**BRA AGM 2022 APPENDIX 4**

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

Question 1: Rob Spalding asked whether, of the 370 sites put forward for housing in North Somerset, did individuals put themselves forward with sites or were they nominated by the Council?

Answer: Lucy White said that North Somerset Council put out a call for sites and any developer or landowner can put forward sites. Over 30 sites in Backwell were mentioned, some big and some small.

Question 2: Rob Spalding mentioned the sustainability factor. The absorption of 100+ houses over 5/7 years is a big thing for a small village to manage. 1,100 new homes in the village would mean a dramatic increase of pupils needing schooling. How do they propose to accommodate that?

Answer: Lucy White replied that it is proposed to build one new primary school in Backwell. There has been no decision on which site that would go on. There are secondary school proposals for an additional school in Nailsea which would have a catchment area with Backwell.

Question 3: Paul Tindall asked, with regard to green belt and non-green belt, NSC are implying that non-green belt land was exhausted but he thinks there must be large amounts of non-green belt still available

Answer: Lucy White said that there is a large area of land outside of the green belt but only a small amount is genuinely feasible and sustainable for development. North Somerset is trying to keep development away from small villages and focus on sustainable locations. Green belt is extensive in North Somerset and is quite a major constraint, however, as a manmade policy constraint rather than a physical/technical constraint, it can be removed to enable development in sustainable locations, where exceptional circumstances apply.

Mike Rose said that North Somerset have produced a Plan proposing development on the edge of Weston, avoiding the Mendips, but some of it is below sea level. Large sites in Nailsea and Backwell have also been proposed. The algorithm of 20,000 houses from Westminster is still being challenged.

Question 4:    Sue Ivens said that there is a large building on second roundabout which suddenly appeared and is up for rent to outside people.

Answer:    Barbara Harland explained, assuming you mean Lulsgate House by the silver zone entrance, this houses Bristol Airport’s offices and the Airport Police HQ. BH explained that the reason why this building appeared, as large site owners they can build under ‘permitted development’ rather than with planning permission as long as it is for business purposes not for profit. Therefore, the second floor is the only part for rent and not the whole of the building.

Question 5: Liliana Bakinowska said that 460 people, most of them parents of children who attend the school and scout hut, have signed a petition to try to stop Taylor Wimpey building 65 houses near the scout hut in Rodney Road. How much chance is there of retaining this space around the school to protect it as a park for children? If 600 houses were approved for Grove Farm could this land become a buffer.

Answer: Mike Rose said it was a difficult question to answer. They may withdraw that application and look at the whole Grove Farm development. There will be a big fight over this.

Lucy White does not think they will withdraw the application if they can get consent. Any open space is likely to be put on the outer area of the site to create a buffer zone between the village edge and countryside beyond, with the exception of play spaces which need to be accessible to all within the development.

Question 6: Malcolm Chamberlain commented if the Government’s requirements are that 20,000 houses are to be built in North Somerset, Backwell does not stand a chance of escaping. Surely we should be looking really hard at getting the most out of what we can minimise in the form of vital amenity areas. In the Grove Farm site, can high quality for amenity footpaths or well used sites be retained? eg Nailsea ponds. Within that area there is a ridge that is above Moor Lane up to Farm buildings which is very important. Looking across one way is Chelvey Church and the other way Backwell Church. Houses must not go along that ridge. Grove Farm is the site under the most pressure and there is a significant prospect of loss of amenity.

Answer: Keith Riches said that the ridge is a really important part of that site and NSC should be persuaded to take that into account. Lucy White agreed that there was no harm in mentioning it as a potential constraint to the sites’ capacity. Further comments could be made later down the line. Backwell will have to take a significant number of houses and we need to try and turn that round to a positive and ask ourselves how we can mitigate the downsides and get what we want from it. Mike Rose mentioned an area of green belt on the Grove Farm side of Backwell might mean that houses will be built on the higher level.

KR said that there are plusses and minuses between the two West and East proposed sites. Potentially developers have got a claim on the land to the west of Backwell but it is more scenic than the eastern Backwell site which is low lying but good quality agricultural land.

Question 7: Malcolm Chamberlain said that X8 is being replaced by X7 and will run every hour and also on Saturdays and Sundays which will be a huge improvement.

Answer: District Councillor, Bridget Petty endorsed this information and said that this is really good news. The bus will go all the way to Clevedon. The charge for adults will be £1.50p to go to Nailsea and 80p for children.

Question 8: Geoff Sully said that the Even Keel Planning Application does not mention Summervale but two-thirds of that site, which has been turned down in the last couple of years, has been included in their Application. He went on to say that he owns the hedge from Moor Lane alongside the eastern side of his property and that the Even Keel plans seem to have included some of his land. The hedgerow is a forage area for the horseshoe bats and contains very high hedge trees and an ash tree is 20 metres high. Looking at the Octavia plans they seem to be wanting to build quite near the trees and have assumed that it is their building land.

Answer: Mike Rose said there are only a couple more days to make representations as the closing date for objections is the 7 April.

Question 9: Ian Forsyth said that it would be an unsustainable increase in traffic on Station Road if the Even Keel Application was to go ahead.

Answer: Keith Riches said that it would produce far too much traffic in that area and unfortunately new roads cannot be built without damaging the green belt. Lucy White said that the Local Authority only needs to take into account harm caused by a new development and whether that harm can be mitigated with new road travel measures. It does not need to address existing traffic problems. The reality is that a new road delivered through the Local Plan is likely to be the only way to mitigate congestion.

Question 10: Nathan Littlewood asked what happens if we manage to get one or two sites rejected?

Answer: Lucy White said that would not happen. The Inspector will need to be sure that the Plan is sound by delivering sufficient housing sites to meet the housing requirement. If the Inspector considered East of Backwell to be unsuitable for development, another site of equal capacity would have to be found.

Question 11: Brian White said that with regard to traffic does each estate have to mitigate the effect of their extra cars? Two bridges over the railway?

Answer: Lucy White said that there is much to come on traffic modelling on each development.

Mike Rose said that one of the problems of the Local Plan is that their proposals for transport and roads etc. are only in their very early stages.

Question 12: Richard Bracken of Downside said that these are ambitious targets which need to be met and it is time to push North Somerset into making sure these houses are better insulated and developers encouraged to put in solar panels etc. We should seek these improvements in writing.

Answer: Bridget Petty said we have a green Council in office and who will be making sure that the highest standards are met.

Question 13:    Mike Timms spoke about Bristol Airport and the fact that there is not much point in complaining as they seem to be able to do what they want.

Answer:    Barbara Harland said that at the Airport Appeal 30 Parish Councils had their say and the 120 page report giving consent to expand does not reflect what she saw at that Inquiry. A local group BAAN which brings together many interested parties including environmentalist have decided to go to the High Court to challenge the planning inspector’s decision and they have the funds to do it. North Somerset Council and the Parish Councils Airport Association are not going to pursue this due to costs and what they might have to pay to the Airport over the last Appeal however they will be working with Parish Councils to mitigate the situation.  She thinks that Backwell may have more aircraft flying over it after the CAA Airspace Review.

Question 14: Lorraine Hopkinson-Parker spoke about the east of Backwell green belt land. This is prime agricultural land and wanted to know if NSC would consider this in their approach to it? Do they differentiate and take into account the good quality land there as opposed to the swapped area for new proposed green belt behind Backwell Lake?

Answer: Lucy White spoke about constraints and secondary constraints identified through the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the Local Plan. The Plan would have to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of best and most versatile agricultural land, however, this does not preclude development and loss of such land, providing there are economic benefits of doing so. The Local Authority will need to take into account the harmful effect of losing high quality agricultural land and balance this against the perceived locational benefits of the site in terms of accessibility to the train station etc.

The creation of a new green belt between Nailsea and Backwell will be considered separately against the tests for Green Belt (see National Planning Policy Framework), including the role the land can play to prevent coalescence between the two settlements. This will be considered separately from the land lost at East Backwell.

Question 15: Alison Attwood said that the small Rodney Road proposed development is now part of the large Grove Farm development and asked is there any way they could mitigate all the cars that go down there and for a traffic assessment to be carried out when the road is busy not when there is little traffic due to half term holidays. How can we fight this?

Answer: Lucy White said the Highways Authority in their view have no objection. A traffic survey has been carried out correctly and is sufficiently up-to-date. They have decided that the additional traffic is relatively low and cannot make it any worse.

The Question and Answer session finished and Keith Riches spoke about the Local Plan and how important it is for residents to make their feelings known to NSC. He drew attention to guidance documents for attendees to pick up as they left the meeting which would help them in submitting their objections. He also encouraged members to write to Liam Fox and Michael Gove.

Meeting ended 9.00 pm. Keith Riches thanked everyone for their participation.