

Planning Policy
North Somerset District Council
Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston Super Mare
Somerset
BS23 1UJ

By email and post

28 April 2016

let.001.TT.GT.18960019

Dear Sir/Madam

SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN MARCH 2016

Introduction

These representations have been prepared by Indigo Planning on behalf of CNM Estates Ltd in respect of the North Somerset Site Allocation Plan (Consultation Draft), published for consultation on 10 March 2016. CNM Estates own the Birnbeck Pier and Island, Royal Pier Hotel and adjoining foreshore land in Weston Super Mare.

These representations focus specifically on the draft allocation for the Birnbeck Pier site which covers foreshore land totalling approximately 7 hectares in area (but excluding the Royal Pier Hotel, Dorville or Lynton House Hotel Sites for which there are separate draft site allocations) as well as the Birnbeck Pier and Island. These representations do not relate to the Royal Pier Hotel allocation which is based on an extant planning permission.

The proposed allocation, shown below in blue shading, is for a mixed-use scheme comprising residential, leisure, hotel and tourism, ancillary retail, cafes, bars and restaurants and community facilities. The allocation identifies that the site has capacity to deliver 50 dwellings (at April 2015).



The Site Allocation Plan

We understand that the Site Allocations Plan is being prepared in the context of the adopted Core Strategy. However, the Council should have regard to the emerging Joint Spatial Plan which is being prepared in conjunction with Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils. The 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) covering the four authorities identified a need to deliver 85,000 homes between 2016 and 2036. This equates to 4,250 homes every year and is nearly 30,000 more than originally planned for across the region.

The emerging growth options which have been identified in the Joint Plan all identify Weston-Super-Mare as an area for “urban intensification”. Therefore, whilst the emerging Site Allocations plan is being prepared in the context of the Core Strategy targets, the Council should pay regard to the emerging context of housing needs in the area.

Birnbeck Pier and Foreshore Land

The condition of the Birnbeck Pier complex has deteriorated over several decades due to changing socio-economic patterns (particularly for holiday makers), the lack of a viable commercial use of the complex, and various accidents and weather related damages. As such, the main Grade II* listed promenade which links the island complex to the mainland has been closed and requires substantial repair works.

CNM Estates is fully committed to the refurbishment of the Birnbeck Pier complex and indeed the wider regeneration of this part of Weston Super Mare. It has appointed a comprehensive team of technical consultants to assess the cost of the refurbishment works to the Pier and has been assisting the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust (BRT) in securing Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF). CNM Estates is also considering appropriate forms of development on the foreshore to close the inevitable gap between the cost of the refurbishment work and any Heritage Lottery Funding.

In order to establish what can be achieved, both on the island and the wider foreshore land, a detailed feasibility study needs to be undertaken. The wider site is a relatively complex area with changing topographies and sensitive heritage assets. A detailed assessment of any development options, therefore, must be undertaken to establish the opportunities and constraints of the site and the best composition of uses for this area.

Whilst we support the policy allocation for a mixed-use development, in the absence of any extant planning permissions or detailed feasibility studies, it is neither appropriate nor possible for the Council to identify a realistic capacity figure for the wider site, at this stage.

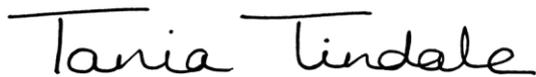
Indeed reference to 50 units is low when you compare the size of the wider site in relation to the Royal Pier Hotel, Dorville and Lynton House Hotel Sites (shown by the darker red shading in the map above), which cumulatively have consent for 104 units.

We, therefore, recommend that the Council retains the allocation but removes reference to a residential capacity figure. It would be appropriate, instead for the Council to provide additional wording suggesting that the overall quantum of development will be informed by a detailed analysis of the area.

Moving forward, we will be keen to discuss the options for the Pier complex and foreshore land with officers to inform both this Site Allocations plan and the emerging Joint Spatial Plan.

Please contact me or my colleague Michael Wood if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tania Tindale". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line above the first few letters of "Tania".

Tania Tindale