

BANES CORE STRATEGY LAUNCH DOCUMENT PRISTON RESPONSE

We have attempted to provide answers where appropriate and our answers are given below, using your question numbers as reference.

Many of the questions in the document appear to be rhetorical and are ones you yourselves need to answer but are not able to be sensibly answered by others.

We were disappointed that there were many questions where no information has been provided within the document i.e details on how BANES is going to address the provision of infrastructure such as roads, sewerage, services etc associated with building developments.

We were surprised that no mention was made in the document to the future completion of the Bristol Ring Road which will have an impact on BANES, and no mention of the potential improvement of the strategic traffic route from Bristol to Southampton i.e. A4-A36 improvement [Saltford by-pass / Bath Southern by-pass].

We understand that it is definitely intended to construct the missing link of the Bristol ring road. Is it certain that the A4/A36 improvements will not take place?

GENERAL

Q1 What policies or principles should be included in the CS to meet challenges of climate change.
Every development/policy should be set within the context of sustainable development. Priority should be given to the most sustainable.

Q2 How do we ensure that there is enough land for business to maintain a prosperous economy & that its in the right place

Q3: Of the existing land in business use, is it the right type in the right place: how much should be retained to ensure needs of business are met?

Areas for potential business development should be clearly identified within the plan.

Local businesses should be consulted on potential future requirements and also whether their current locations match their future requirements.

In general, significant business developments should be developed:

- only where existing transport links are satisfactory;
- near supply of employees;
- where employees can use public transport;
- where it will not adversely affect existing similar development (with consequent waste)
- with stringent building regulations for carbon neutral buildings.
- on brown field sites.
- within new large housing developments where appropriate so as to reduce travel requirements.

Q4: Where and how should the growth in shopping expenditure be met.

Edge-of town-shopping should not be developed: there would be an adverse impact on central Bath and other existing shops and the traffic generation would be huge.

Recent research suggests that by 2020 40% of all retail purchases will be over the internet and this will this lessen car use with warehouse storage uses less energy than physical shops..

- Local shopping centres for food and necessities within Bath and throughout the BANES area should be supported and improved.
- There should be no more supermarkets: they have been responsible for the decline of too many local shops already; they encourage car use; they are energy profligate.
- Local farmers markets made up of local suppliers should be encouraged throughout the area.
- BANES as landlord could do a lot to encourage independent shops in town centre, to retain Bath's attractiveness.

Q5: What types of shops and associated leisure uses should be provided and how should our cities and town centres change.

See 4 above and:

New shops and leisure facilities should be carbon-neutral, e.g.

- low energy lighting

- no air conditioning
- refrigeration units with doors
- near public transport links

and residents of BANES should be made aware of the impact their activities make on the environment, which affects us all.

BANES generally needs to upgrade public sports facilities as these will all be increasingly important in counteracting growing obesity in the population. Many villages do have recreation grounds which are well used, but good facilities in smaller towns are also necessary.

Q6: How do we meet both affordable housing need and housing need for people with specific needs.

Such policies should be met by:

- A strong well informed housing enabling team within BANES who will deliver appropriate development is essential.
- Strong, carefully developed Section 106 requirements for new development.
- Give incentives and support for older single people living in large social housing to move to smaller more appropriate housing.

Q7: Is there a particular need to meet 'key worker' housing needs.

BANES Housing Enabling team to assess this but we believe the answer is 'yes' particularly if lengthy journeys to and from work are to be addressed.

Q8: Is there a role for live-work opportunities.

Possibly a small role if it was sustainable and well managed.

Q9: What is special about BANES that should be protected and conserved through the CS.

Ensure Bath keeps its UNESCO World Heritage status.

Areas which make up BANES must retain their distinctiveness.

- Their identity should be protected.
- Urban sprawl must be contained.

Q10: What local facilities does your community lack..

Priston lacks an evening and late night bus service.

Priston lacks open space available with facilities like a swing etc. for younger children, possibly a basketball ring for older ones and also a place for teenagers to hang out together and sit and talk.

Priston lacks a 'Safe' cycle way to neighbouring villages with shops.

Q11: How do we ensure we cater for all sections of the existing and future population.

Sustainable development and by better targeting of resources to more disadvantaged sections of the overall population.

Q12: What type of local facilities are needed to ensure cohesive communities and to sustain and improve our quality of life.

Shops, pubs, schools and leisure facilities etc provided on a local basis that reduce car use and provide for those who do not have access to cars.

Q13: What major elements of transport infrastructure are needed up to 2026 to address existing problems and support new development.

Essential requirements:

- Improve and extend public transport systems particularly bus services in the south of BANES.
- Electrification of the mainline railway northern corridor would allow more slotting in of commuter trains so reducing car use.
- Resist the expansion of Bristol airport for leisure flying purposes.
- Create a cycle network between centres, including between villages to encourage people who are now frightened of cycling on roads to make short journeys.
- Subsidise public transport to encourage people to use it and ensure it is reliable.
- Terminate relevant countryside bus services at the Bath Park-&-Ride sites to enable use of a shuttle system into the city centre and thus cut down traffic movement of buses in the town.

Q14: How can reliance on the private car be reduced

Q15: How can we encourage more people to use public transport.

See some answers to Q. 13 above and:

- Road pricing or other financial/physical restraints on car use providing that revenue gained is used directly for public transport initiatives.
- Cheaper, more extensive public transport.
- Good, safe cycle network.
- Institutions encouraged to promote visitors not to arrive/leave by car, eg children to arrive at school by coach, bike or on foot (the school run has a huge impact in congestion and pollution).
- Employers to be incentivised to get employees to cycle, cars-share, or use public transport; use local workforce rather than employ people from outside the area.
- Support and ensure local facilities and amenities remain viable.
- Promote the development of a new national coach network. City centre coach stations are shut down and moved to the junctions of the motorways with the urban public transport networks extended to meet them.
- Encourage more car sharing
- Reduce parking provisions in areas of congestion and in new developments.

Q16: What can be done to ensure that the development is brought forward in the right place at the right time.

Q17: What scope is there for the CS phase the delivery of development.

The ability to phase development must be part of the plan, and, given the scale and variety of proposed development this is clearly possible.

Priority must be given to brownfield sites, those which are most sustainable, and those which link best into existing and proposed public transport links.

The plan needs to be capable of major review at say 5 yearly intervals to check progress achieved and how much assumed parameters on population growth, energy supplies, business needs etc have changed.

It will clearly be necessary for all relevant departments within BANES to be highly efficient and actively involved for this to be achieved.

BATH

Q18: How can anticipated growth and development be accommodated in a way that complements the City's environmental quality.

See also Question 1, Section I: General answer above.

- By ensuring that BANES planners plan correctly.
- Infill, which does not encroach on green space.
- New development along established transport links. Urban extension is least sustainable kind of development; will likely encourage more car use unless costly infrastructure and amenities are established.

Q19: How can the CS help improve the public realm [streets, squares, footpaths, gardens, parks]

The central area of Bath already has generally adequate standards, but these need to be extended throughout the entire city and include all new developments.

City landscape maintenance and extension street lighting should be powered by photovoltaics.

Maintenance of infrastructure needs to be improved. Improved streetscapes are often marred by poor/inadequate maintenance/repair.

There is a need to fund adequate maintenance for parks and gardens –e.g Sydney Gardens is of national importance as one of the only surviving historical pleasure gardens but has been allowed to decline in an alarming manner.

Q20: How can we improve visual and physical access to the river.

Any existing gaps in the river walkways should be eliminated and all new riverside development should ensure linear access and good quality landscaping together with high quality architecture and appropriateness of materials.

Q21: What are the most important assets and characteristics of the City that must be protected and preserved.

- 'Rural' nature of Bath skyline and upper slopes of hills to be preserved.

- No high rise developments to be allowed and the height of all developments to be controlled so as to maintain the character of existing views.
- The general impression that Bath is built of bath stone must be preserved.
- The nature and quality of all building materials in all areas to be strictly controlled.
- Distinctive buildings and streets to be preserved.
- No shopping malls; they will detract from charm of Bath.
- Active encouragement of independent shops.
- Seriously address the problem of excess traffic – the city is too often gridlocked

Q22: Where and how should the City's economic growth be accommodated.

Q23: What new employment locations should be developed and what key existing employment sites should be protected.

Q24: What diversification of the economy be promoted and how can this be facilitated by the CS.

Q25: What new business space should be provided to help diversify the economy and meet future business needs.

The following section generally provided no information within the document on how BANES is proposing to address issues of transport, sewerage, housing etc. We therefore find it difficult to provide any detailed response, except to say that the answer to Q.24 Part 1 is 'yes'.

See also answer given to Question 2 in the General section.

Q26: How can the urban extension best be integrated with the existing communities in this part [south-west greenbelt] of Bath. (Area was identified by South West Regional Assembly & BANES)

This will be dependent on the location chosen. It will not be easy and any villages will definitely be swamped.

Q27: How can the setting of the City be best protected and the need for urban extension met.

In terms of overall visibility, the area either side of the Newton Brook from the railway line to the line of Wansdyke, would have the least impact. For any existing properties all options will have a major effect, which can only be mitigated by careful landscaping. This presupposes that no major new roads are provided.

Q28: What form should an urban extension take- 1 big or a few smaller ones – and where in the 'area of search' should it/they be located.

Without any idea of transport issues [raised in our introduction] this is difficult to answer, but the area suggested in the answer to Q.27 is certainly worth investigating.

It would also be appropriate for smaller areas of development to be provided North of the A4. It is, however, always a fact that if a by-pass is constructed the land within will be constantly 'nibbled away' by development.

Q29: How can the supply of affordable housing be increased and what proportion of housing should be affordable.

By implementation of Section 106 agreements, and for rural exceptions under planning law.

Is there more scope for BANES to supply land at low cost to social housing providers, and find ways to minimise right to buy loss.

Q30: What types of new homes are needed in Bath and how distributed.

See answer to Question 6 in the General section

Q31: Should the City centre be expanded to accommodate new shops and if so how and in what direction.

Bath's huge expansion going ahead now, coupled with expansion in Bristol is more than enough. See also answer in Q.4

Q32: What type of shopping expansion should be encouraged in the City centre and how can this compliment existing shops.

None

Q33: Should shop uses continue to be protected or should a greater diversity of uses be allowed.
This depends upon the circumstances. Bath should actively promote as wide a range as possible of a far wider range of individual shops and businesses with BANES as the largest landlord changing its policy to tailor business rates to promote such shops.
It should seize the opportunity to be one of the first cities to get rid of commoditised shopping and the 'High Street Lookalike Image' .

Q34: How should the CS help protect and improve neighbourhood shopping centres.
See also answer to Question 4 in General section.
No new supermarkets should be allowed.

Q35 & 36: Should the need for large stores in Bath be addressed and if so where.
No further retail sheds or large stores are necessary so no provision should be made in the plan. See also answer to Q.4 in General Section

Q37: What additional visitor accommodation is likely to be required in the future and how should this be provided.
Any major increase in hotel room provision should be resisted, or else the current attractiveness of Bath will be lost.

Q38: Should existing visitor accommodation be protected from changes of use.
Yes

Q39: What new visitor facilities should be provided and where should they be located.
Emphatically no casino. Possibly a dedicated concert hall.

Q40: How and where should the increasing number of students be accommodated.
• Students should be accommodated on campus if possible, so this is where expansion of accommodation should take place. They compete with full-time residents in housing market elsewhere.
• Encourage students to study from home, as in Europe.
• Build a few hundred student flats on the river near Bath Spa University College.

Q41: Can the CS facilitate a reduction on the pressure on Bath's stock of family housing.
Student campus housing would reduce pressure on family housing.

Q42: How far can the CS assist in meeting the needs of further education facilities over the next 20 years.
Not enough information to answer. The actual need for further expansion is not clear but obviously there is a need for proper coordination with all Higher Education Authorities.

Q43: How should the CS facilitate the necessary improvements in health, education and recreational facilities?
Some of the areas' health facilities are substandard, and some recreational facilities mentioned in Q.5 could be improved. Some educational facilities are also in need of improvement. All these elements may well require new build to match overall increases in population and should be located within areas of growth whenever possible.

KEYNSHAM

Q.45-62. These are for Keynsham residents to answer. However our introductory comment regarding the wider regional transport picture applies here.

MIDSOMER NORTON, RADSTOCK & ENVIRONS

Questions in general are for residents to respond to, however our introductory comment on the wider transport picture applies here as well.

Q76: Should former railway lines continue to be safeguarded for sustainable transport use.
Emphatically YES for safeguards for sustainable transport.

RURAL AREAS

Q82: Which settlements outside urban areas which should be classified as a small town or village [ie. to attract small amounts of development]

Sustainable development means expanding where transport links and infrastructure already in existence so only those with a solid existing infrastructure should be considered.

Q83: Should any settlements be removed from the Green Belt to facilitate a greater level of development.

No. Green belt is hugely important for the urban areas themselves; extensively used as a place for leisure activities: walking, cycling, fishing, motorbiking, horse riding. It is also essential for the World Heritage Site aspect of the city itself.

Q84: What type of houses and how many should be built in the rural areas to support evolving social, economic & environmental changes.

See Q82

Q85: Should home working be encouraged in the rural areas.

Yes, as this is a personal choice but the document does not suggest how.

Q86: Should more innovative ways of working be encouraged.

Yes, but the document does not suggest how

Q87: Should policies allow for more affordable housing for local people in villages.

Yes, if on the basis of genuine local demand from people on low, fixed incomes.

Q88: Should affordable housing provision in rural areas be closely linked with employment.

Yes

Q89: What facilities are needed to ensure cohesive and balanced communities. In which villages should these facilities be accommodated.

Local shops, transport etc. See answer to Q.12 in the General section

Q90: How can more people be encouraged to use public transport in rural areas.

See Qs 14 and 15 in the General section.

Q91: How can accessibility be improved.

Unclear what is meant

Q92: Should land continue to be safeguarded for the proposed bypasses for Clutton / Temple Cloud & Whitchurch.

Q93: Should former railway lines continue to be safeguarded for sustainable transport

Don't safeguard it for bypass but use for sustainable transport. More bypasses only encourage more car use.

Q94: How can greater diversification of the rural economy be encouraged. What types of activity are appropriate.

Maybe now farmers will be able to concentrate on farming again, given rise in dairy and wheat prices. But

- add value to farm produce
- use farm buildings for appropriate activities for local employees, especially if no transport links.
- When considering planning applications for change of use/new build to farm buildings, scrutinise issues such as light, noise pollution; journeys to work; visitors to the site.
- Further growth of horse riding facilities is undesirable, on grounds of sustainability and the effects on the countryside.

Q95: How can the connection between producers and consumers be improved.

Local farmers markets, web based ordering, help for small producers to access this market.

Q96: How can the benefit of rich biodiversity be realised to improve tourism, economic development, health promotion and sustainable communities,

It already exists

Q97: Should the QS identify the protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure [i.e. network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces, woodlands, greenway linkages in urban areas, the countryside in and around towns, & the wider countryside.

Yes

Q98: Should renewable energy such as wind turbines and the production of biomass be promoted in the district and if so how and where.

- Biomass should not be encouraged: we have to reduce our reliance on the car, not use land that can otherwise be used for food.
- Large-scale wind turbines, yes. Domestic turbines, no: they use more energy in their manufacture than they produce in use.
- Carry out a vigorous campaign about energy efficiency in the home. More energy used in buildings than anywhere else.
- BANES should positively encourage use of solar energy in all proposed new building.

We would also like to suggest that street lighting and, where possible, external lighting of buildings be kept to a minimum in rural areas because of increasing light pollution. Dark skies are becoming a rare resource.