

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review Title: Public Realm Review

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to evaluate how Bath & North East Somerset Council undertakes its role in creating, developing and managing the public realm.

The area of Bath & North East Somerset includes a diverse range of public spaces including the City of Bath, the towns of Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock, plus the villages and wider landscape including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The council has responsibility, often in partnership with the local communities and other agencies for the stewardship of this public realm.

To govern and guide development of the public realm, the Council has a collection of policies and design guidelines and in some cases formal Joint Agreements. A Policy & Projects Group within the Council's Planning Services Department has the responsibility for co-ordinating this work.

Improving the Urban Public Realm is one of the improvement priorities defined in the Council's recently adopted Corporate Plan.

The review is being undertaken by Bath & North East Somerset Council's **Planning, Transportation, Economy & Sustainability Overview & Scrutiny Panel**.

Objectives

The objectives of this Overview & Scrutiny Review are to:

- Understand the issues relating to the Urban Public Realm (built environment) in Bath & North East Somerset.
- Examine current plans and policies to address the issues.
- Undertake public consultation to inform and widen the debate around the future direction of the urban public realm in Bath & North East Somerset.
- Publish a report on the Panels' findings and recommendations on the issue and submit it to the Council Executive to inform their decisions on implementation of future urban public realm projects.

Scope

To achieve its objective, the panel will:

- Review national Government policy that regulates the Council's role in managing the urban public realm.
- Seek views of national practitioners.
- Consider current good practice in other local authorities by making benchmark visits to see examples of recent & notable urban public realm developments. Visits will focus on issues relevant to Bath & North East Somerset such as historical context, similar urban & rural mix or a corporate priority to enhance the public realm (e.g. Bristol, Wells & possibly Harrow)
- Seek views of B&NES residents and other local stakeholders (business and community organisations and formal partners in Joint Agreements) to explore the urban public realm from the community's perspective.

- Seek views of relevant council departments that contribute to the urban public realm.
- Focus exclusively on the built/urban public realm.
- Use the 'Julian Road' scheme in Bath as a case study to explore attitudes to urban public realm development throughout Bath & North East Somerset. The principles encapsulated by the scheme are also generally applicable to the built environments of towns and villages throughout the district.

Outputs of this Review

- Notes & papers from public O&S Panel meetings.
- Short summary report incorporating key findings, conclusions and recommendations for the Council Executive.

Constraints

- The review must be managed within the budget available to the Panel.
- The review will be carried out in accordance with the Bath & North East Somerset Council Overview and Scrutiny project management processes.
- Project Management resource is available from the O&S Project Team (2 days per week).

Project Team

Chair of Panel:	Cllr. Peter Metcalfe
Panel Lead Member:	Cllr. Stephen Willcox
Planning Services:	Vaughan Thompson(Policy & projects Manager)
Project Manager:	David Langman (O&S Project Team)
Democratic Services:	Michaela Newton (Committee Administrator)

Outline Project Plan

Date	Stage / Activity	Meeting Type
16 Feb.	Project Steering Group: Scoping Meeting	Private meeting
8 Mar.	Public Realm introductory presentation & discuss/agree Terms of Reference	Public Panel Meeting
w/c 15 Mar.	Project Steering Group: Plan details of Review	Private meeting
Mid Mar. & April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking, fact finding visits, research & consultation • Press / media to publicise review & invite public comment • Witness / contributor selection & briefing 	Private meetings / visits
11 May	Urban Public Realm Seminar with national perspectives of design and management and representatives from different user groups.	Informal /Public Panel meeting
17 May	Focus on 'Julian Road' scheme. Collect views from local stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public speaking • Contributor presentations & interviews 	Public Panel meeting
26 May	Panel review information received, debate to reach conclusions, and make recommendations for inclusion in summary report.	Informal / Public Panel meeting