

Good evening. I have three points on the Local Plan consultation.

First point - The Local Plan consultation papers page 61 addresses a location described as West of Bath. The text includes the sentence *“Therefore it is considered to be **unlikely** that an allocation for development in this location will be capable of inclusion in the draft plan.”* Similar wording is on page 76. No location map has been provided in your agenda papers. What member of the public would spend anytime giving an opinion or submitting evidence on this West of Bath option knowing that the outcome has in effect been pre-determined? Why is this site presented differently to every other strategic site in North East Somerset? The whole section requires a rewrite.

Second point - In 2014, a lady spoke to me in the street asking if I could help her. Notices had gone up around local farmland stating that permissive footpaths were to be closed because of the withdrawal of DEFRA funds for public access. This lady explained that she walked with her young son across the fields from Saltford to school in Keynsham. I contacted the farmer who kindly granted this lady special access and he agreed to allow me to try to find a solution to the withdrawal of funds for public access to the paths. The outcome was an imaginative scheme whereby the Saltford Community Association collects £3000 in donations annually to compensate the farmer for loss of land and other costs. In return over 3000 metres of footpath have remained open for the last ten years for members of the public to enjoy. No-one checks if users of the paths have donated. The paths are used by Saltford residents and can be used by visitors from other areas including Keynsham and Bath freely at any time.

This scheme demonstrates a classic liberal approach of enabling a community to solve a problem for itself, a scheme not dependent on Councils or taxation. It reflects Saltford at its best – enterprising, community minded, and inclusive. Where are these paths? On the site “options”: Saltford South and Saltford West.

As Crispin Truman, CEO of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England said *“People deserve countryside on their doorstep where there is space for nature that everyone can explore and enjoy and which is accessible to all. Green Belt can provide essential ecological functions and recreational benefits which are fundamental to health and well-being.”*

Third point - B&NES has a 6-year land supply. There will be non-controversial options for housing such as at Hicks Gate that will come forward that do not change the essential character of villages like Saltford. This gives B&NES time in the plan period up to 2042 to create a new community in North East Somerset from scratch. Imagine the excitement and prestige of developing a showcase village with the very best of design, energy conservation, and community facilities. B&NES can demonstrate excellence in planning that can be a showcase to the whole country. There is a landowner who would be willing and eager to support this.

Summing up.

- The Local Plan consultation needs to capture all views and not pre-determine any outcome.
- The Local Plan should seek to preserve the essential character of existing settlements.
- The Local Plan has to be bold and inspiring.