



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

Secretaries: Gill & Dave Gray - 01275 857746

**Report to ALCA, North Somerset Group
Monday 22nd September 2008**

'One Voice' on the Regional Spatial Strategy?

The financial crisis upon us at the moment is undoubtedly hitting. Maybe now there will be a realisation that we can't build our way out of an economic downturn and that the most important thing to provide is sustainability. The word sustainability pops up everywhere and the first dictionary we referred to offered some interesting words like 'hold up', 'affirm the justice or validity', 'to establish the truth of'. Which leads us to the Government's ambition (not local people's) to build 117,350 new dwellings in the West of England (Avon) area (26,750 in North Somerset) by 2026.

The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SWRSS) has undergone a consultation process and at each stage the housing numbers have been increased. No evidence has been submitted for either the original numbers or the increases. Justification is given in the latest 'Proposed Changes' issued by the Secretary of State, Hazel Blears as 'forecasts suggest that by 2026 the regions population could have grown....' Hardly evidence!

What it doesn't do is take account of the alternative scenario where the population is reducing, mortgages are hard to get, more people are out of work and the house builders are out of business. Of course, not all developers or housing speculators will be out of business and many will be 'cashing in' on peoples misfortune.

We understand local authorities are targeted to build the houses the government instructs or they won't get their money, but it was our money in the first place.

Our concerns are:

- Removal of Green Belt for urban extensions
- Removal of land at the Port and Airport from Green Belt
- 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 and a lack of sequential approach across local authority boundaries.

This last point would have a serious impact on the regeneration of South Bristol – the justification given for the South West Bristol Urban Extension!

The date for responses to the SWRSS is 24th October 2008 and the final SWRSS will be published before the end of 2008. It doesn't leave much time for Hazel Blears to consider our comments and get the document printed!

Some local authorities have already taken a stand, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset have both written to Hazel Blears to reject the housing numbers proposed for them and asked their residents to write as well. We'd like North Somerset Council to do the same. **We would urge Parish and Town Councils and individuals to write to Hazel Blears, your MP, your District Councillor, the Government Office of the South West and Gordon Brown. For further information go to**

http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=4145&tt=swra

Bristol International Airport

Bristol International Airport (BIA) have declared that they expect to submit a major planning application around Christmas 2008 for further expansion of the airport. Although the Master Plan indicated that they were looking for a capacity of 9 million passengers by 2016, this is now to be 10 million passengers. The proposed plans include doubling the size of the terminal, a multi-storey walkway across the whole of the site, multi-storey (4/5 floors) car parking to the north, plus further car parking to the south and east of the A38 and 32 aircraft stands.

BIA have already started the process by asking North Somerset Council for a scoping opinion on an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed development. The reference number is 08/P/1951/EIA - responses by the 26th September 2008.

<http://wam.n->

somerset.gov.uk/MULTIWAM/findCaseFile.do;jsessionid=FA0DA5D202F0440A841CBED3F7F3635C?appNumber=08%2FP%2F1951%2FEIA&appType=planning&action=Search

Although various assessments were completed at the time of the Master Plan, we believe that so much has changed since then (including an increase in their anticipated passenger numbers) that this will require a new broader Environmental Impact Assessment.

In the meantime, BIA have said they will be asking for a CLOPUD (Certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development) from North Somerset Council for the walkway application submitted earlier this year and refused by Council.

Other proposed 'permitted development' for the airport include further car parking to the north, adjacent to Downside Road homes and moving the Fire Station to the south side of the runway. An Appeal has just been heard in respect of unlawful offsite airport car parking for 1200 cars at the Mushroom Farm in Langford. The Inspector's decision is expected shortly.

Hedges

CPRE along with other interested partners, have supported the issue of a new DVD called 'A cut above the rest – managing hedges for the future'.

For further information and details on how to obtain a copy go to:

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/hedgerows/hedgerows-video>

Stop the Drop!

The campaign to keep our countryside free of litter and fly tipping is going well with Bill Bryson recently featuring on BBC's Panorama Programme *Notes on a Dirty Island*. Town and Parish Councils have told us how important this issue is for them and so new special packs are soon to be sent to all member Parish & Town Councils.

For further information see:

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

Sign up to Bill's newsletter on

<http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=21&ea.campaign.id=586>

Georgie Bigg

District Chairman, CPRE North Somerset, September 2008

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