

SUMMARY OF DRAFT LOCAL PLAN REG 19 CONSULTATION RESPONSE BY SPC (6th October 2026)

SPC has prepared a comprehensive response to the BaNES Council consultation on the draft Local Plan (2025 to 2043) and focuses on the proposals for 1,290 houses on Saltford's undeveloped Green Belt; a staggering 75% increase in housing for the village.

The response answers the key questions of whether the draft plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. In its response, SPC has concluded that the proposals for Saltford are neither legally compliant nor sound.

The points made by SPC include:

Saltford's Green Belt contributes significantly to the National Planning Policy Framework's five purposes for the Green Belt. Strategically, for the Bristol and Bath Green Belt, it helps restrict urban sprawl that would otherwise merge Saltford with Keynsham and hence Bristol with Bath.

Exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to justify the loss of such a large proportion of Saltford's Green Belt to development to meet the high housing target set by national Government for BaNES Council, a target that is not evidence-based and has not been set to meet a local, identified need.

Such a large and disproportionate development of the Green Belt at Saltford conflicts with NPPF requirements of exceptional circumstances, reasonable alternatives, sustainable patterns of development, proportionality, landscape, infrastructure, and Green Belt purposes.

SPC maintains that BaNES Council's interpretation of the NPPF to re-classify specific undeveloped Green Belt land proposed for development in Saltford as grey belt is fundamentally flawed.

The proposed release of Green Belt land at Saltford needs to be considered in the context of BaNES Council's wider strategy for the further development of the Bristol to Bath Corridor, for which, despite significant transport constraints, substantial housing growth of 8,900 new houses is proposed along a transport corridor whose principal road, the A4, is through Saltford.

The A4 at Saltford is already subject to considerable weekday peak-time congestion. The effects on transport for the Bristol to Bath Corridor development proposals including Saltford therefore also need to be assessed cumulatively rather than as individual developments. Where sustainable transport does not provide a realistic alternative for the full range of journeys, significant additional demand will fall on the A4. The proposals will put unsustainable pressure disproportionately on the Saltford community.

Many Saltford residents rely on access to the countryside on their doorstep for their health and well-being. The proposals will seriously compromise their quality of life. Rising levels of traffic congestion; education and healthcare capacity; drainage; utilities - these are all important considerations affected by such a large scale of development.

The plan fails to firmly embed a 'brownfield first' sequencing strategy using previously developed and under-utilised land, and density optimisation. By failing to exhaustively allocate and prioritize previously developed land before releasing undeveloped Green Belt sites, the plan unnecessarily sacrifices vital green infrastructure.

The city of Bath is a major factor for the high housing target set by Government. But, despite also being the main centre of employment, BaNES Council has allocated only 27% of the planned increase in housing by the plan for Bath due to its World Heritage City status, a status that clearly works to the distinct disadvantage of a rural, food producing area like Bath and North East Somerset.

As a consequence, the remaining 73% of new development required to meet the Government's target is proposed for North East Somerset, overwhelmingly on Green Belt land. The draft Local Plan is therefore highly unbalanced and not positively prepared.

In summary, the Parish Council's response concludes that the development proposals for Saltford in the draft Local Plan are not justified, sound nor sustainable development. Developing significant areas of Saltford's Green Belt would create considerable and disproportionate harm to the local community.

The Parish Council seeks a longer-term stewardship approach to land-use planning from the BaNES Local Plan; an approach where the new affordable homes that are needed are built closer to centres of employment, and that protects the countryside, valued landscapes, the health and well-being of residents, nature and food security.