflect the council's revised delivery aspirations in relation to the SPD process, meaning that as drafted there remains a conflict between chapter 19 and the last paragraph of Policy CS12

- 1.25 See also response to Matter 22 regarding proposed amended wording to Policy CS26

**Q6 Have the cross boundary implications of the strategy been taken into account?**

- 1.26 Whilst we cannot comment on the detail of discussions and outcomes the council has undertaken and achieved as a result of cross boundary engagement with key stakeholders we can confirm that should any element been missed or overlooked BAE Systems are committed through the master planning process to rectifying any shortfalls within their control.