**BRA BULLETIN 6.11.20**

Dear Member

We are sending this bulletin out as we start another lockdown, which is having a major impact on our lives and livelihoods. We sincerely hope that, for all our sakes, this phase will result in a slowdown of the spread of the Corona virus.

In spite of the national restrictions, BRA needs to continue to concentrate on the emerging North Somerset Local Plan (LP), and on two other significant matters for our village, the proposed housing to be built off Rodney Road, and Bristol Airport’s expansion proposal.

**NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (LP)**

**Challenges for the Future – Part 1**

Our bulletin in August introduced the consultation document from NSC, which asked for your comments by Sept 2nd. This document covered the “Challenges” in producing the Plan. The feedback from the consultation is given in a 57-page document available on the NSC website in the link below.

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/Local%20Plan%202038%20Consultation%20Statement%20October%202020.pdf>

The document includes responses to a “call for sites”, whereby significant parcels of land are submitted (not always with the full approval of the owners) as possible development sites, no matter how speculative!

In total 56 sites were identified in North Somerset, of which 3 were in Backwell:

Farleigh Fields 21 Hectares

Land around Grove Farm 43 Hectares

Land NE of Backwell\* 37 Hectares

\*This land is adjacent to Backwell School playing fields going North and just beyond the railway line. All of this is in the Green Belt.

There has been a number of previous “call for sites”. There is no immediate cause for alarm but it emphasises the need for us to be alert and aware.

The “Challenges” document responses gave the factors that residents considered to be the most important for the next stage of the process.

Some of the many points raised by respondents included hopes that:

* housing developments should prioritize a good mix of house types – design, size and tenure, with small houses (both affordable and for downsizing)
* climate change and protecting environment measures should be a top priority
* housing should be built next to employment
* services, facilities and public transport, open space and recreational areas should be made as accessible as possible
* plans would seek to prevent village over-development and loss of character.
* plans would also seek to prevent development without the necessary infrastructure
* brownfield development sites should be prioritised
* green belt should only be developed in exceptional circumstances but sometimes this may be the best option.

**The above seem helpful points to bear in mind when completing the “Choices” questionnaire, particularly when considering ‘The Alternative Approaches’**.

Many members, including those on the BRA committee, reported difficulties in using the NSC website to make their “Challenges” comments. BRA reported this to NSC and we received an appreciative letter from the Chief Executive, Jo Walker. Following the “Challenges” above, the consultation now moves to “Choices”, and we think this is a huge improvement in its user-friendliness.

**Choices for the Future – Part 2**

**NSC’s consultation has just opened on “Choices”, with a deadline for comments by Dec 14th.**

The “Choices” document can be viewed on the link below:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/North%20Somerset%20Local%20Plan%202038%20challenges%20and%20choices%20part%20two%20-%20Choices%20for%20the%20future.pdf>

The 32 pages are easy to read and give a helpful summary of the planning process, making good use of maps of North Somerset to show green belt, areas at risk of flooding etc. In order to facilitate the consultation it presents four alternative approaches to the choice of development sites. Residents are asked to comment on these and give a preference – or even to suggest a fifth alternative. **This is your chance to be a planner!!**

One needs to register with an email address and to create a password to start the process. This minor inconvenience is a small price to pay for the subsequent ability to stop and start again at a later date, and even to change one’s answers. Response may also be made by post.

On this occasion, we believe most people will be content to fill out the questionnaire on-line. **Members may like to see the whole questionnaire in advance, so they know what to expect. It is attached as a pdf with this bulletin**.

BRA will be seeking professional help in making its comment, which will be the subject of a bulletin to members well before the deadline. Residents may of course make their comments before the BRA submission. In any event, we would welcome hearing the views of members before BRA submits its comments.

**Please read the 32 page “Choices” document and be prepared to make a submission by Dec 14th.**

**APPLICATION TO BUILD 65 HOUSES OFF RODNEY ROAD (Ref 20/P/1847/OUT)**

The closing date for comments was September 9th, with 324 comments against the housing and 2 in favour. At the moment the application rests in the in-tray at North Somerset Council (NSC), and we await further information on the date that NSC will make its decision.

**BRISTOL AIRPORT**

The airport is currently running at 10 -15% of its present capacity, but much has been happening on the planning front. The application by the Airport for an expansion from 10 million passengers pa to 12 mppa, which was refused by NSC in February this year, is the subject of an appeal. We mentioned the Compulsory Purchase Order made by the Airport in September, for the purchase of land on both sides of the A38 at Lulsgate Bottom. This is under consideration by the Secretary of State for Transport, along with the airport’s application for “Fully Slot Coordinated” status, which would increase night flights. The Airspace review which potentially will see increased flights over Backwell has been delayed until 2021. The Parish Councils Airport Association (PCCA), which comprises 26 councils surrounding the airport has provided valuable information which any single village would struggle to obtain. BRA has donated to its Legal Costs Appeal fund. We will continue to monitor these issues and keep you informed.

Best wishes

From your BRA Committee 6th November 2020

**Visit our website on** [**www.backwellresidents.org.uk**](http://www.backwellresidents.org.uk)

**Email us at** [**backwellresidents@btinternet.com**](mailto:backwellresidents@btinternet.com)