

**Statement to the 13.3.14 Bath and North East Somerset Council meeting  
of the Economic and Community Development PDS Panel**

Thank you Chair for allowing me to comment on this important strategy.

I bought into this vision a decade ago when, with babe in arms, I relocated from the global metropolis and economic powerhouse of London to join three generations of family already in Bath and North East Somerset. Like many others, I was attracted by the whole-life quality this locality offers – its wealth of cultural and educational opportunity, its knowledge-intensive enterprise and all in close proximity to beautiful countryside. Not the graveyard of ambition as my London friends and colleagues told me, but the cradle of my 21st century ambition. As Florence and Tuscany were to renaissance Italy, I saw this locality to be the hyper connected, knowledge intensive but natural resource constrained 21st century.

However here the eulogy ends, for buying in to such a vision as this, is the easy bit. The real challenge is getting there. For such a renaissance to happen by 2026, and here rather than say in Cambridgeshire, a lot of different people and organisations have to do a lot of different things. And to shape and promote this, an inspirational, well-founded and coherent strategy is needed.

To this end, I hope to get the opportunity to scrutinise the strategy in more detail, but pending this and based on the little I have seen so far, I have three broad wishes:

Firstly, please can you strengthen the strategic interdependencies and partnership links to flood risk management, natural capital, green infrastructure, and rural regeneration. Although the River Regeneration Trust is already filling an important governance and resource gap in addressing some of these important long-term agendas and this PDS panel has already made a major contribution to ensuring our river is an integral part of this economic development strategy, this is only a beginning.

Secondly, I would like the strategy to include indicators of social, cultural and environmental wellbeing as well as the economic ones already being targeted. Important because

- what you measure (however badly) you value and visa versa;
- in changing how people perceive their locality and situation, you are more likely to change what they do about it;
- economic, social and environmental wellbeing are interdependent;
- many goals are best achieved indirectly.

Finally please include lots of examples from diverse areas of our locality, of different people and organisations working enthusiastically, entrepreneurially and collaboratively to achieve the various economic, community and environmental outcomes we desire. For there is nothing more compelling than a strategy that is already happening and making a difference to people's lives.

**Nicolette Boater, M.A.(Oxon.), M.Phil**  
*Strategist, business economist and policy analyst,  
working at the interface of the public, private and voluntary sector.*