

On Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 at the Full Council meeting I voted in support of the Core Strategy; but spoke passionately about my one reservation; the need to allocate more housing to as many as possible of the 47 villages of Bath and North East Somerset. My concerns were that all villages should have a trickle of development, to sustain villages and prevent decline associated with high prices ageing communities and declining household size.

As the then Ward Councillor of Clutton I gave an example. Clutton has grown from 120 houses at the time of the Earl of Warwick estate sale's in 1920 and 1945, to which were added 130 local authority homes in the late 50's and 60's. Today the village has around 620 houses, an increase of around 360 homes over my lifetime, or 6 houses a year.

If all villages were allowed to expand by 1% then Clutton might receive 6 a year, Stanton Drew 4.5 a year and Chelwood .5 of a house. BaNES have about 25,000 houses in the rural area. If each village was allowed this modest expansion as a maximum, that would equate to 250 a year.

I fear that with a World Heritage Site, 76% Green belt, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and numerous Conservation Areas, BaNES will never provide enough houses to satisfy the housing need. Brownfield employment sites cannot all be converted to housing. Nor can the Somer Valley communities or Keynsham and Whitchurch be expected to take all the overspill from the rural areas. The day will come when you will run out of sites, now is the time to place rural development as a priority aspect of the Core Strategy, where AoNB and, Green Belt policies do not prevent such development, as this is the only salvation to the problem.

Since the introduction of Town Planning in in 1947, all villages have expanded. Now is the time to commit to some further expansion as a positive contribution to an ever growing problem.

Steve Willcox