

Democratic Services

Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1LA

Telephone: (01225) 477000 *main switchboard*

Direct Lines - Tel: 01225 394416

Web-site - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

Date: 12 February 2013

E-mail: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk

To: The Chairperson and Clerk of each Parish and Town Council in Bath & North East Somerset and the Chairpersons of Parish Meetings

Copy to :

Group Leaders:

Cabinet Members:

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers

Press and Public

Dear Member

Parishes Liaison Meeting: Wednesday, 20th February, 2013

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Parishes Liaison Meeting**, to be held on **Wednesday, 20th February, 2013 at 6.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath**.

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely



Ann Swabey
for Chief Executive

If you need to access this agenda or any of the supporting reports in an alternative accessible format please contact Democratic Services or the relevant report author whose details are listed at the end of each report.

This Agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

NOTES:

- 1. Inspection of Papers:** Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Ann Swabey who is available by telephoning Bath 01225 394416 or by calling at the Riverside Offices Keynsham (during normal office hours).
- 2. Public Speaking at Meetings:** The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday)

The public may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services at least two full working days in advance of the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays, notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday). If an answer cannot be prepared in time for the meeting it will be sent out within five days afterwards. Further details of the scheme can be obtained by contacting Ann Swabey as above.

- 3. Details of Decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and also circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime details can be obtained by contacting Ann Swabey as above.

Appendices to reports are available for inspection as follows:-

Public Access points - Riverside - Keynsham, Guildhall - Bath, Hollies - Midsomer Norton, and Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

For Councillors and Officers papers may be inspected via Political Group Research Assistants and Group Rooms/Members' Rooms.

- 4. Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register which will be circulated at the meeting.
- 5. THE APPENDED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY AGENDA ITEM NUMBER.**
- 6. Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted.

Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

Parishes Liaison Meeting - Wednesday, 20th February, 2013

at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair of Council, Councillor Rob Appleyard will welcome everyone to the meeting.

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as follows:

If the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people. The assembly point is outside Kingston Buildings, behind the Abbey.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair will announce any items of urgent business accepted since the agenda was prepared

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON OCTOBER 17TH 2012 (Pages 5 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE LEADER OF COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive, Jo Farrar and the Leader of Council, Councillor Paul Crossley, will give a joint presentation on the vision and aspirations for the future of Bath & North East Somerset Council.

7. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE B&NES COUNCIL'S 2013/14 BUDGET

Tim Richens (Divisional Director, Finance) will attend to update the meeting on the Budget and to answer questions.

8. THE B&NES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (Pages 11 - 14)

Briefing notes on the following issues are attached:

- a) The progress of the re-visiting of the Core Strategy
- b) The progress with the Place-making Plans Issues and Options document.
- c) Neighbourhood Plans in North East Somerset
- d) Progress of North East Somerset Conservation Area Appraisals

Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager) and David Trigwell (Divisional Director, Planning and Transport) will attend to answer questions.

9. GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DOCUMENT - UPDATE (Pages 15 - 16)

A briefing note is attached. Meghan Rossiter (Senior Planning Officer) will attend to answer questions.

10. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Richard Look (Estates manager, Strategic Services Team) and Gregory Stacey (Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Officer) will attend to give a presentation to the meeting and answer questions.

11. THE GREEN DEAL (Pages 17 - 18)

A briefing paper is attached for the meeting to note.

12. UPDATE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL BROADBAND PROJECT IN NORTH EAST SOMERSET (Pages 19 - 24)

A briefing paper is attached for the meeting to note.

13. THE PROVISION OF HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND TO RURAL SETTLEMENTS

Councillor David Bland (Englishcombe PC) will give a presentation concerning the provision of high-speed broadband to rural settlements.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday June 19th in the Council Chamber, Keynsham.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Ann Swabey who can be contacted on 01225 394416.

Bath and North East Somerset Council

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting held

Wednesday, 17th October, 2012, 6.30 pm

Bath & North East Somerset Councillors: Rob Appleyard (Bath & North East Somerset Council) (Chair), Neil Butters, Paul Crossley, Dine Romero (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and David Bellotti (Bath & North East Somerset Council)

Representatives of: Bathampton, Cameley, Camerton, Clutton, Combe Hay, Compton Dando, Dunkerton, Englishcombe, Farmborough, Freshford, Keynsham, Marksbury, Midsomer Norton, Monkton Combe, Newton St Loe, Peasedown St John, Paulton, Priston, Publow with Pensford, Radstock, Saltford, South Stoke, Stanton Drew, Timsbury, Ubley, Wellow, Whitchurch,

Also in attendance: Eric Potter (Chair of the B&NES Local Councils Association)

Officers: Jo Farrar (Chief Executive), Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager), Paula Bromley (Principal Youth Officer) , Gordon Currie (Implementation/ Enforcement Manager), Vernon Hitchman (Solicitor to the Council), Liz Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer) , Gill Millar (South West Regional Youth Work Advisor), Meghan Rossiter (Senior Planning Officer), Ian Savigar (David Trigwell, (Divisional Director, Planning and Transport), Ann Swabey (Democratic Services Officer).

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Rob Appleyard, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He gave a special welcome to Jo Farrar, the new Chief Executive.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the Emergency Evacuation Procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Gabriel Batt, John Bull, Sally Davis, Francine Haeberling, Roger Symonds, Martin Veal, Geoff Ward and Charlcombe, Corston, Batheaston and Chew Magna Parish Councils.

17 URGENT BUSINESS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 20TH JUNE 2012

A representative from Publow and Pensford asked for his request (at Item 12 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people site allocations DPD) about whether questions from correspondents on this issue would be answered (to which Glen Chipp had replied in the affirmative) to be recorded. With this amendment, the minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19 THE NEW STANDARDS REGIME

The Council's Monitoring Officer, Vernon Hitchman informed the meeting that the Standards Committee had decided on a new, simpler mechanism for the handling of complaints against councillors. All but the most serious complaints would now be considered at a single session of the Committee, thus speeding up the whole process. This change should mean that instead of it taking 3-4 months for a complaint to be processed, it should now take 3-4 weeks.

20 THE PROVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

The Principal Youth Officer, Paula Bromley, introduced this item together with her colleague Gill Millar (South West Regional Youth Work Advisor from Learning South West). Gill gave a presentation on the outcomes of the survey which had been carried out in July and August 2012 by the Somerset/B&NES Youth Innovation Zone Project. The Project aimed to work closely with Parish and Town councils to encourage and support their youth work. The next step for the Project would be to organise focus groups in B&NES on November 8th. Details of this event had already been sent to Parish and Town Councils.

The Chair asked how this initiative differentiated between the two authorities, given that Somerset was much larger than B&NES. Paula Bromley replied that information that applied specifically to B&NES would be identified in the response along with local issues. It was also planned to share good practice.

21 THE COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUY

The meeting **RESOLVED** to note the report from Andy Thomas, (Group Manager, Partnership Delivery).

22 THE B&NES CORE STRATEGY

Simon de Beer (Planning Policy and Environment Manager) introduced this report and drew the meeting's attention to the revised timetable for the examination of the Core Strategy.

A representative from Priston Parish Council commented that the placemaking plans seemed to concentrate on housing and asked whether other issues will be included in the Core Strategy consultation with the parishes. Simon de Beer replied that the

whole range of planning issues would be addressed. A representative from Englishcombe Parish Council asked when the options would be assessed and was informed that the department would be talking with parishes in January and then the conclusions would be presented to the February full Council. The outcome of the Council meeting, together with community views would then be sent to the Inspectorate. The Chair asked whether the parish views would carry less weight with the Inspector and was informed that he would consider all views. Simon de Beer also offered to send guidance to parishes on the weighting that the Inspector gives to the various planning documents.

A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council (referring to Paragraph 10 of the report) asked what the 4 other Core Strategy policies were that the Inspector was concerned about was informed that they were 1) the district heating policy, 2) the Recreation Ground policy, 3) the flood compensation scheme and 4) the gypsies and travellers' policy.

A representative from Priston Parish Council asked, with regard to placemaking, when the discussions with parishes would take place and was informed that it would probably be in Spring 2013. A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council informed the meeting that the launch workshops would take place on 12th, 21st, 22nd and 26th November.

A representative from Freshford Parish Council expressed concern about the Community Infrastructure Levy and the wide variance amongst the proposed level of charges between local authorities. He thought that there should be a fair alignment between districts, especially where county borders cut through communities. Simon de Beer replied that there was no requirement for B&NES to align their charges with neighbouring authorities. The Chair proposed and the meeting agreed that this issue should be included as a future agenda item for Parishes Liaison.

23 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Gordon Currie (Enforcement and Implementation Manager) and Liz Jones (Principal Enforcement Officer) introduced the report and informed the meeting that their section aimed to improve the service to the parishes and to the public. They planned to tackle some of the long-term issues and make a difference to the historical perception of the service.

A representative from Englishcombe requested that parishes be sent an organisation and responsibilities chart of the new enforcement team to which Gordon Currie agreed.

David Trigwell (Divisional Director for Planning and Transport) informed the meeting that additional resources had been put into enforcement during this year - the only area in the department which had an increase in funding. It was hoped that this investment would effect significant changes.

A representative from Dunkerton Parish Council commented that they had been very impressed with the enforcement officers for their handling of a local issue. A representative from Priston asked whether parishes were being told when

enforcement issues were being considered and was informed that, although it was not part of the statutory process, the officers were considering how to do that.

24 GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Meghan Rossiter (Senior Planning Officer) introduced this report.

A representative from Compton Dando commented that in the criteria, there was nothing about sites who had put in planning applications and been rejected, then had appealed through the courts. She asked why these sites were still being assessed. Meghan Rossiter replied that all applications are taken into account together with their full history, whatever that might be.

A representative of Publow with Pensford Parish Council asked about the absence of detailed responses from the planning department in answer to submissions earlier in the process. Meghan Rossiter replied that all the responses have been compiled and are on the planning website and that the department would be responding to as many as they could. However, they could only respond collectively to general concerns.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson informed the meeting that she had recently attended training on Gypsy and Travellers sites and the two main conclusions which had come out of that were that councils should listen to the requests of travelling people themselves who do not want large sites and also that there should be a liaison forum set up between the travellers and the Council which has councillor (as well as officer) involvement. Meghan Rossiter replied that the assessment of need (which included what the travellers want) was nearly finished and would be published in November. Councillor Paul Crossley added that he would make sure that there was councillor representation on the forum.

A representative from Stanton Drew Parish Council asked why distances to essential services from sites were not mentioned in the report and also why there was no reference to sites being places nearer urban areas which was more suitable for young people. Meghan Rossiter replied that all the specific selection criteria would be taken into account, including distances to schools and services. In response to a question from a representative of Dunkerton Parish Council about the timing of the assessment, the officer referred members to information on the planning website and said that the report would go to the Planning, Transport and Environment PDS panel in January before the shortlist of sites goes out to public consultation in February 2013.

25 LOCALISING COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TAX-BASE AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL PRECEPTS

Ian Savigar (Divisional Director, Customer Services, Revenue and Benefits) introduced this item and gave some background to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. He explained that the scheme was funded slightly differently from previously but that the Council had discretion about exemptions and discounts. Proposals for running the scheme had been agreed by Cabinet and were due to be

put before full Council on November 8th. The tax base will fall, but the government have not yet given details about how the parish precepts will work and is still considering the methodology. Once the department has the information (hopefully by December) they will issue guidance, technical supports and workshops to parishes.

A representative from Priston Parish Council asked whether it would affect parishioners who pay Council Tax and was informed that it might do. A representative from Cameley asked if the parish precept would be divided between those who pay Council Tax and was informed that once parishes have set their precepts, the department would apply a tax base to properties in the area and divide one sum by the other. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked whether the parishes would collect the precept and was informed that B&NES would collect it.

A representative from Combe Hay Parish Council commented that it would be helpful if the billing authority requested the parishes information slightly later than at present so that they know more about what amount they will collect. Councillor David Bellotti (Cabinet Member for Community Resources) replied that they would try and make it as late as possible, but that parishes should be aware that they may need to call an extra meeting to set their precept if the government changes the timetable.

26 RURAL BROADBAND PROJECT

The Chair asked the meeting to note the report and invited questions which would be fed back to Anna Garner (Principal EEB Development Officer).

A representative from Englishcombe Parish Council stated that their area was very badly affected by slow broadband speeds and they were concerned that fast broadband could not be guaranteed to be available for their parishioners.

Jo Farrar (Chief Executive) replied that a request has been made to the government about supplying superfast broadband to hard-to-reach areas within the authority. She added that she would arrange for Anna Garner to meet with Englishcombe Parish Council.

27 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting will be February 20th 2013; venue to be announced.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and added that he was happy to visit communities. He added that he has been very impressed so far with the work going on in the parishes.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

This page is intentionally left blank

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING – 20TH FEBRUARY

1. UPDATE ON THE CORE STRATEGY

1.1 Work on addressing the examination Inspector's concerns is nearing completion. This has entailed;

- Reviewing the existing housing land supply to ensure account has been taken of existing re-development opportunities, especially on brownfield sites. (The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment or SHLAA);
- Reviewing the district's long term housing requirement, taking account of the most recent census data (the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or SHMA)
- Reviewing opportunities to boost housing land supply. This has entailed assessing opportunities across the District

1.2 The results of this work are due to be considered by B&NES Council on 28/2/13. Any changes agreed to the Core Strategy will be published for public consultation from mid-March to the end of April. The Council will also consider a consultation strategy to ensure limited resources are used most effectively to enable community engagement. Only those who object have the right to appear at the hearings. When the hearings resume in early July, the Inspector will therefore have before him;

- The Council's changes to the Core Strategy
- The public comments on the changes
- the up-to-date evidence base underpinning the Council's changes

1.3 As well as the issues relating to housing, the Inspector also expressed concern about a number of other policies in the Core Strategy. These include;

- Affordable housing policy : that the blanket requirement all housing sites to be 35% affordable didn't reflect the evidence of variations in viability across the district
- District Heating : The requirements were too onerous
- Travelling Community: the needs assessment should be updated.

1.4 Following the hearings, the Inspector will issue his report to B&NES. This is likely to be a few months after the hearings. The Council will then consider his recommendations before adopting the plan with any necessary amendments. The key issue for Parish & Town Councils is to ensure arrangements are in place to comment on the Council's proposed changes during March/ April. Parish & Town Council's also have a key role to lay in publicising the changes to their communities.

2. UPDATE ON THE PLACEMAKING PLAN/NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- 2.1 The Placemaking Plan closely complements the Core Strategy by providing essential detail to the strategic planning framework. It also provides the mechanism for working in partnership with local communities on local and community planning aspirations. It will provide the remit and context for local planning policy formulation.
- 2.2 The recent Placemaking Plan /Neighbourhood planning workshop provided a useful opportunity to explore the scope for collaborative working on local planning issues, either through the Placemaking Plan or through Neighbourhood Planning. Following the workshop, the immediate next steps for the District Council are to analyse the information from the workshop and to produce the Workshop Report and to respond to the key issues arising.
- 2.3 Following this the District Council will provide greater clarity on the next steps towards producing the Placemaking Plan, including the resources available to offer local communities, and the programme and process towards achieving this. As was emphasized at the workshop, B&NES' current priority taking forward the Core Strategy to ensure that a robust planning framework to manage development proposals coming forward. Once this is achieved then more of the Plann9ing Policy team's resources will become available to work on the Placemaking Plan.
- 2.4 The Placemaking Plan launch document is programmed for May which will enable a greater degree of collaborative working. In the meantime, Town & Parish Councils have the opportunity to consider their aspirations for taking forward the issues discussed at the workshop
- 2.5 As was discussed at the workshop, the District Council sees considerable benefits in working collaboratively with local communities on the Placemaking pan in terms particularly in terms of financial efficiency and consistency. Once adopted as a Development Plan Document, it will be a key tool in the determination of planning applications; the gateway to enabling development.
- 2.6 The provisional programme for the Placemaking Plan is;
 - Pre-meetings and informal discussions with key stakeholders, preparing them for launch document and on-going collaborative working
 - Launch document to May Cabinet meeting for approval, and to agree to collaborative programme - Spring 2013. Intended as a discussion document
 - Initial collaborative process from Spring to Autumn, to include joint workshops with Parish Clusters, and collaborative working with Bath communities
 - Preferred Options Document - Autumn 2013
 - Draft Placemaking Plan - Summer 2014
 - Examination - Spring 2015
 - Adoption - Summer 2015

3. UPDATE ON PREPARATION OF CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS.

3.1 Resource constraints have constrained the District Council's capacity to effectively progress conservation area appraisals.

3.2 The present situation is as follows:

South Stoke

3.3 Draft Appraisal prepared in 2009, consultation phase (including Parish Council) completed. Draft needs updating to reflect changes to legislation to strategic planning policy. When complete, the Appraisal could be presented for B&NES Executive Member sign off.

Combe Hay

3.4 Draft Appraisal prepared in 2009, consultation phase (including Parish Council) completed. Draft needs updating to reflect changes to legislation to strategic planning policy. When complete, the Appraisal could be presented for B&NES Executive Member sign off.

Englishcombe

3.5 Preliminary analysis completed in 2010 but needs to go to graphic design and then consultation.

Newton St. Loe

3.6 Preliminary analysis started but not progressed.

Hinton Blewett

3.7 The services of a volunteer planning student were made available to the Parish Council. Work largely completed but needs to go to graphic design and then consultation.

The future

3.8 There are no current plans to progress this area of work required by S71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act but requests by Parish Council and amenity groups to designate new conservation areas or prepared appraisals are recorded and are accessible should resources become available in the future. However there may be scope to pursue this agenda through the Placemaking Plan as described above.

This page is intentionally left blank

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING – 20TH FEBRUARY

Briefing Note on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD

- 1.1 The report of the 12 September 2012 Cabinet meeting set out the scope of the 'stock take' on the preparation of the Plan. Significant work continues on progressing the document, including:
- Ongoing discussions with neighbouring local authorities about joint working, including on the local evidence base (GTAA), and on the capacity of those areas to meet some of the B&NES local need for sites;
 - Review of the site assessment criteria;
 - Review of potential for allocation of pitch requirement within major development sites;
 - Assessment of the 3 sites remaining from the previous public consultation against the revised site criteria;
 - Assessment of the additional long list of sites presented to Cabinet in September 2012 against the revised site criteria.

Stock Take Progress

- 1.2 The LDF Steering Group have agreed that, particularly in light of the need to focus on the Core Strategy, the timetable for progressing this work has been extended. It is now anticipated that a report will be presented to Cabinet in May 2013 on the results of the stock take, including the need identified in the GTAA, and the options for progressing the Site Allocations DPD. This timetable will:
- Allow specialist work to be completed and incorporated into each site assessment, forming a comprehensive understanding of each site's constraints and opportunities;
 - Allow for a comprehensive assessment of site options, including consideration of exceptional circumstances for minor Green Belt alterations, if required;
 - Ensure sufficient time for other reports to be completed, including the Sustainability Appraisal;
 - Enable sufficient time to discuss options with various committees and local communities (through parish councils) in advance of full public consultation.
- 1.3 Progress on the stocktake will be considered by the Cabinet meeting in May 2013. The revised timetable for the Site Allocations DPD currently published on the Council's website will be updated in due course to reflect this ongoing work.

Next steps:

- 1.4 The stages to follow are:

- The 2012 GTAA report is published as part of the Core Strategy background evidence (February 2013);
 - A formal decision on a revised strategy of provision for public consultation is made at Cabinet (May 2013). This will include the results of the site assessments;
 - Public consultation on the site options shortlist (May - July 2013).
- 1.5 The results of the public consultation will then inform preparation of the draft Plan, formal public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

PARISHES LIAISON MEETING – 20TH FEBRUARY 2013

The Green Deal

What is it?

The Green Deal is a new finance mechanism that aims to help residents and businesses improve the energy efficiency of their homes or properties.

How does it work?

The Green Deal allows people to pay for eligible improvements over the long term through their electricity bill. This avoids large upfront costs. In addition, there should be no net cost. This is because the loan repayment will not be more than the predicted saving to monthly energy bills. The loan is unsecured and remains with the property not the person.

What can it be used for?

Eligible improvements include loft and cavity wall insulation; solid wall insulation; draught proofing; double, triple or secondary glazing; boiler replacement; and energy generation for instance through solar panels.

Who is eligible?

It's for everyone not just those on a low income. It's available to those who own their own home, to those who rent and to landlords. (Tenants need to get the permission of their landlord and vice versa). The loan is 'lightly' credit scored. This means that far more people will be eligible than would be for a normal loan.

Why improve energy efficiency?

Energy saving improvements can make homes and business properties warmer, healthier and more comfortable; reduce energy bills and potentially improve property values. They also contribute to reducing carbon emissions which is essential in tackling climate change.

Is the Green Deal the only way to pay for energy efficiency improvements?

The Green Deal is one option to consider. It may make more financial sense for some people to extend their mortgage or use their savings to make improvements or do the work themselves. People living in an older property or on benefits or a low income may qualify for extra or alternative financial assistance.

What is the Council doing?

Bath & North East Somerset Council aims to develop a local community partnership which will take a proactive role in Green Deal. This could mean appointing a Green Deal partner (or partners) to deliver good quality services that maximise benefits for the local community. The Parish Liaison meeting will be kept up-to-date with the proposals as they develop throughout this year.

Is the Green Deal available now?

The Green Deal is available now. In fact, those making use of Green Deal finance early will be entitled to apply for the Government's Cashback Scheme with packages worth up to £1000.

Anyone interested in the Green Deal and other energy saving opportunities should call the Home Energy Advice Line free on **0800 082 2234**.

Contact details for Marion Britton – Interim Project Manager, Sustainability, Policy and Partnerships :

Tel: 01225 477068

Email: Marion_britton@bathnes.gov.uk



PRESS RELEASE

DC13-018

30 January 2013

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 31 January 2013

SUPERFAST BROADBAND PARTNERSHIP WILL CREATE JOBS AND PROVIDE UP TO £750 MILLION BOOST TO THE DEVON AND SOMERSET ECONOMY

A £94 million project to transform broadband speeds for businesses and residents across Devon and Somerset within the next four years was announced today.

Connecting Devon and Somerset has agreed a deal with BT which aims to deliver high-speed fibre broadband to around 90 per cent of premises by the end of 2016 and to ensure a minimum of 2Mbps broadband speeds for all - making this one of the best connected areas in the UK.

The contract for the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme and BT, the private sector partner, was signed on 29th January 2013, at County Hall in Taunton, Somerset. BT was chosen by Connecting Devon and Somerset following an extensive and thorough procurement process.

Surveying work on the project will start immediately and the first locations to be upgraded will be announced during Spring 2013.

This major infrastructure project will also provide a big boost to the local economy. The programme team estimates that this will generate an estimated additional £750m¹ in GVA by 2020,² creating high tech jobs and attracting new businesses and investors to the area.

Faster broadband will help local businesses find new customers and become more competitive and efficient, whilst for households the high-speed technology will offer new educational, training and leisure opportunities.

BT's £41 million financial contribution will bolster the public sector investment, which includes £10 million each from Devon and Somerset County Councils, £32m Government

funding from Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and contributions from other public sector partners.

The programme will transform broadband speeds. Average speeds are currently around 9 Mbps in Devon and around 8Mbps in Somerset whilst approximately 14 per cent of premises across the two counties receive less than 2Mbps.³

The combination of rural, urban and coastal geographies will offer various engineering challenges, but the most predominant technology will be fibre optic broadband.

Most of the programme area will receive Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC), where the fibre runs from the telephone exchange as far as the nearest BT street cabinet. It can deliver download speeds of up to 80Mbps and upload speeds of up to 20Mbps.

Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), where the fibre runs all the way to the home or business and which can deliver the top current download speed of 330Mbps,⁴ will also be available in certain areas. In addition, from Spring 2013, BT aims to make FTTP technology commercially available on demand⁵ in any area where fibre broadband has been deployed, should local businesses want the ultra-fast speeds it offers.

Openreach will install the fibre network which will be open to all communications providers on an equal wholesale basis. Devon and Somerset consumers and businesses will therefore benefit from a highly competitive market, bringing greater choice and affordable prices.

With fibre broadband, large video and data files can be sent and received almost instantly and hi-resolution photos posted online in seconds. Faster upload speeds also boost flexible and remote working, reducing office overheads and improving employees' work-life balance. High quality voice and video calls mean businesses can keep in touch with customers while cutting down on travel.

Superfast broadband can also transform communities, enabling better access to public services, online shopping and keeping in touch. Families can download a movie, watch a TV replay service, surf the net and play games online simultaneously.

BT is already in the process of rolling out fibre broadband to homes and businesses in some areas of Devon and Somerset as part of its commercial plan to reach around two-thirds of UK premises.

Councillor David Hall, Deputy Leader of Somerset County Council and Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Board Member, said: "Breaking down the rural broadband divide will give our residents, communities and businesses opportunities that they've only been able to imagine up till now. Fast and reliable internet is becoming more important to daily life and going online will soon be the only way to access some key public services. Superfast and improved broadband will help us to strengthen our economy, grow and develop our businesses while enhancing community activities. This is an important milestone for all who live and work in our region."

Councillor Cherry Beath (Lib-Dem, Combe Down), Bath & North East Somerset Council Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities, added: "This is a project of huge significance to businesses and local communities across Bath and North East Somerset.

"Superfast Broadband will enable even our smallest businesses to compete on a level playing field with other companies nationally and internationally. That means businesses can expand without having to relocate and benefit from improving productivity. It'll mean a big boost to our economy and the creation of new jobs as firms take advantage of their new-found competitiveness. And families in rural areas will be able to enjoy all the benefits of our digital age, such as downloading films and music, which have so far been denied them."

Bill Murphy, Managing Director, Next Generation Broadband from BT Group, added: "This project is vital to the future economic strength of the heart of the South West. Reliable access to broadband is an integral part of 21st Century living. It's much more than streaming video and music or online shopping: it's increasingly the way business is conducted and services are delivered. It will enable businesses to compete on a level footing regardless of location – making Devon and Somerset a more attractive proposition for business relocations and start-ups – including the creation of new, high-tech jobs.

Communications Minister Ed Vaizey, said: "It is projects like "Connecting Devon and Somerset", the largest of all the English Local Authority projects and encompassing six

different local authority areas, that will help us achieve Government's aim for the UK to have the best broadband in Europe by 2015. Superfast broadband is a powerful tool for driving growth, and this ambitious £94m project, set to generate an additional £750m for the local economy by 2020, will bring countless benefits to both businesses and households alike."

Ends

Notes to Editors

- ¹Devon and Somerset Local Broadband Plan: <http://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/additional-information/devon-and-somerset-local-broadband-plan/>
- ² Gross Value Added (GVA) measures the value of all goods and services produced in an economy. GVA combines wages and operating profits from companies and other organisations. Growing GVA can reflect improvements in workforce skills, productivity, R&D and innovation.
- ³Ofcom data indicates that the average broadband speed for Devon is 9.2Mbps with 13.7 per cent of the county getting less than 2Mbps. The average broadband speed for Somerset is 8Mbps with 14.7 per cent getting less than 2Mbps
- ⁴These are the top wholesale speeds available from BT's local network division Openreach, to all broadband service providers; speeds offered by service providers may vary.
- ⁵Openreach will levy an installation charge for FTTP on demand. It will be up to broadband service providers to decide whether they pass that on to businesses or consumers wishing to use the product.

For more information please contact the following:

- For enquiries to Connecting Devon and Somerset, contact Julie Everett at Coast Communications on 01752 847135 or email julie@coastmarcoms.co.uk
- Comment: For BT enquiries, contact 0800 085 0660 or BT Group Newsroom 24-hour number: 020 7356 5369. From outside the UK dial + 44 20 7356 5369. All news releases can be accessed at our web site: <http://www.bt.com/newscentre>

About Connecting Devon and Somerset

Councils across Devon and Somerset are working together to bring faster broadband to the area and deliver improved broadband for rural Devon and Somerset – the “final third” – rural areas that are unlikely to benefit from commercial investment in broadband.

The Connecting Devon and Somerset project covers Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council, and North Somerset Council areas.

The project has secured £32 million of funding from the government agency Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and both Somerset and Devon County Councils will be putting in up to £10 million each. Further funding from Bath and North East Somerset Council who joined CDS in February has brought the total close to £53 million.

For more information, visit www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk

About BT

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in more than 170 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband and internet products and services and converged fixed/mobile products and services. BT consists principally of four lines of business: BT Global Services, BT Retail, BT Wholesale and Openreach.

In the year ended 31 March 2012, BT Group's revenue was £18,897m with profit before taxation of £2,445m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com

This page is intentionally left blank