

## ***Major Projects External Bodies Panel***

### **Review of the Future for Bath Vision**

#### ***Introduction***

The 'Future for Bath' is a vision developed to bring future development direction to the city of Bath and to redefine it's identity as a world class heritage site.

The vision has been agreed in principle by the Council Executive and a role for Overview & Scrutiny has been identified to assist the Council Executive in the process of moving the vision from a set of aspirations to an implementation plan.

#### ***Review Objective***

The Major Projects Overview & Scrutiny Panel will set out to:

1. Understand the dynamics of the city's position in the region, in both competitive and interdependent terms, and make a recommendation concerning the time parameters that should be linked to the process of delivering the Future for Bath vision.
2. Encourage strong corporate ownership and understanding of the 'Future for Bath' by raising awareness amongst key services of the role they play in the vision's delivery, and by aligning competing aspirations within the Council.
3. Make recommendations concerning the implementation process of the vision and the Council's relationship with strategic local partners and key government agencies. Specifically commenting on the role of the Local Area Agreement in the delivery of the vision and the resources required throughout the Council to implement the vision.
4. Make recommendations concerning the governance arrangements that need to be put in place for the delivery of the vision to ensure that there is a cohesive and accountable process of delegation and reporting.

#### ***Background***

Bath is an outstanding City and it provides a foundation for the future, however, complacency could result in decline over the long run. Bath, like all towns and cities functions in a competitive environment and this impacts in many ways, from pressure on visitor numbers and the ability of the City to attract inward investment. In this respect, the absence of a long-term vision and framework to instigate and guide enhancement and development has been a weakness.

The Council has embarked on a process to establish a vision for the future of the area which focuses on harnessing the potential of the City of Bath ("The Future for Bath"). Building on the historic strengths of Bath, the vision identifies a series of themes which uniquely position the City, both nationally and internationally. It also establishes a clear role for Bath within the South West region and the West of England sub-region. It provides a basis for securing the long term success of Bath as a key driver for the local economy across Bath & North East Somerset and as a place for local residents to visit, shop, learn, work and enjoy. This work builds upon previous policy and visioning with regards to the role of Bath within the sub-region and the interaction between major projects such as Bath Western Riverside, Southgate and the Council's Spatial, Transport and Economic Development Strategies.

The intention is to consolidate the themes into a strategy and framework for action. While this will adopt a long-term approach, it will be important to identify actions that can bring early improvements and benefits to the City. The development of the strategy will include the preparation of an Area Action Plan for Bath, under the new planning arrangements for Local Development Schemes, as well as general alignment with Council policy.

The Major Projects Panel's review will run alongside the work currently being undertaken to develop the vision. The Vision is presently being developed both in detail within Bath City and geographically by using a similar approach across the wider B&NES area. Various strands of work have been identified, notably covering retail, access and movement, public realm and economic land use. It is envisaged that work will be commissioned shortly to take these strands forward to develop an overall development framework for the B&NES area.

## Scope

Taking each of the review objectives the Panel will investigate the following.

- 1. Understand the dynamics of the city's position in the region, in both competitive and interdependent terms, and make a recommendation concerning the time parameters that should be linked to the process of delivering the Future for Bath vision.**
  - Define the current position of the City of Bath and how, according to present trends, this will change in the future if the Council does not pursue a vision for Bath.
  - Using the 'Future for Bath' document spell out the aspirations for Bath for 2026 and beyond, in its regional context.
  - Moving from the present stage of the vision's development identify in broad terms the journey needed to progress the vision to implementation stage, taking into account major developments elsewhere in the region.
- 2. Encourage strong corporate ownership and understanding of the 'Future for Bath' by raising awareness amongst key services of the role they play in the vision's delivery, and by aligning competing aspirations within the Council.**

The Panel will focus in three key areas:

### **(a) Access and Movement**

The panel will set out to understand

- The role of the Transportation and Highways Service in the implementation of the vision
- How far ahead strategic planning within the service area has occurred and whether this is in line with the aspirations of the vision.

### **(b) New Economy**

The panel will set out to understand

- The economic opportunities that the 'Future for Bath' identifies and the steps that are required to ensure that these opportunities are fully realised.

### **(c) Policy and Planning**

The panel will set out to understand

- The role of the Planning Service in the implementation of the vision
- How far ahead strategic planning within the service area has occurred and whether this is in line with the aspirations of the vision, particularly in the context of the Local Development Framework for the city of Bath & for B&NES

- The Panel will examine whether the Council holds the knowledge and resource to write the planning regime that is needed to provide the aspired development framework for the city in the appropriate timescales.
- Explore the likely impact of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) on the vision for Bath aspirations and comment on ways that the Council can we take advantage of the RSS requirements in B&NES to help deliver some of the vision's aspirations.

**3. Make recommendations concerning the implementation process of the vision and the Council's relationship with strategic local partners and key government agencies. Specifically commenting on the role of the Local Area Agreement in the delivery of the vision and the resources required throughout the Council to implement the vision.**

**(a) Relationship with the Community**

- Examine the potential to tie in the key elements of the vision to the emerging aspirations of the LAA.
- Consider the community's present understanding of the vision and what they consider the impact of the regeneration to be on their own roles in the city i.e. business / health / Universities / Chamber of Commerce and other organisations.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Council's communication of the vision to key partners.

**(b) Government Agencies**

- Understand the role of relevant Government agencies in the process of moving the vision to implementation
- Gauge the level of assurance from these Government agencies that the vision has the appropriate buy-in and support.
- Consider what more the Council can do to encourage strong collaboration with these agencies in moving the vision forward.

**(c) Funding and Investment**

- Look at the evidence from the Council directorates concerning the resources available to them to deliver elements of the vision. Assess how far the aggregate of this will go in achieving the aims of the vision.
- Examine the various sources of funding and the likelihood of being successful in bidding for it.

**4. To make recommendations concerning the governance arrangements that need to be put in place for the delivery of the vision to ensure that there is a cohesive and accountable process of delegation and reporting.**

- The Panel will investigate governance methods across a spectrum ranging from entirely internal arrangements to a process managed via external consultants.
- This will include an assessment as to the role and relative benefits of using an Urban Development Company
- They will also assess what role external experts will play in the delivery process of the Future for Bath.
- The Panel will explore how all-party support can be secured, to give stability over time in the event of changes in the local political environment.
- Looking specifically at governance arrangements, the Panel will investigate other world class development schemes where a vision has been successfully converted into a reality,

**Excluded from Investigation**

The Panel will be looking at the Future for Bath Vision at a strategic level and will not be addressing issues of detail concerning the delivery of the vision.

## **Approach** *(detail to be confirmed)*

The Majority of this review will be held in public session

*Best Practice research of other exemplar schemes – particularly concerning governance*

*Survey/talk to local organisations and partners who have already heard the vision – what is their perspective – what do they understand by it? How do they think it will impact on their organisation?*

### *Contributors session 1*

- Council Officers /Executive Members
- Local Partners Organisations
- LSP /LAA

### *Contributors session 2*

- Government agencies,
- External experts.
- Other Local Government successful schemes etc.

## **Timetable**

*Timescales to be confirmed following setting of the project plan*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type</b>
June 06	Panel and officer briefing of the review background, process and requirements	Internal meeting
4 <sup>th</sup> July 06	Contributors session 1	Public Meeting
4 <sup>th</sup> Sept 06	Contributors Session 2	Public Meeting
26 <sup>th</sup> Sept 06	Contributors session 3	Public Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 06	Panel Visit to Gloucester URC	Private Visit
21 <sup>st</sup> Nov 06	Final report to Panel meeting	Public Meeting
9 <sup>th</sup> Feb 07	Executive response to Panel's recommendations come to Panel meeting	Public Meeting

## **Project Team**

O&S Panel members:

- Cllr. Charles Gerrish
- Cllr. Rosemary Todd

Development & Major Projects:

- John Betty, Development & Major Projects Director
- Rhodri Samuels, Regeneration Manager
- David Stephenson, Vision for Bath Project Leader
- and others as required

O&S Project Officer

- Bethan Grant