

Review Title: **The Urban Public Realm in Bath & North East Somerset**

Overview & Scrutiny Panel: **Planning, Transportation, Economy & Sustainability**

Panel Chairman: **Cllr. Peter Metcalfe**

Overview & Scrutiny Project Manager: **David Langman**

Supporting Service Officer: **Vaughan Thompson, Policy & Projects Manager**

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.

Urban Public Realm Review: Recommendations

Following extensive debate, the Panel makes the following **recommendations to the Council Executive** for a planned programme of initiatives to deliver the Council's February 2004 adopted & published Corporate Financial Plan objectives for "improving the Urban Public Realm".

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
<p>7.1 A Vision for Bath & North East Somerset The council should prepare and adopt a long term, clear and comprehensive vision with objectives for the urban public realm across the district.</p> <p>To accelerate this process, it would be sensible to utilise best practice models from other leading Local Authorities that have demonstrated success in delivering a sustainable approach to the stewardship of the urban public realm, linked to comprehensive implementation.</p>	Rosemary Todd	Accept	<p>April 05</p> <p>April 05</p>	<p>I consider the identification of the Urban Public Realm improvement priority (with its emphasis on "targeted transformations of spaces and initiatives focused on street scene improvements") to be a significant step forward in this respect. It will also be important to ensure that our progress in delivery is measured and reported, and work is currently being undertaken to develop indicators to measure the full scope of the Urban Public Realm identified in the O and S report. All of this will be presented in a full report to the Executive in March 2005 and I shall keep the O and S Panel informed of progress.</p> <p>It is clear that the Panel has identified some areas of good practice in this field. A wide range of good practice is also available through sources such as Beacon Councils and the IDeA. It is also important to note the Council's own good practice in this area- for example, the Draft Streetscape Manual, our Local PSA agreement on reducing graffiti and our current work on improving the management of Bath City Centre's "streetlife". This will be captured in the report to the Executive in March 2005.</p>

<p>The vision needs to also be informed and take account of Government Guidelines CABE, English Heritage, Institution of Highways & Transportation and other nationally recognised stakeholders, to achieve best practice.</p> <p>The vision must promote the delivery of excellence in both ongoing maintenance and enhancement.</p>		<p>Accept</p>	<p>April 05</p>	<p>We will gather a wide range of views, including those from the stakeholders referred to, as we develop and implement our improvement priority. For example, the recent White Paper “Choosing Health” refers specifically to the need for public realm improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to promote healthy choices with regard to travel and we will link to good practice in this area.</p> <p>I would suggest that “management” be added to “maintenance and enhancement”, to cover issues such as street cleaning and community safety. In general, however, the promotion of excellence in this area of work is agreed. This is reflected in the Community Strategy’s “Be Distinctive” ambition, which refers to “insisting on the highest possible standards of design, for examples in areas the public has access to”.</p>
<p>7.2 Community Engagement: 7.2.1 Establishing Priorities It is imperative that the Council must actively engage with the communities of Bath & North East Somerset, encouraging participation to establish and agree the Council’s priorities for the urban public realm. Those priorities must be published in the revised Corporate Plan for 2005 to 2007.</p>	<p>Rosemary Todd</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Community Planning processes regularly identify the public realm as a key issue- examples include the Community Strategy consultation and the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. And this applies also outside the urban areas. It is clear that we need to widen the scope to the ‘Public Realm’ generally, so that it includes suburban and rural areas as well. It is not considered necessary to have a separate consultation on this issue, instead communities should be engaged on their local issues as these come forward.</p> <p>I will consider further how to improve the way we engage with communities on such issues- eg through the Parish And Town Plan process, the Local Strategic Partnership and our pilot Area Committee. I will bring a further report for consideration of this issue to the Executive, LSP and</p>

				O and S by July 2005.
7.2.2 Julian Road The Julian Road scheme should be taken forward as a priority pilot model for community engagement and to demonstrate the effective delivery of an inclusive urban public realm scheme	Rosemary Todd	Accept		I agree that the Julian Road scheme provides a useful opportunity to provide an evaluation framework for this aspect of the Urban Public Realm which can potentially be used elsewhere. A suitable exemplar from the rural area should also be investigated.
7.3 Finance: 7.3.1 Audit In order to ascertain the financial value, purpose, usefulness and coordination of current expenditure on the urban public realm by this Authority, the Executive needs to conduct as a matter of priority an audit of all Council service budgets which impact on the urban public realm.	Rosemary Todd	Defer	April 05	Initial discussions have taken place on the implications of providing this information. Although much of this information readily available in the Budget Book, clarification is sought of the scope of the information that is required, prior to committing resources to this work.
7.3.2 Financial Plan It is essential for the Council to insert into the 2005/06 a financial plan budget heading for "The Urban Public Realm" and establish a budget for meeting the adopted vision and objectives.	Rosemary Todd			This will be considered as part of the financial plan process.
7.3.3 External Funding The Executive needs to collectively develop a pro-active approach to identify and bid for external funds in support of its Public Realm Objectives (Government grants, awards, matched funding, EU support, etc).	Rosemary Todd	Accept	Various	Local Public Service Agreements and the ODPM Liveability Fund may potentially offer sources to explore this approach. The timetables for these various bid funds will be clarified in due course.
7.4 Organisational Structure The Executive should appoint a Member Public Realm Champion to work with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to put in place an organisational structure with clear objectives and accountability in the annual delivery of an urban public realm programme which 'makes Bath & North East Somerset a better place to live, work & visit'	Rosemary Todd	Reject	n/a	What matters most is adopting a coherent approach to this issue- eg, through cross-service working, and working with partners such as Somer Community Housing Trust, ENCAMS and the LSP. My view is that this matters more than consideration of changes to structure and management arrangements although of course these are kept under review to ensure effectiveness. I shall take the lead on the Public Realm, working closely with my colleagues on the Executive and the Executive collectively.

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Additional comment from Rosemary Todd:

I welcome this report. It is thorough and well-researched. It has the potential to put our area at the forefront of current thinking on the Public Realm.

More work clearly needs to be undertaken to ensure that all of the issues identified by the Panel are fully considered and acted upon. A full report responding to the review is being prepared for the March executive meeting, and I shall ensure that Panel is kept informed of progress. However, given the timeliness of the report and its linkages to the Corporate Plan review, I would like to offer my initial comments (above) on the recommendations.