

## Connecting Communities -Somer Valley Forum – Report of the Facilitated Workshop July 2015

Attendees list at end of the report

## Executive Summary followed by detailed notes

#### 1. Introductions and welcome

- Welcome from Terry Taylor Chair of the Forum
- Setting the scene background & context from Cllr Tim Warren Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities and Cllr Martin Veal, Cabinet Member for Community Services Bath & North East Somerset Council
- Video about Connecting Communities the importance of local engagement.

#### 2. Introduction to the Facilitated Workshop – Rowena Harris

**Purpose** – the Forums have been designed to provide a stronger voice for the community and help improve engagement with the public sector partners. The workshop aimed to help the Forums consider different ways of working together on specific ideas, gain a better understanding of what partners can offer and review the influence and effectiveness of the Forums for the future.

**a. What's already happening?** The Forums could provide ways of exchanging information: people were asked to bring posters or a pre-written postcard/notes to tell other people in the area about things planned or underway to improve things in their community.

**b. What issues concern you NOW and what ideas do you have to make a change?** People were encouraged to write on post it notes under the following headings:

- 1. Health & Wellbeing
- 2. Transport
- 3. New housing and infrastructure developments
- 4. Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change
- 5. Skills and Jobs
- 6. Stronger and Safer Communities
- 7. Education
- 8. Young people
- 9. Older People

These post it notes were typed up and are included in the next section of this report.

**c.** Action **Planning** : the attendees were asked to propose what they wanted to discuss further in small groups. Ten themes were suggested and a lead was nominated for each to ensure action is taken forward:

- Community Asset transfer: lead Andrew Pate B&NES, Strategic Director Resources B&NES, Strategic Director – Resources
- Local Housing Policy: lead: Janet Durk, Timsbury PC
- Dialogue about an ageing society: lead Chris Gittins
- Inclusive sports facilities; lead Ann Birtwistle

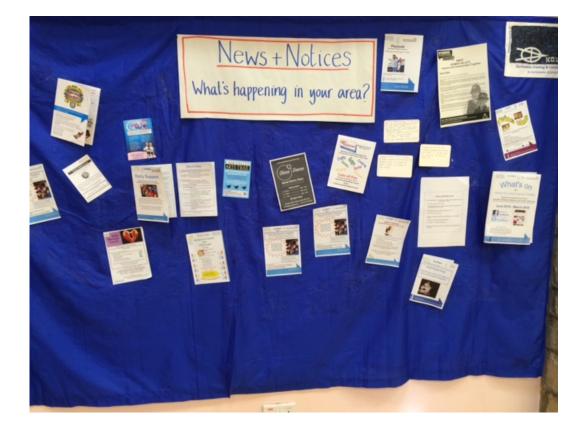
- o Improving how the Forum works: lead Paul Myers
- Engaging young people: lead Heidi Limbert B & NES Children's Centres
- Economic development for Radstock: lead Oliver Jones
- Improving communication between &B & NES and Town and Parish Councils: lead Kirstie Green Timsbury Parish Clerk
- Support for local workless families: (no notes handed in)
- Services in villages (no discussion took place)

Detailed notes and actions agreed in each discussion are included in the next section of this report. The 'Lead' will report back on progress at the next Forum meeting.

#### 3. Closing words

- Terry Taylor thanked everyone for their contributions
- The next meeting of the Forum is the AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> October, venue Beacon Hall, Peasedown St John, Bath.

## What's already happening in the Somer Valley area?



# What issues concern you most at the moment and what ideas do you have to make a change?

## Post - it notes as follows

- Health & Wellbeing
  - the old style SVF was a very good model the 'core' strategy was discussed by the locals and adopted with very high levels of support
  - unhealthy weight require greater funding to run more courses in the area on healthy eating as 20 - 30% 5 year olds are obese
  - develop a B & NES school leaving fitness test & certificate with grades increase self esteem of non-academic pupils, tackle obesity, set up lifelong healthy habits
  - sharing of information between organisations to support service delivery and evidencing impact
  - more local inclusive disability sport roadshows in Timsbury, encourage local sports providers - wheelchair users in the village want to be more active, accessing cricket, tennis etc
  - access to leisure facilities in Peasedown St John
  - more NHS dentists to promote dental health outreach support to groups within Children's Centres





- Transport
  - Timsbury Road Safety Group: non-political, non-funded group of residents, open to anyone concerned about road safety in Timsbury. They are working with B & NES to consider how to implement a 20 mph speed limit. Look on Timsbury web site.
  - The Roads & Transport sub group of the Placemaking Group, together with Timsbury Road safety group, the PC, B & NES engineers, transport manager, police and residents have attended a series of workshops to develop a strategy for improving traffic flows in North Road Timsbury, to improve pedestrian safety, not harm existing businesses & reduce speeding. About to be implemented WATCH THIS SPACE!
  - Timsbury road safety ease traffic flow, safety issues to be addressed where road widening not possible
  - some ability to improve parking in central Timsbury, currently reaching grid lock
  - shoppers car park Timsbury High Street is too small. Cars are left there too long so it's often impossible to find a space, very difficult for elderly or disabled
  - parking is very bad in Timsbury and will only get worse
  - not enough disabled parking in village or Bath
  - disabled parking needs to be more inclusive for larger vehicles with tail gates. A minibus with a 3mtr access requirement cannot use many of the disabled spaces
  - work with the villages to consider the area wide impact of vehicle weight/size controls
  - lack of road links around Bath are killing our businesses
  - stop out sourcing services- it is cheaper to do in house. Just building more houses is not regeneration and does not help transport problems (e.g. more commuter traffic from Radstock to Bath, Bristol, Frome. Why not reinstate rail links AT THE SAME TIME AS building more houses. N.B. no new roads are planned
  - NETWORK required to allow links between journeys e.g. bus, cycle routes
  - produce a <u>new</u> traffic & transport model for the whole area
  - Timsbury needs accessible public transport for wheel chair users to maintain independence
  - affordable public transport to community facilities
  - costs of transport means that it costs more to go from PSJ to MSN than to go to Bath - negative impact on local economy
  - cost of transport is high within rural areas reduced access to services action: subsidies for families
  - loss of 184 bus service
  - no buses into Bath after 7.30 p.m.
  - transport from Radford to Timsbury 1 mile walk uphill to nearest bus stop
  - franchising of bus services to control buses across council boundaries as many people work and play in Bristol
  - efficiency potholes don't patch, do a proper job
  - potholes in roads unsafe danger to residents at Greenhill House who have to go into the road to access village shops - pavements are not wide enough for their wheelchairs, the camber tips them into the road
  - Leonard Cheshire Disabled we do not get our roads gritted which means we feel isolated need a grit for a distance of 200 m and 3 minutes of time to deliver

- please make sure vulnerable people e.g. Cheshire Homes, have access to facilities /emergency vehicles in icy weather road should be gritted
- gritting of Radford Hill towards Clandown
- dropped kerbs need to be flush to the road so that electric wheelchair users can safely access pavements and cross roads

#### • New housing and infrastructure developments

- Timsbury improved broadband urgently needed to encourage new and existing businesses
- when is Cam valley going to get good broadband and mobile phone signals?
- provide genuine traffic impact assessment of the effects of new development i.e. 5,10,20 miles away not 100 yards up the road
- ensure that new developments are only implemented in accordance with the Core Strategy and are led by this plan
- no mains sewers at Radford each house has its own septic tank
- one size fits all the 'city' mentality does not fit allow differences
- poor quality and expensive private rented housing threat to RSL's from Government housing proposals
- affordable housing still not affordable for residents
- we need new housing that is affordable for our children, built in a sensitive and sustainable way with attention paid to added parking within any development
- new houses should have parking space for at least one car
- give Parish Councils the chance to decide who gets local housing
- give local people the chance to settle in their village of birth and don't let outsiders take new houses
- support families moving into new housing i.e. induction how to reduce mould, save on heating
- new affordable housing necessary where building land is available but important to keep communities together - not all running into each other



- Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change
  - unless the planning process prioritises good environment in its decisions it will continue to reduce - a 'false' green space substitute is not the answer
  - local communities should identify locations for appropriate scale sustainable energy generation - solar panels, wind farms - and to have a final say on them

Workshop Report written by Rowena Harris, independent facilitator rowenaharris@btconnect.com 01873 860493

- Skills and Jobs
  - what are the problems that 'we' can work together to overcome: jobs, buses, bad planning, anti-social, preservation of green belt
  - availability of affordable workspaces
  - *improve the support available to help people back into work, very few services available in Somer Valley all centralised in Bath*
  - promote use of living wage for over 18's 18 year olds earning £5.13 an hour
  - living wage for 18 year olds so they can afford to live
  - encourage more employment opportunities by having a clear plan for generating inward investment
  - severe cuts in community budgets can prevent useful community tasks being done. The money earned is spent 'in the system' very quickly and circulates, much of it back to the government
  - support business organisations like the Chamber of Commerce to help businesses to help themselves
  - will B & NES apply for economic partnership funding for Somer Valley to establish more jobs?
  - lack of jobs for young people

## • Stronger and Safer Communities

- creative social hub for health, housing and the arts in Radstock
- hub type facility somewhere for charities like Age Concern UK to hold surgeries, an internet cafe facility at a reasonable price for young mums & older generation to meet. An extra room at Conygre Hall could be used consider extension or ensure YMCA can use it at reasonable rates
- increase role of arts and culture in empowering communities to develop socially - increasing social capital leading to education and employment opportunities
- information sharing when appropriate of incidents of domestic violence so that the support can be introduced at the right time
- reduce anti-social behaviour by having more street pastors
- need to improve road safety in our village i.e. traffic calming, reduction in speed, measures to ensure children have safer journeys to and from school
- improve the walk or cycle to school e.g. Paulton to MSN
- Timsbury PC is about to begin working with the Community Pay Back Scheme to improve the visual impact and safety of the village
- cambers on pavements very difficult for wheelchair users
- stop policy on pavements because a wheelchair user is not visible when they need to cross the road
- we are very concerned about the safety of disabled people using local footpaths and roads - lots of pot holes, damaged uneven areas - causing damage to our vehicles
- speed tables in Gullock Tyning replace ineffective bumps, close gate of Somer centre at night to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Education
  - give parents more information including performance tables in the secondary school admissions brochure better schools more informed choice
  - skills education for less academic children to include forest schools, sewing classes, farming etc
  - removal of funding to colleges and students

- ensure that educational provision in accordance with the planned development required by the Core Strategy to avoid children having to be educated outside their local communities - plan ahead!!!
- Young people
  - school aged children Brownies, Guides, Scouts etc but youth facilities required for those who do not take part in these activities
  - older teenagers need to have places they can 'hang out' without being moved on by police
  - give the money to the community to help all young people instead of just focussing on problem cases in a couple of centres with expensive staff
  - increase investment for Children's Centres to act as a hub for supported troubled families
  - ask young people what they want appropriate consultation to reflect the diversity of the community
  - the school holidays are a problem for working families there could be more working together in local villages to provide a spread of activities for all ages during the holidays
  - young people need to be encouraged to take up sporting activities but need supervision
  - how will B & NES support children and young people in Somer Valley area?
  - school leaving fitness test and certificate
- Older People
  - Timsbury create a hub for the benefit of old and young library, internet, cafe, meeting rooms
  - ageing well awareness programme involving all generations in ageing society
  - gritting in bad weather to ease fears of frail and disabled people
  - isolation becoming a problem, older people are afraid to go out at night, people living longer with more health problems
  - better publicity for all clubs and venues to help isolation problems
  - try to bring the various organisations together to help each other to achieve more meaningful and common objectives ensure everyone has a say
  - improve links between isolated elderly and young families e.g. children in secondary schools encouraged to befriend an old person
  - where will people go for books when the library is closed?
  - join the University of the Third Age life-long learning
  - the council should do more to get older people out of houses
  - pilot home share initiative to help older people stay at home and provide affordable accommodation for those in need have an integrated and shared vision for independent living services
- Other
  - you want us to do more & more like a team but you never let us think as a team
  - we want to be able to talk to each other not talked at
  - we should SHARE both good and bad issues and learn from one another, help each other WORK TOGETHER using best practice
  - why can't we as members talk to each other it's our Forum
  - local priorities should be the TOP of our agenda: dog mess (we know the owners) traffic (parking, speeding) business (lack of), development (inappropriate): we know best!
  - unless unitary authority officers and departments start communicating across their boundaries there will continue to be waste and contradictory decisions

- what does the new closer working arrangements with other councils mean?
- different priorities in different areas...whether village/group or adjacent areas
- avoid overt politicisation of local issues. Parish councils are not responsible for EEC or immigration or the national wage!
- an innovative and risk taking approach for redesign of services be more outward looking using examples of best practice from UK and international
- Neighbourhood Plans and Placemaking the lack of decisions is holding back village projects
- joined up planning and consultation
- use other agencies as vehicles to consult with vulnerable families there is a willingness, let's find a way!
- what about meaningful consultation e.g. changes to leisure facilities
- more consultation needed regarding services e.g. change in leisure facilities in MSN and Bath
- lack of consultation regarding tendering and facilities
- poorer communities unable to fund raise to replace lost central and local government cash
- abandoned 'ranger' scheme parish allocates jobs e.g. clearing vegetation, verges etc B & NES supplies training/certification for 1 individual to use weed killer
- volunteering hampered by need for residents to work multiple jobs
- more funding for voluntary training e.g. first aid
- volunteers already deliver fishing for disabled people and need better facilities to increase this locally and expand to other sports activities
- standardise and publish B & NES property strategy for surplus property e.g. garages, much needed garage space was sold by B & NES, sale held in London, not advertised locally for rent or sale
- B & NES property division can we know what property is owned in a Parish and be warned if selling and given an option on purchase if special circumstances
- reliance on food banks and other charitable donations
- what is happening with the parish Charter that Peter Duppa Miller compiled?
- efficiency inspect all work before paying the bill!
- town park for Midsomer Norton Bath, Keynsham, Radstock all have parks
- more of a civic lead from Radstock Town Council bringing organisations together to bring in outside investment e.g. European Funding (ESIF Building Better Opportunities)
- Gritting: South Road residents in the Cheshire Home deserve better service!
- we need more dropped kerbs to enable disabled residents, old and young, to access local shops safely

## The issues raised on the post it notes could be reviewed at a future meeting of the Forum.

## Action Planning - notes from small group discussions

# 1. Complete Community Asset Transfers (those pledged by B & NES)

What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

• enable local charities/organisation to lever in money and develop

## What needs to happen first and by when?

• *leases to be fast tracked (get update next week)* 

#### Who will lead?

Andrew Pate B&NES, Strategic Director – Resources

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

key B & NES property officers

**What help we would like?** ongoing support from Bath & North East Somerset Council to help with looking at resources across the Parishes: Dave Dixon can help

dave\_dixon@bathnes.gov.uk

#### **Further comments:**

• legal issues unblocked or if there are real problems they need to be clearly explained

# 2. Ageing better workshop in Timsbury (as a start for village forums in other B & NES towns and villages)

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- greater awareness of issues
- talk about ageing population and plan practical activities based on good ideas around B & NES and wider

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- workshop in the Autumn, mapping what already happens, make proposal to PC
- Who will lead? Chris Gittins & Parish Council

## Who else needs to be involved?

other residents, then wider

What help we would like?

- small grant might be needed
- information about services e.g. CURO

## 3. Future of the Somer Valley Forum

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- democracy, get things done, share resources
- to have a Forum that works as a team, owned and run by its members
- all to contribute to the agenda
- space to share views so we can focus on what we agree on and look at how to address
- action so people can take a plan away to work with, either in groups or

alone

## What needs to happen first and by when?

• Forum to work out a plan

**Who will lead?** Paul Myers from discussion group at July workshop, with all forum members and newly elected chair

**Who else needs to be involved?** we invite members who are the community - try to get a representative from each town and Parish

**What help we would like?** *minimal from B & NES but let us talk and think rather than talking at us* 

## 4. Economic Development in Somer Valley

What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- jobs and better trained local workforce
- a place that people want to work and live in better regional and national profile to attract further investment

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- Bath College to improve liaison with employers to fit jobs to courses a working dialogue
- possibility of creating a flagship business hub
- creating an exemplar building/project e.g. creative health and well being centre
- create a business case for the ideas organise a meeting with B & NES, Bath College, Radstock & Westfield Development Advisory group (expanded to include PSJ), and other interested parties

## Who will lead?

Creativity works to report back to Forum

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

*Town Council, B & NES(John Wilkinson), Bath College, Radstock & Westfield Development Advisory group (expanded to include PSJ), and other interested parties* 

## What help we would like?

- expertise from big business
- funding LEP, WOE investment

## Further comments:

- address issues with broadband and transport links including public transport
- bike storage to be provided to encourage cycling
- what about Midsomer Norton?
- avoid overlap with ides already going ahead , Oliver to talk to Cllr Tim Warren Leader of the Council
- pushing on an open door

## 5. Youth Engagement in the Forum

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- variety for young people
- better engagement, better community for all

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- Forum to include representation of all ages: guides, scouts, youth service, WPA drama and dance, toddler groups etc
- make a list of contacts for all parishes and towns
- gauge interest and forewarn
- *invite to Forum meetings*

## Who will lead? Heidi Limbert B & NES Children's Centres

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

• Parish & Town Clerks ( admin)

**What help we would like?** ongoing admin support from Bath & North East Somerset Council. All members of the forum need to promote the meetings.

## Further comments:

- community forums to have a facebook page & twitter account can link with others e.g. Sirona, Children's centres, Parish Councils
- younger people appear not to be involved in a number of activities e.g. Radstock in Bloom
- young people lack confidence to attend formal meetings
- best to organise representation of young people keep numbers sensible
- themed meetings so young people can be invited to specific meetings

## 6. Improved Communication between B&NES and Parish Councils

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- better working together
- better outcomes for residents
- more informed Parish and Town Councils, also B & NES more in touch with communities

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- PC's to be proactive and ask for help
- help each other to get a better flow of information
- encourage B & NES councillors/officers to attend meetings

## Who will lead?

Kirstie Green Timsbury Parish Clerk

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

• B & NES Community Development officers with Town and Parish Council clerks

## What help we would like?

• better support from District Councillors, clustering of Parishes

## Further comments:

- understand strengths and weaknesses
- link to similar discussions at Bathavon Forum with David Trethewey and Keynsham with Andy Thomas
- online two way forum might be useful
- focus on the future , not the past
- Forum can be the place to share information

# 7. Local Housing Issues (local people being priced out of housing in their own villages)

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- keep families together
- care for older relatives
- local people can stay in local employment

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- to influence the 'points' system more fact finding needed
- find out from B & NES/CURO about any constraints or possibilities asap
- find out more from CURO about allocation of housing to local families in High Littleton

## Who will lead? Janet Durk, Timsbury PC

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

• B & NES housing, CURO, ward councillors, private developers?

## What help we would like?

 advice from housing team at B & NES, CURO etc and views from other PC's & Forums

## Further comments:

- need for more local representation in housing allocation
- in villages over 3,000 a local connection is not taken into account (National Government Policy)

## 8. Inclusive Sports Facilities

## What benefit will this idea bring to the community?

- change attitudes about disability
- increase access to sport

## What needs to happen first and by when?

- need to find a local permanent space for Boccia ( a kind of bowling game, a para Olympic sport) other sports such as fishing.
- need more volunteers to help with driving
- increase awareness of the sport
- need to discuss with Bath University about improving their facility
- Janet will take to next meeting

## Who will lead? SD/AB/NCandy

## Who else needs to be involved (or wants to be involved)?

## • Colin Taylor - Somer centre

## What help we would like?

- help to look at funding opportunities Corporate Sponsors?
- need to be part of the West of England Inclusive Sports Programme (WISP)& influence strategic planning

#### Further comments:

• could mark out a Boccia court at Conygre hall - Janet to ask committee

## Feedback on the Workshop (12 forms were completed, all comments typed up)

## 1. On which sections would you have liked to have spent more or less time this evening?

## More time on...

- education
- us being able to talk and write our own lists. We are so short of money why/how can we afford a video and a facilitator?
- future
- inclusive sport and activities
- local housing
- highways & transport limitations
- discussion of topics

## Less time on...

- housing
- B&NES officers and outsiders talking
- politics
- housing
- unachievable aspirations which are the responsibility of others

## What was about right?

- the length and format of the meeting
- ageing population
- all very good
- agenda and emphasis on communication
- 2 minute limit for feedback
- all of it
- all about right
- all OK
- feedback from groups

- interesting ideas (even if no time to discuss them properly), good parking, length of session, good turn out
- best shot so far at eliciting local projects with a realistic chance of implementation

## 3. Please give one example of something you will do as a result of tonight's discussions, no matter how small.

- support the Forum
- fight for a democratic forum for the people
- help other groups
- try and sort transport problems
- future forums working more bottom up
- feedback to parish council
- follow up with my district council
- think about moving the Forum onwards so it's more than a talking shop

## 4. Any thoughts about the frequency, format and venue for future Community Forum meetings?

- make invitees more aware of format in advance
- ok as it is
- quarterly meetings
- every three months
- bi-monthly
- this type of meeting was just a 'one off' wasn't it? Normally agenda run, a bit rushed.
- themed meetings
- as this is my first meeting I don't know how they usually work, this hall is a good venue
- quarterly
- depends on how the Forum develops

## 5. Any other comments?

- the facilitator has done an excellent job this evening. I found the whole meeting interesting and informative
- disappointing facilitation, screen was adjusted wrongly, why not ask community to bring speakers if you can't do it?
- very good meeting
- very professionally presented meeting
- very good special meeting

Name	Organisation Represented
PC Stuart Peard	Avon and Somerset Police
Insp. Sarah Treweek	Avon and Somerset Police
Cllr Barry Macrae	B&NES – Midsomer Norton North
Cllr Michael Evans	B&NES – Midsomer Norton North
Cllr Chris Dando	B&NES – Radstock
Cllr Paul Myers	B&NES – Midsomer Norton Redfield
Cllr Liz Hardman	B&NES – Paulton
Cllr Deirdre Horstmann	B&NES – Radstock
Heidi Limbert	B&NES Children's Centres
Jed Parsons	B&NES Children's Centres
Chris Gittins	Chair - Timsbury Neighbourhood Plan Group
Oliver Jones	Creativity Works
Cllr Ian McLennan	Farrington Gurney Parish Council
Ann Birtwistle	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home
Keith Pope	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home
Liz Clemments	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home
Maria Francis	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home
Rob Ryan	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home (resident)
Peter Swithenbank	Greenhill House, Leonard Cheshire Home (resident)
Cllr Jane Lewis	Midsomer Norton Town Council
Terry Taylor	Norton Radstock Regeneration and Chair of the Somer Valley Forum
Cllr Bob Piper	Paulton Parish Council
Clir Lesley Mansell	Peasedown Parish Council and Vice Chair of Somer Valley Forum
Royston Knight	Radstock Action Group
Brian Perrett	Radstock Residents' Association
Cllr Mike Boulton	Radstock Town Council
Julie Harrington	Sirona
Peter Barter	Somer Centre, Midsomer Norton
Shirley Steel	Somerset and Dorset Railway Heritage Trust

Rev Martin Blewett	St Mary's Church, Timsbury
Geoff Smith	Timsbury Neighbourhood Plan Group
Kirstie Green	Clerk – Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr Mike Horler	Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr Ray Merchant	Timsbury Parish Council
Janet Merchant	Resident
Cllr Sheila Clarke	Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr Janet Durk	Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr David Lorriman	Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr Derek Wheeler	Timsbury Parish Council
Cllr Martin Veal	B&NES – Cabinet Member for Community Services
Cllr Tim Warren	B&NES - Leader of the Council
Andrew Pate	B&NES, Strategic Director – Resources
Sara Dixon	B&NES Strategy and Performance
Dave Dixon	B&NES Strategy and Performance
Mark Hayward	B&NES Strategy and Performance
Alison Wells	B&NES Strategy and Performance
Rowena Harris	Independent Facilitator
Diane Godwin	Independent Facilitator