

Members of the Conference

Somerset County Council

Cllr Cathy Bakewell
Cllr Paul Buchanan
Cllr Tony Shire

Leader of Somerset County Council
Portfolio Holder: Economic Development
Executive Portfolio Holder: Transport, Highways
and Waste

Cllr William Wallace
Claire Pearce
Richard Antliff
Paul Browning
Charmaine Lock

Head of Strategic Planning & Transport Policy
Principal Regional Planner
Development Consultant (Planning)
Conference Secretary & Publicity Assistant

Exmoor National Park

Cllr John Edwards
Cllr Roger Webber
John Clements
Chris France

Second Deputy Chairman
Vice Chairman of Planning Committee
Principal Planning Officer (Planning & Community)
Head of Planning & Community

Mendip District Council

Cllr Ian Hasell
Cllr Nigel Woollcombe-Adams
Chris Arscott
Stuart Merritt

Shadow Portfolio Holder for Planning & Environment
Senior Portfolio Holder for Planning & Environment
Service Manager: Economic Regeneration
Service Manager: Policy & Partners

Sedgemoor District Council

Cllr Dennis Davey
Cllr Duncan McGinty
Aynsley Burfield
Nick Tait

Portfolio Holder: Economic Development & Tourism
Portfolio Holder: Planning & Transportation
Business Development Officer
Head of Planning & Transportation

South Somerset District Council

Cllr Tim Carroll
Cllr Tony Fife
Andrew Foyne
John Shaw

Portfolio Holder: Economy, Planning & Transport
Area Chairman and Portfolio Holder (South) and Deputy Leader
Group Manager: Regeneration and Land-use
Planning Policy Manager

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Cllr Cliff Bishop
Cllr Norman Cavill
Mark Green
Ralph Willoughby-Foster

Portfolio Holder: Planning Policy & Transportation
Portfolio Holder: Economic Development / Property & Tourism
Economic Development Manager
Forward Plan & Regeneration Manager

West Somerset District Council

Cllr Barbara Child
Cllr Bryan Leaker
Trevor Shaw
Mark Westcott

Vice Chairman of Council
Planning Policy & Rural Regeneration Manager
Assistant Planner (Policy)

Government Office for the South West

Tim McCombe
Neal Whitehead
Karen Partridge

Regional Planning Officer
Senior Planning Officer
Planning & Local Government Programme Officer

South West Regional Development Agency

Gordon Woodend
Alice Ordidge

Head of Operations - Somerset Area Team
Senior Planner (Sub Regional)

South West Regional Assembly

Chris Mitchell
Kate Murdoch

Transport & Spatial Planning Adviser
Policy Advisor

Somerset Association of Local Councils

Peter Lacey

SALC County Secretary

Somerset Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ltd

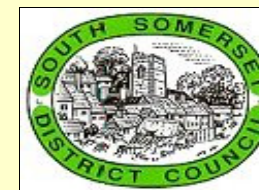
Ken Burrows

Chairman



Somerset Strategic Planning Conference

Newsletter 6th June 2005



Notes of the SSPC held on 16th March 2005, Luttrell Room, County Hall

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Duncan McGinty (SDC)
Chris Mitchell (SWRA)
Kate Murdoch (SWRA)
Karen Partridge (GOSW)
Claire Pearce (SCC)
Trevor Shaw (WSDC)
David Vaughan (SSDC)
Cllr Roger Webber (ENPA)
Neal Whitehead (GOSW)
Gordon Woodend (SWRDA)
Cllr Nigel Woollcombe-Adams (MDC)
- 1.1 Cllr Cathy Bakewell, Chairman of the Somerset Strategic Planning Conference opened proceedings by welcoming everyone.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from:-
 - Chris Arscott (MDC)
 - Ken Burrows (Somerset Chamber of Commerce Ltd)
 - Cllr Barbara Child (WSDC)
 - Cllr Norman Cavill (TDBC)
 - Cllr Dennis Davey (SDC)
 - Simon Eames (MDC)
 - Cllr John Edney (SCC)
 - Nigel Farrow (SCC)
 - Cllr Tony Fife (SSDC)
 - Andrew Foyne (SSDC)
 - Chris France (ENPA)
 - Cllr Alan Gloak (SCC)
 - Mark Green (TDBC)
 - Cllr Ian Hasell (MDC)
 - Peter Lacey (SALC)
- 2.0 **Regional Spatial Strategy - Update**

2.1 Stuart Todd (SWRA) updated the Conference:

 - Over 400 consultation responses were received;
 - The consultation responses were reported to a RSS workshop;
 - Conclusions would be formed in June/July 2005;
 - A number of topics are being considered, including the economy, housing,

- culture and Gypsies and travellers;
 - Key policies would be developed to cover all the topics;
 - The final draft of the District Housing Distribution would be prepared by mid-June 2005;
 - Roger Tym & Partners are looking at those settlements outside of PUA status;
 - The Regional Transport Strategy is ongoing, and a first draft would be considered by the Regional Transport Forum in June 2005, and;
 - A number of key dates have been formed;
 - 1) Production of the Strategy Document - June 2005
 - 2) First draft RSS - August/September 2005
 - 3) EIP - 2006
- 2.2 Following the presentation there was an opportunity for Members to raise any questions.
- 2.2.1 Cllr Cliff Bishop (TDBC) highlighted a fund available to help infrastructure. He asked who is responsible for this fund.
- In reply, Stuart Todd (SWRA) thought this might stem from the RSS.
- 2.2.1.1 Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) thought the SWRDA had bid for funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund.
- Alice Ordidge (SWRDA) added
- that the SWRDA did put together a bid.
- In addition, Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) explained that the SWRA also signed up to the bid.
- 2.2.2 Stuart Merritt (MDC) raised the issue of District Housing Figures, asking how the SSPC can agree a response.
- Paul Browning (SCC) responded that due to the timings of the committees, it would be difficult to give a formal response. However, he suggested that it would be possible to provide an initial response, prior to approval through the committee process.
- Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) explained that Somerset County Councils' officers would liaise with District officers.
- 2.2.3 Paul Browning (SCC) questioned when the EIP would be held.
- Stuart Todd (SWRA) thought it would be held in Summer/Autumn 2006, due to the nature and scope of the work required before the start of the deposit period.
- 2.2.4 Cllr Tim Carroll (SCC) highlighted that the timetable shows two consultation periods, and asked for clarification.

5.2.2 Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) welcomed Iain Cairn's advice. He wondered if a view would be formed before the completion of the RSS.

- Cllr Tim Carroll (SCC) replied that the timing would be tight, but it is necessary.

5.2.3 Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) explained that the issue would be discussed at a future meeting between the Chief Executives of the District Councils.

5.2.4 Iain Cairns (SCC) explained that a joint working group would standardise the information, and aid the assessment.

6.0 Future Business

6.1 Members highlighted several items of future business:

- Response to the budget statement concerning free off-peak concessionary fares;
- Update on the Taunton Sub-Area Study;
- Presentation on the Workspace Investment Strategy;
- Presentation on LTP2 and Accessibility Planning;
- Presentation on the Yeovil Vision and UDF.

CLOSE.

Changes to SSPC Membership

Welcome to Councillors William Wallace, Paul Buchanan (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development) and Tony Shire (Executive Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Waste).

Councillor Tim Carroll will continue to make a valuable contribution as SSDC's Portfolio Holder for Economy, Planning & Transport.

We say goodbye to Councillors John Farley, John Edney and Alan Gloak and thank them for their commitment and contribution to our Conference.



Meeting Dates:

SSPC Officers' Meeting

Friday 24th June, 10.00 am,
Wyndham Room, County Hall

SSPC Conference

Thursday 7th July, 14.00,
Luttrell Room, County Hall

For Further Information Contact:

Charmaine Lock, Conference Secretary:

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Or

Email: CLLock@Somerset.gov.uk

that new software is being used, which shows the weaknesses in our provision.

4.2.6 Stuart Merritt (SDC) asked if anyone has been asked to comment on the budget statement that off-peak concessionary fares should be free.

- Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) wondered if this should be presented at a future SSPC.

4.2.7 Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) requested that Media One work with the Press Office.

5.0 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

5.1 Iain Cairns (SCC) introduced himself to members explaining:

- Some sites are in operation which were founded before grants were available;
- 93% of planning applications for Gypsy sites fail;
- The 2004 Housing Act introduced the requirement to assess the number of Gypsies and travellers;
- The Government is committed to reviewing the planning for Gypsies and travellers;
- The consultation paper is not based on housing, but how to use the legislation.
- The Somerset County Council

response recognises the need for both short-term and long-term sites, and that a large number of private sites have been created;

The new legislation extends the definition of Gypsies and travellers, but it would enable anyone to claim the status;

The Gypsy and travellers community wishes to have equal rights;

The Legislation would require the identification of new sites;

He has yet to encounter a Local Authorities who does not welcoming the new legislation;

SCC has always tried to engage the issue at a regional level;

The SCC has the opportunity to work together and develop new policies;

Gypsies and travellers make up less than 1% of Somerset's population, approximately 3,500, and;

He personally estimates that Somerset has already provided for 80% of the Gypsy and traveller population, but it is necessary to address unauthorised development.

5.2 Following the presentation there was an opportunity for Members to raise any questions.

5.2.1 Cllr Cliff Bishop (TDBC) highlighted that they have been to court regarding a Gypsy site.

- In answer, Stuart Todd (SWRA) explained that a consultation would occur in June/July 2005, and again in September 2005 when the draft RSS would be available.

2.2.5 Paul Browning (SCC) questioned how the RSS relates to the LDF's.

- In reply, Stuart Todd (SWRA) said they have used various officer groups to discuss the issues, and has received enquiries from Districts. He furthered that the LDS's are sent to the SWRA for consultation.

2.2.6 Cllr Cliff Bishop (TDBC) thought the housing distribution numbers would be developed without much member involvement.

- In answer Stuart Todd (SWRA) explained that a statement of community involvement was sent to GOSW. He furthered that it wasn't possible to allow a longer consultation period for the Taunton Sub-Area Study, but the public will have further opportunities to comment.

2.2.7 Tim McCombe (GOSW) asked how many responses were received for the Taunton Sub-Area Study.

- In response, Brian Morgan (SCC) -

said that 480 responses were received, which is similar to the number sent to the Bristol Joint Study Area.

3.0 Taunton Sub-Area Study

3.1 Brian Morgan (SCC) updated the Conference:

- Four workshops were held to discuss the options with stakeholder groups;
- The four options were tested for their feasibility;
- The economic growth in Taunton is spread across all the sectors;
- Options 1A and 1B are feasible for housing growth, and;
- Options 1A and 1B perform better in terms of transport.

3.2 Following the presentation there was an opportunity for Members to raise any questions.

3.2.1 Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) asked if the Norton Fitzwarren site is classed as a flood plane.

- In reply, Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) explained that the Local Plan allocated this site, but it was later removed.

3.2.2 In addition, Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) asked for more information relating to the Vivary site.

- In answer, Ralph Willough-

Foster (TDBC) explained that the Vivary site is not the Vivary wedge, but Dowslands.

- Brian Morgan (SCC) thought the site should be renamed to avoid confusion.

3.2.3 John Shaw (SSDC) thought the town centre sites would not be available for housing. He suggested that problems might occur if sites were allocated for housing, and then used for other purposes.

- Paul Browning (SCC) replied that he would explain this to John Shaw.

3.2.4 Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) asked how the formulas were developed.

- Brian Morgan (SCC) replied that it is necessary to look at the whole population, including the economically inactive.

3.2.4.1 In answer, Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) thought housing needs should go with the jobs, not the population.

- In reply, Cllr Tim Carroll (SCC) thought Taunton has a stable jobs market, and there is inward migration.

3.2.5 Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) thought it is encouraging that the views of the TDBC and SCC

are similar.

3.2.6 In addition, Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) raised the subject of town centre renewal, and stressed its importance. He thought the town centre regeneration would be limited by factors such as flooding.

3.2.7 Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) added that we are uncertain if Taunton will retain its' PUA status, but thought it is necessary to retain it for the benefit of the county.

3.2.8 Cllr John Edwards (ENPA) stressed the effects on West Somerset and Exmoor.

- Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) said it would not remove jobs from other areas.

- Brian Morgan (SCC) added that it would seek to work with its neighbours.

3.2.9 Cllr Tim Carroll (SCC) thought the improvements in infrastructure would benefit West Somerset and Exmoor.

Tim McCombe (GOSW) agreed.

3.2.10 Stuart Merritt (MDC) questioned the affordable housing figure of 20% when the other Districts have 40%.

Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC)

replied that this is based on - previous needs assessments, so may increase when the current work is completed.

3.2.11 Nick Tait (SDC) wondered if the option with the best transport affects would still have an impact.

- In answer, Brian Morgan (SCC) replied that congestion would still increase, but to a lesser extent.

4.0 LTP2 and Accessibility Planning

4.1 Jeremy Callard (SCC) updated the Conference, explaining:

- A LTP2 workshop was held on the 7th April;
- Media One will be used to promote the LTP2;
- It is anticipated that the SSP would be involved in the process, and;
- The cycling, rail, parking and passenger transport strategies would be circulated to SSPC members for comment by 18th April 2004.

4.2 Following the presentation there was an opportunity for Members to raise any questions.

4.2.1 Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) wondered when the draft LTP2 would be available.

Jeremy Callard (SCC) answered that it would be taken to the Executive Board on 13th April 2005, and would be available shortly afterwards.

4.2.2 In addition, Ralph Willoughby-Foster (TDBC) questioned when the responses would be required.

In reply, Jeremy Callard (SCC) said it would be taken to the Executive Board in June 2005.

- In response, Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) thought this would require a report to be produced by mid-May 2005.

4.2.3 Stuart Merritt (MDC) explained that the SSP Members have been invited to respond, and asked how the District Council's can forward their views.

Cllr Cathy Bakewell (SCC) replied that the Districts might use both the SSP and the SSPC to respond. She furthered that the LTP2 working group is new.

4.2.4 Cllr Tim Carroll (SCC) thought it would enable the District Councils to give their views through several mediums.

4.2.5 Jeremy Callard (SCC) explained that Accessibility Planning would be a big challenge, not just in terms of resources, but also in the level of partnership working required. In addition, he said