

**Statement made on behalf of Newton St Loe Parish Council by  
Jo Tinworth:**

Introduction.....

The question over housing revolves largely around the issue of numbers. **B&NES** proposes 11,000 houses and this seems to fit with current perceptions, regarding available jobs and projected growth. The issue of increasing the numbers of houses, is that it will put the question of an Urban Extension back on the agenda. The Urban Extension that was originally proposed would certainly have destroyed farmland and greenbelt land around Newton St. Loe.

Much is made of the need to provide new housing for people on housing lists. Indeed, the main argument used to increase housing numbers across the country and to push for development on greenbelt land, is dependent on the numbers of people on social housing waiting lists. Locally, the number of houses needed here would have to satisfy not just us, but many stakeholders in and around Bath, who see no justification to destroy the green setting of Bath. What is not discussed is the actual numbers that would be removed from the housing list, if such houses were built in an urban extension of Bath.

- (a) How many of these people are already housed, but are simply seeking cheaper or more secure accommodation?

- (b) What numbers would be **socially** housed and what numbers are considered as potential candidates for affordable housing– which is not the same thing? It is accepted that few people on housing lists can afford ‘affordable’ housing.

Somer housing (in conjunction with The Duchy), claim that building a larger number of houses in one area, reduces prices! Where, in this country, has that ever proved to be true?

The average price in Poundbury – the other Duchy urban extension – is approximately £375,000. Given that a large proportion of jobs in Bath are all minimal wage, how will housing on a development of this kind, assist many workers in Bath? Houses in the proposed Urban Extension would only be within the reach of commuters or second-home owners.

We, in Newton St. Loe, are against an Urban Extension and are pleased that the previous proposal has been removed from the Core Strategy. We see no reason for it to be reintroduced and believe that the development of Western Riverside, the MOD sites, empty properties and limited regeneration of small villages, will provide an adequate number of properties in the projected timescale. Also, the developments proposed or underway in Keynsham and Bristol will more suitably provide executive homes.

Alarmingly, Bath and Bristol, via Saltford, could create the beginning of a mega-city. Would B&NES allow a decision to be taken in this direction before all other potential solutions have been thoroughly explored? Surely not!

Regarding food: the United Nations predict increasing levels of world-wide food prices. Also, as fuel prices increase, it is ever more likely that the United Kingdom will have to seek its own solutions for food security and further-develop farmland and green areas to produce more food. Bristol has already developed a significant study towards becoming more self-sufficient in food production. Where is Bath's study and commitment towards the area's food security? And what is our strategy?

As a priority, why are we not focussing on this important issue and protecting green fields that could produce food? Surely, this must be as important for our sustainable future as the reduction of our carbon emissions?

**To sum up:**

- (1) We want to protect the unique setting of Bath and to retain its distinct identity - certainly not risk a merger with Bristol.
- (2) We want housing development prioritised on brownfield sites and utilisation of empty properties.
- (3) We want the greenbelt protected for food production.

**We must not allow developers to prevail over these aspirations.**