



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England

Secretaries: Gill & Dave Gray - 01275 857746

**Report to ALCA, North Somerset Group  
Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**Developers still pushing forward despite economic downturn!**

Despite a downturn in the economy and the sale of houses slowing, developers are still pushing forward with planning applications. Developer's inclination to look to choicer green field sites with better margins will hold more appeal and there will be little incentive to redevelop and regenerate brownfield urban areas.

Land to the South West of Bristol proposed in the South West Regional Spatial Strategy as an urban extension was the topic for workshops over four days held at the Ashton Gate Stadium. The workshops, attended by various stakeholders and organised jointly by North Somerset Council and developers, considered the implications and options for the area and will feed into the Local Development Framework.

There were some excellent presentations on design, density, green space and energy efficiency but also an assumption that the 10,500 houses proposed were not open to public debate despite the fact that the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is still to be finalised. See below for progress on the RSS. Information from the workshops can be found on [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning+policy/Local+Development+Framework/SouthWestBristol.htm](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Environment/Planning+policy/Local+Development+Framework/SouthWestBristol.htm)

**South West Regional Spatial Strategy**

The South West Regional Spatial Strategy is currently with The Secretary of State for Communities, Hazel Blears who will be publishing a consultation on the 'Proposed Changes' to the Panel Report around July to mid October 2008. We await her proposals.

Major issues with the Panel Report:

- Removal of North Somerset Green Belt for urban extensions
- Removal of land at the Port and Airport from Green Belt
- Green Belt boundaries to be defined in the Local Development Framework.
- No recommendations for extensions to Green Belt (apart from a small area between Portbury Docks and Portishead).
- No phasing of greenfield supply to support brownfield supply. So no brownfield first policy.

Further information and the Panel Report can be found at:

[http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a\\_id=3627](http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=3627)

**Economics rule?**

If you thought that the Regional Assemblies were undemocratic – we've got some news for you!

From 2010, the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) will assume executive responsibilities for planning and transport strategy development currently residing in the Regional Assemblies. For the South West, the South West Regional Development Agency will be formally designated as the Regional Planning Body.

Although local authorities will be consulted it is clear that the RDAs will still lead the development of the plans.

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/news/view/484>

Prosperous Places: Taking Forward the Review of Sub-National Economic Growth and Regeneration <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file45468.pdf>

## **Planning Bill**

CPRE has serious concerns about certain aspects of the proposed Planning Bill presently going through Parliament. In particular, establishing an Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) to make decisions on major developments. It would reduce democracy in the planning process through imposing policies that have not undergone proper debate or environmental appraisal, for example on airport expansion. It would remove rights for local communities to hold developers to account at public inquiries and it would not be directly accountable to Parliament or the public. In addition, it is expected to have a running cost of £9.3 million per year, on top of a one-off £5 million to set up the commission!

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/planning/planning-system/planning-system-what-you-can-do>

## **Bristol International Airport**

BIA's 'permitted development' application for a walkway submitted just days before Christmas, was recommended for acceptance in a report to South Area Committee by North Somerset officers. Councillors considered the report at a meeting on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008 and unanimously decided that the development was not 'permitted development'. They stated that in view of its large size and potential impact on airport capacity and the environment it would require a full planning application.

See North Somerset Council website planning ref: 07/P/3214/PAI

South Area Committee also decided unanimously that the BIA formal screening opinion for an Environmental Impact Assessment already decided by North Somerset officers should be reviewed in the light of their decision for a full planning application.

See North Somerset Council website planning ref: 08/P/0789/EIA

Draft minutes can be currently viewed on

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/cairo/docs/doc16907.htm>

These decisions were unique and will be important to ensure that major changes go through a thorough democratic process enabling the impact of development on local communities and the environment to be fully considered.

## **Stop the Drop!**

CPRE has launched an ambitious three-year campaign called *Stop the Drop* to keep our countryside free of litter and fly tipping. Bill Bryson, CPRE President feels so passionate about the issue he is leading the campaign. For further information see:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/stop-the-drop/litter-and-fly-tipping/litter-take-action>

### **Georgie Bigg**

District Chairman, CPRE North Somerset, June 2008

**Local website:** [www.cpreavonside.org.uk](http://www.cpreavonside.org.uk)

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