

## **Draft Minute from the Planning, Transport & Environment Panel – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

### **Placemaking Plan Launch Document**

The Policy & Environment Manager introduced this item to the Panel. He explained that the purpose of the Placemaking Plan is to facilitate the delivery of key development sites and in a way that meets community aspirations. He added that the Placemaking Plan will complement the strategic framework in the Core Strategy by setting out detailed proposals for identified development sites including the new urban extensions proposed in the Core Strategy.

The plan is intended to be produced in a collaborative way drawing on the principles set out in the Council's emerging Local Engagement Framework. This will ensure that B&NES work closely with local communities and other key stakeholders to identify valued assets for protection, opportunities for development and necessary infrastructure requirements.

There is an aspiration to adopt the Placemaking Plan by the end of 2014, and this is acknowledged as a very ambitious programme. The details of the collaborative process of producing the Placemaking Plan will need to reflect this target programme.

In the Somer Valley and the rural areas where specific sites are not identified in the Core Strategy, preparation of the Placemaking Plan will require close working with local communities to identify appropriate sites for development within the context of the Core Strategy as well as to identify key assets to be safeguarded. However in light of the limited weight that can be attributed to the Core Strategy in advance of the Inspector's report due later this year, there will still be pressure for new development linked to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in the interim.

The document will be presented to the Cabinet on May 8th and it is hoped that a draft plan will be in place at the end of the year.

The aspiration to adopt the Placemaking Plan by the end of 2014 has the political support of the cross party LDF Steering Group, who recognise the benefits that the Placemaking Plan will provide to the communities of Bath and North East Somerset, and to enabling the delivery of corporate priorities such as the Enterprise Area, and housing delivery. They support the collaborative approach towards the production of the Placemaking Plan, whilst recognising the need for this to be tempered with the demands of the programme.

Mr David Redgewell addressed the Panel. He spoke of his concerns regarding the lack of a link to sustainable transport in the document. He added that all sites should be well served by bus services and that developer contributions should be sought for these to be provided.

Councillor David Martin asked how residents in Bath would be consulted on the plan as they had no Parish Council facility available to them.

The Policy & Environment Manager replied that they were working on ways in which to engage with Bath residents and in the process of drawing up a timetable of activities for the next six months.

Councillor David Martin suggested that the final document should contain maps when referring to sites.

The Policy & Environment Manager replied that indeed the final document would contain maps and diagrams when referring to sites.

Councillor David Martin suggested that the section on energy minerals could be expanded further to explain coal bed methane and shale gas extraction. He also asked for a reassurance that resources were in place to meet the ambitious timescale for the plan.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that it was indeed a very challenging but achievable programme that relied upon input from across the Council. He added that Members would also need to support officers in this process to provide a focus.

Councillor Ben Stevens commented that the cover report for the item appeared to be critical of Neighbourhood Planning.

The Divisional Director for Planning and Transport replied that officers were not against Neighbourhood Planning and were simply asking whether that route or this is the best. He added that he felt the public were keen to see what this process had to offer.

Councillor Ben Stevens asked if any comment could be given on the progress of the Freshford Neighbourhood Plan.

The Policy & Environment Manager replied that he was aware of a large amount of support for the plan and that the community had put a great deal of effort into it.

Councillor Geoff Ward commented that he felt Neighbourhood Plans should be promoted. He added that Economic Regeneration should be considered a priority within the plan and that a realignment of priorities would almost certainly gain support from the Conservative group. He also wished to highlight that the plan does not mention the use of brown field sites in the first instance.

Councillor Liz Richardson asked if the plan provided any protection to areas such as Whitchurch given the lack of an approved Core Strategy.

The Policy & Environment Manager replied that until the Inspector gives his judgement on the Core Strategy there remains a window of vulnerability.

The Chairman wished to thank officers on their production of the plan and acknowledged the pressures that they were currently working under.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) ask that their comments on the Placemaking Plan Launch Document be passed to the Cabinet meeting on May 8th 2013;
- (ii) approve the broad programme of activity and actions contained in the introduction of the Launch Document; and
- (iii) support the collaborative approach that the Council is proposing to take with the production of the Placemaking Plan.