**BRA Bulletin – Thursday 8th December 2022**

Dear Member

A number of important issues have arisen recently, which your committee feels members should be aware of.

**Local Plan (LP) 2023 -38**

Members will recall much of 2022, including the BRA AGM in April, was taken up debating a draft of the LP which proposed 1100 houses for Backwell (600 on the Grove Farm area and 500 East of Backwell in the Green Belt bordering Backwell School Playing Fields. BRA carried out a straw poll in March 2022 to which 160 members responded with 93% saying it would be “very bad” for Backwell, and 7% “bad”.

The North Somerset Council (NSC) “preferred options” gave a total of 18,046 houses to be built in North Somerset, compared with a government target of 20,880 houses.

NSC was aiming to present a latest draft for consultation by this month, but this has now been delayed until March 2023. Once approved the LP will go for public consultation. A more flexible approach is being taken towards the Green Belt and the Flood Plain, which together account for 70% of North Somerset land. One encouraging aspect is that alongside the latest plan will be an **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).** This will cover transport, education, cost and funding sources, and should ensure that plans are more realistic.

Meanwhile, the government has come under great pressure to relax the impact of its “algorithm” and give local communities more say.

In a statement on December 6th, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Housing etc, has included matters such as:

* Local Authorities will no longer need a 5-year Land Supply if their plans are

 up-to-date

* The protection afforded by Neighbourhood and Local Plans will be increased
* More incentives will be given for brownfield development

A modified National Planning Framework will be available for consultation by Christmas.

The full statement by Michael Gove can be seen on

[Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415)

What does this mean for Residents? If the ambitions are achieved, the LP that emerges should hopefully be more acceptable to Backwell residents than earlier versions. Residents must await the draft, and be prepared to express their views to NSC in the spring/summer.

**Development Proposals for 400 houses West of Backwell Lake**

A development company, Gleeson Land, has assembled a 94-acre site, and has plans to build 400 new homes, mainly within Nailsea’s boundary, but with part of the site in Backwell. The principal (and possibly only) vehicle access to the site would be via a new road crossing fields ad exiting onto Station Road, very close to the entrance to the Lake car park.

Gleeson Land has produced a website with an outline of where it proposes to build the 400 houses (up to 2.5 stories high), along with further information. A form is also available for anyone wishing to provide feedback to Gleeson Land - [http://www.southnailsea.co.uk](http://www.southnailsea.co.uk/)

Gleeson has given a presentation in Nailsea as part of its consultation process, but not in Backwell.

Members should be prepared to express their views to NSC, should Gleeson come forward with an outline application.

**Backwell Recycling Centre (BRC)**

The NSC Executive Committee at its meeting on the 7th December approved the draft budget proposals for 2023-24, which includes a saving of £300,000 from the closure of BRC. BRA is aware of very strong views within the Backwell community. Those who make regular use of the Backwell site are aggrieved at the cost and time involved in travelling to the remaining sites at Weston and Portishead. Others would be relieved to have the tip traffic no longer using Backwell’s inadequate busy roads.

Consultation can now take place with members of the North Somerset Citizens Panel who will be invited to share their views on the plans for the year ahead. Their feedback will be included within the next report so councillors can consider the views of local people when these important decisions are made.

Information on the Citizens Panel is given on:

[Sign up for the North Somerset Citizens' Panel (Your Voice) - North Somerset Council Consultations (inconsult.uk)](https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/citizenspanel/consultationHome)

NSC’s leadership team and senior managers will continue to work on proposals to close the remaining £4m gap for 2023-24, before the final budget and council tax levels are agreed in February.

**Conversion of stable block into a residential dwelling at the junction of Backwell Common and Backwell Bow Ref 22/P/1726/FUL**

The property, which is located adjoining the junction of Backwell Common and Backwell Bow was originally built as stables for horses, before being converted into living accommodation (without obtaining planning permission). Subsequently NSC accepted the conversion to a dwelling house was lawful, but refused the application for lawful use of the property as a dwelling. The current owners are now seeking planning consent for a newly converted dwelling.

Notwithstanding the legal confusion about this property, BRA strongly objects to this application as it is a residential development in Green Belt. In addition, the site is located in Flood Zone 3 (designated as “high risk”). On both counts this is contrary to North Somerset’s Core Strategy and the emerging draft Local Plan 2038.

**We encourage members to also object to this unwelcome application.**

[22/P/1726/FUL | Conversion of stable block into 1no. residential dwelling, erection of fencing, entrance gate, post box and construction of bunds (part retrospective) | Stables South Of Junction Of Backwell Common And Backwell Bow Backwell (n-somerset.gov.uk)](https://planning.n-somerset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=makeComment&keyVal=RF0GYSLPH2300)

**Farleigh Fields Local Green Space**

The BPC Working Party, which includes BRA input, continues discussions with NSC and Persimmon regarding the potential purchase of the FF LGS fields. No definite decision will be required until well into next year, as building work is not likely to start before 2024.

We send everyone very best wishes for the festive season, and a safe New Year.

**From** **your BRA Committee**

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