

Review Title: **Future for Bath Vision**

Overview & Scrutiny Panel: **Major Projects and External Bodies**

Panel Chairman: **Cllr. Charles Gerrish**

Overview & Scrutiny Project Officer: **Bethan Grant**

Supporting Service Officer: **David Stephenson, Development Manager, Major Projects Team**

Process for Tracking O&S Recommendations - Guidance note for Executive Members

The enclosed table lists all the recommendations arising from the above Overview & Scrutiny Review. Individual recommendations are referred to the relevant named Executive Members (or whole Executive in the case of a whole Executive referral) as listed in the '**Exec Member**' column of the table. In order to provide the O&S Panel with an Executive response on each recommendation, the named Executive member (or whole Executive) is asked to complete the last 3 columns of the table as follows:

Decision Response

The Executive has the following options:

- **Accept** the Panel's recommendation
- **Reject** the Panel's recommendation
- **Defer** a decision on the recommendation because a response cannot be given at this time. This could be because the recommendation needs to be considered in light of a future Executive decision, imminent legislation, relevant strategy development or budget considerations, etc.

Implementation Date

- For 'Accept' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be implemented.
- For 'Defer' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be reconsidered.
- For 'Reject' decisions this is not applicable so write n/a

Rationale

Use this space to explain the rationale for your decision response and implementation date. For accepted recommendations, please give details of how they will be implemented.

Future for Bath Vision: Recommendations

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel heard that Bath is facing a number of challenges in terms of housing, retail, jobs, transport and the wider economy. The Panel recognises the challenges that must be addressed and believe that the Vision is vital for securing the future prosperity and well-being of the residents, businesses and those that work in the City. The Panel strongly agree with the assertion highlighted in the Vision that 'Doing nothing is not an option'. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>That the Vision is endorsed and supported at the highest corporate level.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That the Corporate Plan is amended to reflect the priority that is vital to making the Vision a reality, with complementary revisions to the Financial Plan</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That the Council Executive recognise they have a lead role in working together to inspire commitment and to advocate delivery of the Vision.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That briefing sessions are arranged for new and returning Council Members after elections in May 07, detailing the thinking behind the Vision, the progress that will have been made to date and the challenges that remain.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That further alternative strategies are adopted to ensure that members have a full understanding of the Vision</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel considered Bath’s position in relation to other sub-regional centres such as Bristol and Swindon. The Vision asserts that Bath should not seek to ‘compete’ with its larger neighbours, but instead must bring a different offer to the table. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>That work is undertaken to determine what our ‘type’ of city is, and to find out what cities with similar characteristics are doing to stimulate economic development and growth.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That work is undertaken to determine the impacts on Bath of regional competitors in terms of retail and business markets.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That research is undertaken to understand what kind of business and employers the City should be looking to attract and what their needs are.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That Major Projects and Economic Development proactively seek the views of the business community about what the Council needs to do to encourage inward investment and businesses to relocate to the area.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel recognises that failure to successfully tackle traffic and congestion in the City will seriously impact on the ability of the Council to deliver the Vision. The Panel supports the aspiration of a car-free city centre within the lifetime of the Vision and recommends that work is undertaken to contribute to driving down traffic and congestion levels in the historic core. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>That work is undertaken to consider the feasibility of introducing low-carbon public transport options and;</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That work is undertaken to review the current bus routes that traverse the City centre.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel heard presentations from senior officers across most of the key service areas in the Council. Officers were asked to comment on their understanding of the Vision and how they believed their service area would contribute to its delivery and to consider what capacity and resource implications this work might carry for their areas.</p> <p>The Panel concluded that there appeared to be an insufficient understanding across the Council of the Vision and how it can be achieved. The Panel are concerned there is evidence that directorates/departments are still working in policy 'silos' and have not yet demonstrated the kind of joined-up thinking that will be necessary to deliver an overarching strategy like the Vision.</p> <p>The Panel believes that it is vital for the aims and objectives of the Vision to be communicated and understood by officers throughout service areas and at all grades. Improving the interface between Service Areas will also be crucial to ensure that work on the Vision is taken forward in a coherent and joined-up fashion. The Panel believes this is as much a culture issue as it is one of communication. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>There should be a role for the Cultural Change Programme in promulgating a 'can-do' culture, communicating, educating and instigating the necessary step-change in corporate understanding and commitment across the Council.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>To investigate what other mechanisms might be harnessed to disseminate progress on the Vision and maintain momentum.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>To consider the establishment (possibly on secondment) of a 'Futures Team' – an officer group to promote creative thinking and cross-departmental working with a reduced focus on risk assessment.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel believes that the Council must work more creatively in order to harness the full potential of its own extensive assets, both its corporate and commercial estates. By demonstrating that it can manage its own estates, regional funding partners and the business community will be able to have confidence in the Council as a credible body to do business with. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>That serious consideration is given to how best the Council can maximise the use of it's assets over a 20-year period, perhaps through the establishment of a 'Property Board' or similar mechanism.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel heard that significant challenges lie ahead in communicating the objectives of the Vision to the wider business community and residents of Bath. The Vision is a high-level concept which currently lacks a 'brand' or definable narrative. This is making it difficult for the community to identify with and understand what the Council is trying to achieve. The Panel recommends:</p>				
<p>That a 'narrative' is drafted which tells the 'story of Bath', clearly articulating the journey the City must embark upon to ensure the future vitality, success and well-being of the City and its residents.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>That as soon as is practicable, the Vision needs to be available for the public in an easily digestible, accessible format.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>The creation of a dedicated on-line area, either within the B&NES website or linked to it, which clearly outlines what the Vision is aiming to achieve.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			

Future for Bath Vision Review (MPEB O&S Panel): Executive Response Table

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>The Panel recognises the scale of the work that the Council is aiming to achieve through the Vision. It has become apparent that such a large undertaking raises many more issues than can be dealt with during the period allocated for the review. The Panel strongly believes there is a longer-term role for Overview and Scrutiny in helping to move the Vision to a fully-worked up implementation plan.</p>				
<p>That delivery of the Vision should be included as an objective within 08/09 Service Plans which are coming to O & S Panels as a regular agenda item in the future; that the Vision be appropriately included in the Corporate Plan, and that the necessary links between the Corporate Plan, the Financial Plan and Service Plans be identified.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			
<p>Following elections next May, the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel should consider taking forward the lessons learnt from this exercise and continue to support developing the Council's approach to implementing the Vision.</p>	<p>Council Executive</p>			