

**Bath and North East Somerset
Council Meeting 15 September 2011**

Amanda Leon on behalf of Radstock Action Group

CORPORATE PRIORITIES, CREDIBILITY GAPS AND DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

Whilst any stay of execution is to be welcomed, Radstock Action Group sees last night's Cabinet vote to defer a decision on the TROs for Radstock as an inadequate response to the crisis which would unfold in the town if the TROs were to be adopted. We hope that this latest move will turn out to be something more than a moment of cynical window dressing to make B&NES look like a 'listening council'. The TROs should be thrown out and we urge the full council to do so when given the opportunity, particularly as they are at odds with the Corporate Priorities underpinning the Core Strategy.

Four of them are particularly relevant in this debate:

- Building communities where people feel safe and secure
- Sustainable growth
- Improving the availability of affordable housing
- Improving transport and the public realm

The TROs provide the latest evidence of a scheme which would be contrary to these priorities:

- People in Radstock will feel less safe when the main (A362) road through traffic is introduced via a new bit of road into the town centre. Shoppers, children, visitors to the library, doctor, churches, working men's club, Victoria Hall and many other amenities will be overwhelmed by two way traffic in the Street, including eight axle lorries and other HGVs which are simply trying to get past the town. Air and noise pollution will increase and people's health and safety will be diminished.
- The inevitable traffic gridlock will possibly/probably lead to the closure of the sorting office and the subsequent loss of 60+ jobs, thus cancelling out any alleged job creation from the scheme.

Shops which rely on people being able to visit the town centre by car as well as on foot will be at serious risk of loss of trade and possible closure, as was shown when Wessex Water set up temporary traffic lights in the town last week and provoked total chaos. This will lead to further loss of jobs.

Potential new businesses will be very reluctant to set up in an area subject to traffic gridlock; others may well move away.

- According to the Royal Institute of British Architects' newly published *Case for Space* (www.architecture.com/HomeWise/RIBAresearch/RIBAResearch.aspx):

'Space is an important factor when people are choosing a home, but many feel that newly built homes aren't big enough. Existing research suggests that consumers are right to be worried. A lack of space has been shown to impact on the basic lifestyle needs that many people take for granted, such as having

enough space to store possessions or even to entertain friends. **In more extreme cases, lack of adequate space for a household has also been shown to have significant impacts on health, educational attainment and family relationships'** (my capitals).

The NRR proposed housing development for Radstock must be re-examined in the light of this authoritative report, since there is a high proportion of questionable affordable housing which will not meet B&NES declared Corporate Priorities.

- Finally, we know that the impact of the proposed new road layout in Radstock will result in poorer transport as the town centre will be un-negotiable by all the traffic which will be introduced to it and the public realm will be diminished.

If the Core Strategy is to be meaningful, it must be based on transparent, democratic relations with the community. The Council is well aware of the consistent, long-lasting and widespread opposition to the current plans for Radstock. Will you have the determination to rethink?