

Banes councillor Paul May statement

Cabinet meeting re the proposed JSP. 19th October 2016

Leader, thank you for allowing me to speak about this item.

I represent the village of Whitchurch which is identified within the draft JSP/Traffic vision as suitable for an additional 3500 houses and a park and ride.

Whilst it is clear there is a government duty and agreement for the four Unitary authorities to work together to meet the housing need of the sub region this proposal will take a small village and increase its population by some tenfold and destroy its character.

This is not a NIMBY approach. The previous council approved a 50% increase in the size of the village and we have been working so hard with developers to minimise the impact on the environment and to welcome a significant number of new people into our village.

Our community survey shows that 70% of our working residents work in Bristol, 97% have cars and only 19% can use buses to reach their work.

The village is on the highest plateau adjoining the city so proposal to walk or cycle the eight miles are not reasonable for large numbers of commuters.

The vast majority of the population already rely upon their cars to reach their work so congestion, pollution and pedestrian safety has made the A37 road into Bristol already a nightmare for our residents.

So point 1... the area has taken significant strategic growth and there is no further scope without major transport improvement works before the village to be capable of taking further expansion.

So point 2...The JSP correctly refers to the joint need to provide infrastructure in the right place and at the right time. The fundamental flaw at the heart of the JSP argument is the impossibility of delivering the infrastructure to support the concepts of this dispersed development aim.

The transport paper is a "vision" not a plan. It predicts a need for £7.5 Bn of capital investment which they say is much higher than that made available to date and presents no practical idea how to resolve this.

There are no details, design nor even consistency with the JSP document in relation to infrastructure to allow significant development in whitchurch village.

The practical business case for a new route from Hicks gate to south Bristol via Whitchurch village will require detailed design and costing to prove the viability and sustainability test for 3500 houses there.

Point 3... the reasons for removing 250 approx acres of green belt does not meet the requirements of development sustainability in comparison with other areas outside of Banes.

The arguments used to exclude clearly more reasonably sustainable areas for Bristol city housing expansion fail miserably in comparison with the constraints of Whitchurch village. This will be vigorously challenged.

This is not a criticism of our planners who have gone out of their way to talk to our community but of the overall fairness of how the NPPF rules have been applied elsewhere.

I accept the cabinet will probably have to approve the JSP moving to full consultation but I do think it could record its own reservation on the gap between the JSP and the Transport Vision in relation to the proposals in Whitchurch village.

I will work tirelessly within the community to fight this unrealistic proposal during the consultation period and beyond.