**NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (LP)**

Dear Member 25th November 2020

In the BRA bulletin of 6th November, we gave the results of **North Somerset Council (NSC)’s** “Challenges” Consultation, and said we would give further information in a later bulletin on the “Choices” consultation, **which closes on Monday Dec 14th.**

**Please read this bulletin, and submit your comments to NSC. It is your chance to make an input on development in North Somerset up to 2038, which will influence what happens in Backwell.**

**Priorities for the Future**

The “Choices for the Future” document runs to 32 pages, and can be viewed on:

[**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**](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)

On page 9 the document presents NSC’s priorities for the future, which were revised following feedback from the responses to “Challenges”. The most important priorities were:

* addressing the climate emergency
* promoting sustainable, low carbon development and renewable energy
* developing new and existing communities to enhance health and wellbeing
* prioritising housing development close to services, facilities and jobs
* increasing job opportunities for all
* prioritising use of brownfield sites
* avoiding development in flood risk areas and safeguarding the natural environment
* developing transport and community infrastructure in step with housing and employment
* delivering essential new transport for more sustainable and active travel options
* delivering a range of quality, ‘low carbon’, genuinely affordable homes
* regenerating town centres

**BRA’s Approach to the Questionnaire**

BRA has received advice from Lucy White, our Planning Consultant, who is providing the official BRA response, which includes references to the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), the NSC Corporate Plan, and the Sustainability Appraisal etc. The BRA committee has also given its views, together with results from the recent Backwell village survey. These have enabled us to give some guidance to members, but it is important that you make your points in your own words. The intention is for us to provide the official BRA response, with technical matters as required, along with a large public response of residents making their own points.

**The Questionnaire**

**This can be found in a link from page 31 of the “Choices” document**

**Or directly via:**

[Consultation Homepage - North Somerset Local Plan 2038: Challenges and Choices Part 2: Choices for the Future - North Somerset Council Consultations (inconsult.uk)](https://n-somerset-pp.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/NSLPChoices/consultationHome)

**Q1 Brownfield Sites** You are asked if you support brown field development.

**Q2 Flood Risk** Various questions to answer on development in flood risk areas.

NSC has suggested four alternative approaches to development, each of which is illustrated on an easy to read map.

Q3 Retain Green Belt

Q4 Urban Focus

Q5 Transport Corridors

Q6 Greater Dispersal

**Q3 Retain the Green Belt**

This is a complex issue, given that the designation of areas needs updating and some of the areas now have limited value. Although broadly in favour of its retention, we have concluded that the Government’s unrealistic housing targets for North Somerset (which NSC is required to meet) are on a scale which is completely incompatible with retaining all of the Green Belt, whilst avoiding the extensive flood risk areas and dealing with climate change / sustainability issues.

**Q4 Urban Focus**

**This has received support from the BRA committee as being the best approach for the big climate change issues, and for Backwell**. We remain of the view that large scale development at Grove Farm or elsewhere in the parish would unacceptably alter the character of our community and should be resisted.  This option does not include major housing development in Backwell.

**Q5 Transport Corridors**

This approach creates major developments for Nailsea, Backwell and Flax Bourton, along the A370, and on other major roads in North Somerset.

**Q6 Greater Dispersal**

A glance at this map shows development scattered over North Somerset in many villages, which has major disadvantages.

**Q7 Alternative Approaches**

Responders are invited to produce their own alternatives.

We consider the ‘Urban Focus’ approach to be the best option for the future. A possible alternative would be to modify this approach by reducing the scale of development in Nailsea, and to increase development east of Weston beside the M5, and/or at SW Bristol. We believe that Backwell does need continuing, small scale housing developments, similar in scale and speed of development as that achieved in our Neighbourhood Plan. This would be a contribution towards the NSC housing target.

We also consider that one of the biggest issues we have in Backwell is the volume of traffic, particularly on the A370 and Station Road. This must be addressed before there could sensibly be any more large-scale development in Nailsea.

**Completing the questionnaire**

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. It is possible to change your response at any time prior to the closing date. Responses may also be made by post.

The BRA committee would welcome any feedback from your participation in this process.

**This questionnaire is well presented and is very important. Please go to the NSC website link above, and help create the Backwell Future that you would like, by the closing date of Monday Dec 14th.**

Best wishes

From your BRA Committee

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

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