

2023 Priston Annual Parish Meeting Priston Village Hall

16th March 2024

Minutes

Present: Peter Hopwood, Bruce Clarke, Guy Davies, Helen Burns, Nick Keppel-Palmer, Fiona Gourley (B&NES Ward Councillor), Jocelyn Nichols (clerk), Paul Thatcher (PCSO), Chantal Young (village agent) and approximately 33 villagers

1. **Apologies**

John Lippiatt, Farah Downing

2. **Previous Minutes 18th March 2023** – accepted as a true record

3. **Matters Arising** – none

4. **Chair's Report** - Last May we formed a new Committee with 4 new Councillors, and give our grateful thanks to Doug Pattison and the retiring Councillors for all their years of service to the parish, and also thank you to the current councillors for their enthusiasm and commitment to improving our parish.

We have appointed a new auditor - Patrick Dawson who was a South Stoke Councillor and audits South Stoke and Monkton Combe parishes. Robin Anderson was thanked for all his years as auditor.

We are reminded that reporting potholes on 'Fix My Street' is still important for all to do.

We have 4 defibrillators and there have been several training sessions. Thanks to Roger and Emma Morad for managing the training and maintaining the defibrillators.

Peter has replaced Doug on the Priston Emergency Group. Peter, Helen and John Wilkinson are working on a new Community Emergency Plan.

The Biodiversity Awareness day was a huge success thanks to PAGE for organising. We are focusing on three topics - Ponds, Dead Hedges and Dark Skies.

Damp issues at Walnut Tree house were noted.

Planning - We supported the application for a dog training facility at New Farm, but lighting issues have since resulted in an enforcement order. There is another enforcement order on the Shepherd's Huts at Blind Lane.

We received Community Infrastructure Levy money for Pottern House, and have written a protocol for spending this and future payments.

The old minute books have been photographed and put on website by Richard Bottle. Thanks to Richard for all his work in keeping the website interesting and up to date.

Helen has liaised with Eddie Proctor, footpaths officer for B&NES about various footpath improvements, which should happen soon.

Thanks again to our clerk – Jocelyn Nichols, for her hard work.

5. **Parish Council Financial Report**

The year end is 31st March, and with some outstanding invoices to be paid, we will finish the year with at least £8,600 in the bank. The precept has been authorised as £7,829 for the coming year.

6. **Matters Raised by the Residents**

PC Paul Thatcher introduced himself and provided some crime statistics.

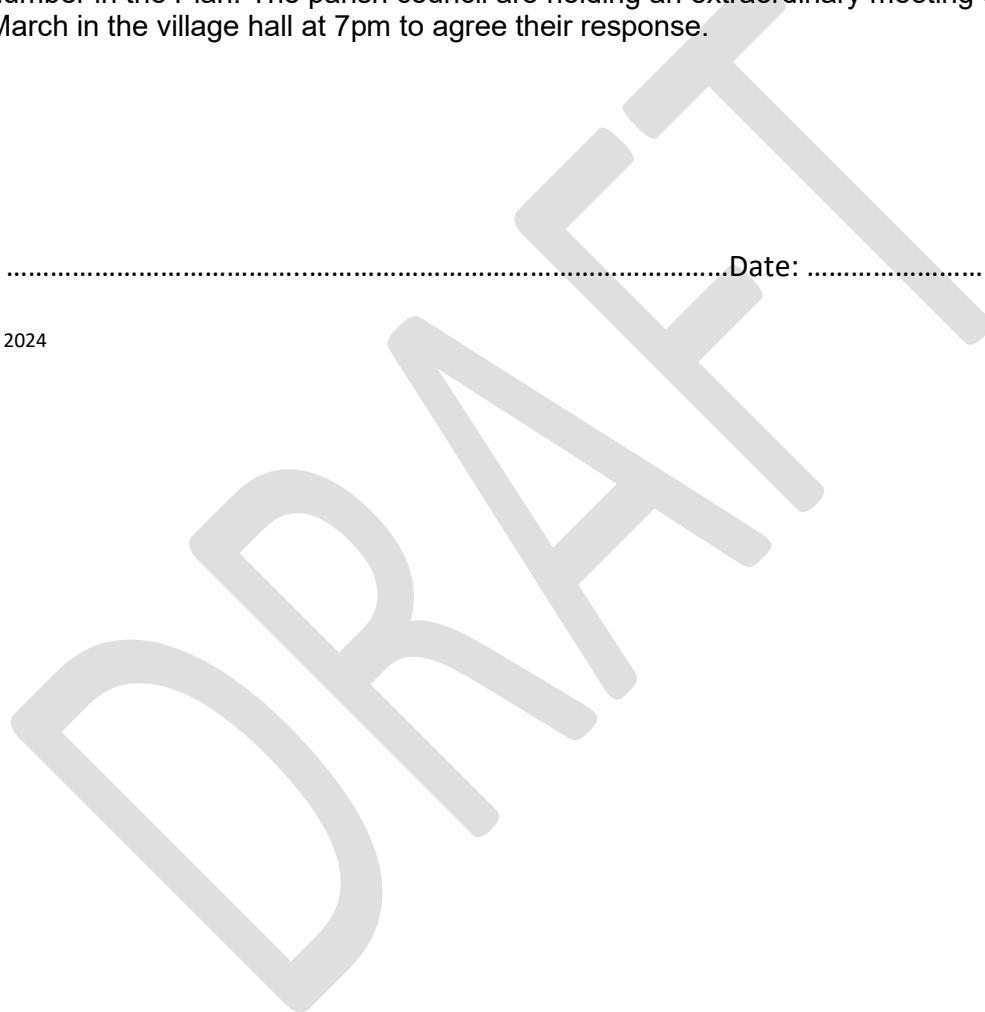
Chantal Young, Village Agent, explained her role in WERN to provide support to residents in rural areas. This might include help with transport, equipment in homes, benefits and basic networking with appropriate organisations. She works 10 hours a week and her contact details are on the Priston Web. Her service is confidential and free.

7. Local Plan Consultation

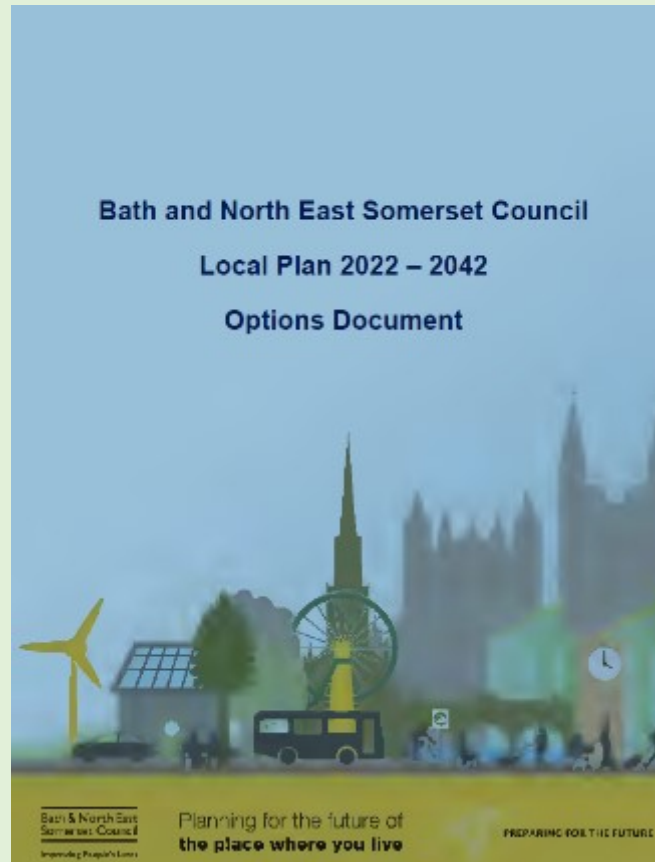
Robert Davies (Chairman of the BANES Group of CPRE-the Countryside Charity) reported on the Local Plan consultation. He said there would be no change in Planning Policy for Priston and similar villages, but indirect effects on travel will be felt from changes in rest of B&NES and other areas. A 5% uplift in houses is proposed for villages with more facilities out of Green Belt- eg Farmborough 28 houses, Timsbury 59 houses. 14,500 new homes are proposed by 2042 to satisfy B&NES' 'housing need'. B&NES have a duty to co-operate with neighbouring Authorities which could mean a further 3000 to 4000 to address Bristol's 'need'. In BANES, 6,200 of the 14500 are already planned for (but not built) in the current Core Strategy. A major factor influencing migration is the availability of housing. The more housing provided, the more people will come here. Individuals and organisations (including the Parish Council) should respond to this consultation via the BANES Website. Suggestions for responses could include references to loss of Green Belt, traffic congestion, social infrastructure and excessive housing provision. A good outcome would be for the housing numbers requirement to drop below the number in the Plan. The parish council are holding an extraordinary meeting on Monday 25th March in the village hall at 7pm to agree their response.

Signed:Date:

JN 22 March 2024



B&NES New Local Plan Options Consultation



Robert Davies
Chairman, B&NES Group
CPRE - the Countryside Charity

Background

- Current Local Plan Core Strategy runs to 2029. This will merge into new Plan 2022-2042.
- Current Consultation. BANES sets out its objectives and seeks views on various option.
- Preferred options will go into the Draft Plan with further Consultation and Examination in Public by Planning Inspectors. Should be adopted 2026.

What it means for Priston

- No change in Planning Policy for Priston and similar villages.
- Indirect effects eg on travel will be felt from changes in rest of BANES and other areas.
- A 5% uplift proposed for villages with more facilities out of Green Belt-eg Farmborough 28, Timsbury 59.
- 14500 new homes proposed by 2042 to satisfy BANES' 'housing need'.
- Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring Authorities could mean a further 3000 to 4000 to address Bristol's 'need'
- Other LA's have their own Plans, S Glos 20490, Bristol 45000, N Som 14900 Total 94800
- In BANES, 6,200 of the 14500 these are already planned for (but not built) in the current Core Strategy.

Where will these new homes be built?

- Not many of them will be built in Bath, though about 4000 remain to be built under the Core Strategy.
- BANES estimate about 2000 'windfall' sites
- New allocations to be planned for are about 6200 plus whatever extra is added for Bristol's overspill, taking the total to maybe 10000.
- 3 strategic areas, the A4 Corridor (Keynsham -2500, Saltford -500-1000 and Hicks Gate-lots!), Whitchurch -1500, and the Somer Valley - 2000.
- Suggestion of new village community around Burnett 2600 houses.

Likely impact on Priston Residents

- Getting to and from Bristol and Bath by car is the travel issue for most Priston residents.
- The new homes planned for BANES and surrounding areas will create many more car journeys.
- Other than active travel provisions (walking and cycling) and some more buses there are no major transport improvements.
- Increased journey times and congestion are bound to result.
- Development in Radstock and Farrington Gurney will worsen the already bad situation on the A367 into Bath.
- All the developments along the A4 through Keynsham could cause gridlock at peak times.

The Wider Picture -The Green Belt

- CPRE was founded nearly 100 years ago to protect the countryside under threat from urban sprawl.
- CPRE was instrumental in securing National Parks, AONB's, the Green Belt and the Town and Country Planning Acts.
- Green Belts were introduced for good reasons and those reasons remain valid.
- For city-dwellers, Green Belt is the countryside next door which is highly valued.
- With the exception of the Somer Valley, all the extensive land proposed for strategic development lies in the Green Belt.
- These strategic growth areas can only be developed if they are removed from the Green Belt in the Plan
- Removing land from the Green Belt requires demonstration of exceptional circumstances.

What about the Doughnut?

- A key part of BANES' vision is the application of 'Doughnut Economics'
- Looking at current conditions, it could be argued that BANES is in danger of breaching its 'doughnut'
- Always pushing for more houses, people and economic growth does not seem to square up with doughnut economics
- Certainly, a thriving Green Belt jells with Doughnut Economic philosophy and removing land from it does not.
- Looking to the future, there seems to be no end to this process.

A Step Back-Fighting Yesterday's Battle ?

Until fairly recently, everyone was worried about the population explosion across the world, BUT.....

BBC News Item 28th Feb 2024 – ‘South Korea has the lowest birth rate in the world, and it continues to plummet, beating its own staggeringly low record year after year. Figures released on Wednesday show it fell by another 8% in 2023 to 0.72. This refers to the number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime. For a population to hold steady, that number should be 2.1. If this trend continues, Korea's population is estimated to halve by the year 2100.’

- BANES plan to increase their housing stock by 18% even though....
 - population in the UK is forecast to grow only 5% , allowing for international immigration.
 - If net international migration were zero (it could be negative) population would fall by .12%
- BANES must therefore be a very deprived area?

‘To Him that hath he shall be given more’

- National Planning policy requires that housing numbers are calculated using the ‘Standard Method.’
- They are based on trends in the local population over the past years which are then projected into the future.
- BANES has ‘enjoyed’ large population increases over the past years and this growth is projected to continue.
- Because BANES is a high house cost area, housing projections are uplifted by 35%.
- This is supposed to bring prices down by expanding supply (!!!!)
- National Planning Policy requires Local Authorities to calculate an ‘objectively’ determined housing need and to make strategic land allocations to fulfill this ‘need’.

Unpacking the 'housing need'.

What BANES doesn't want you to know

- BANES wants you to believe that they must build 14500 houses or there will be thousands of people sleeping on park benches.
- But the population projections behind this are nowhere near as robust as they maintain because over 90% of the increase is due to incomers moving into the area.
- BANES generally attracts more people than leave as it is a great place to live.
- But movements into and out of the area cannot be predicted and used for policy as they are large and volatile.
- A major factor influencing migration is the availability of housing. The more housing provided, the more people will come here.
- The Planning Cycle-more housing attracts more people so new Plan predicts more people again and more housing et al.
- People are free to live wherever they wish, but you needn't encourage them where suitable free space is so restricted.
- More houses don't mean lower costs

The Elephant in the Room

- The Big unmentioned question – Who are BANES the Local Authority answerable to and responsible for?
- This Plan provides mainly for the housing needs of people who at present do not live in or pay Council Tax in BANES.
- The beneficiaries of the Plan, ie the incomers, do not have to bear any of the costs and disadvantages of the Plan
- All the costs will be born and few of the advantages reaped by those who are resident now.
- Existing residents will have more traffic jams, less countryside and probably less access to social facilities.
- People instinctively realize this and have little enthusiasm for the Plan.

Quarts and Pint Pots

- All these Local Plans tend to be about squeezing quarts of houses and people into pint bottles of free space.
- As each Plan comes along, the quart bottles of new homes get refilled but the pint bottle of free space stays the same.
- The Consultations are frustrating because the fundamental questions are never put on the table.

Conclusion and Actions

- Individuals and organisations (the Parish Council) should respond to this consultation via the BANES Website
- Suggestions for responses could include references to loss of Green Belt, traffic congestion, social infrastructure and excessive housing provision.
- A good outcome would be for the housing numbers requirement to drop below the number in the Plan.
- A real danger is that the Developers will talk the figures up and the problem will be even worse.
- Because the Planners' mindset is focused on housing shortages, the Standard method and what the Planning Inspectors require, many of these arguments will fall on stony ground.
- But they may strike more of a chord with the public at large.
- Possibly the worst outcome is if the Inspectors find the Plan unsound and reject it. Having no Plan is open house for the Developers.

Finally- a reminder that an Extraordinary meeting of Priston Parish Council to agree the Council's response to the consultation will be held in the Village Hall at 7pm on Monday 25th March.

Thank you!

Existing Housing Requirements

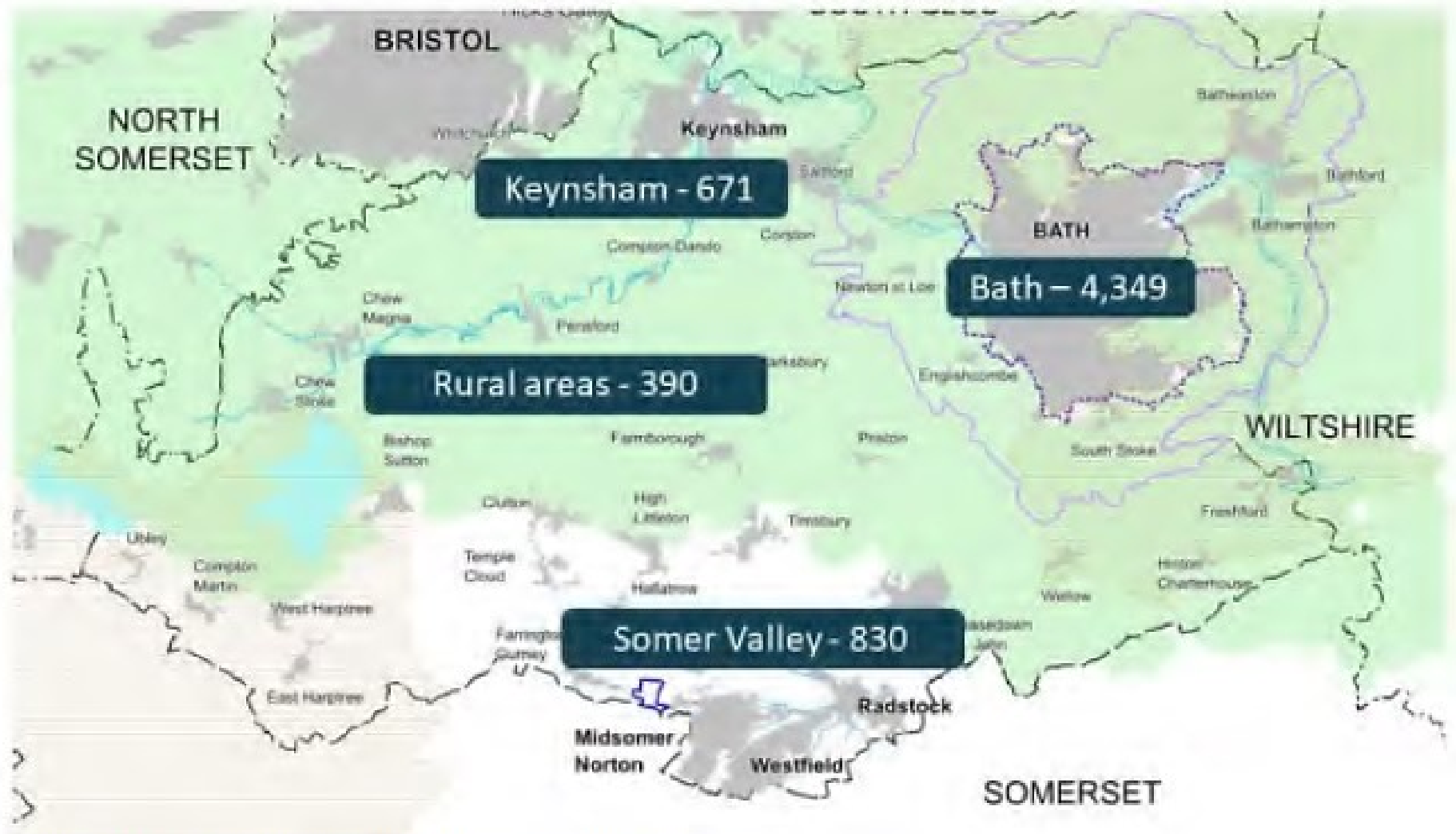


Figure 3: Map showing existing housing commitments

Strategic Site Options

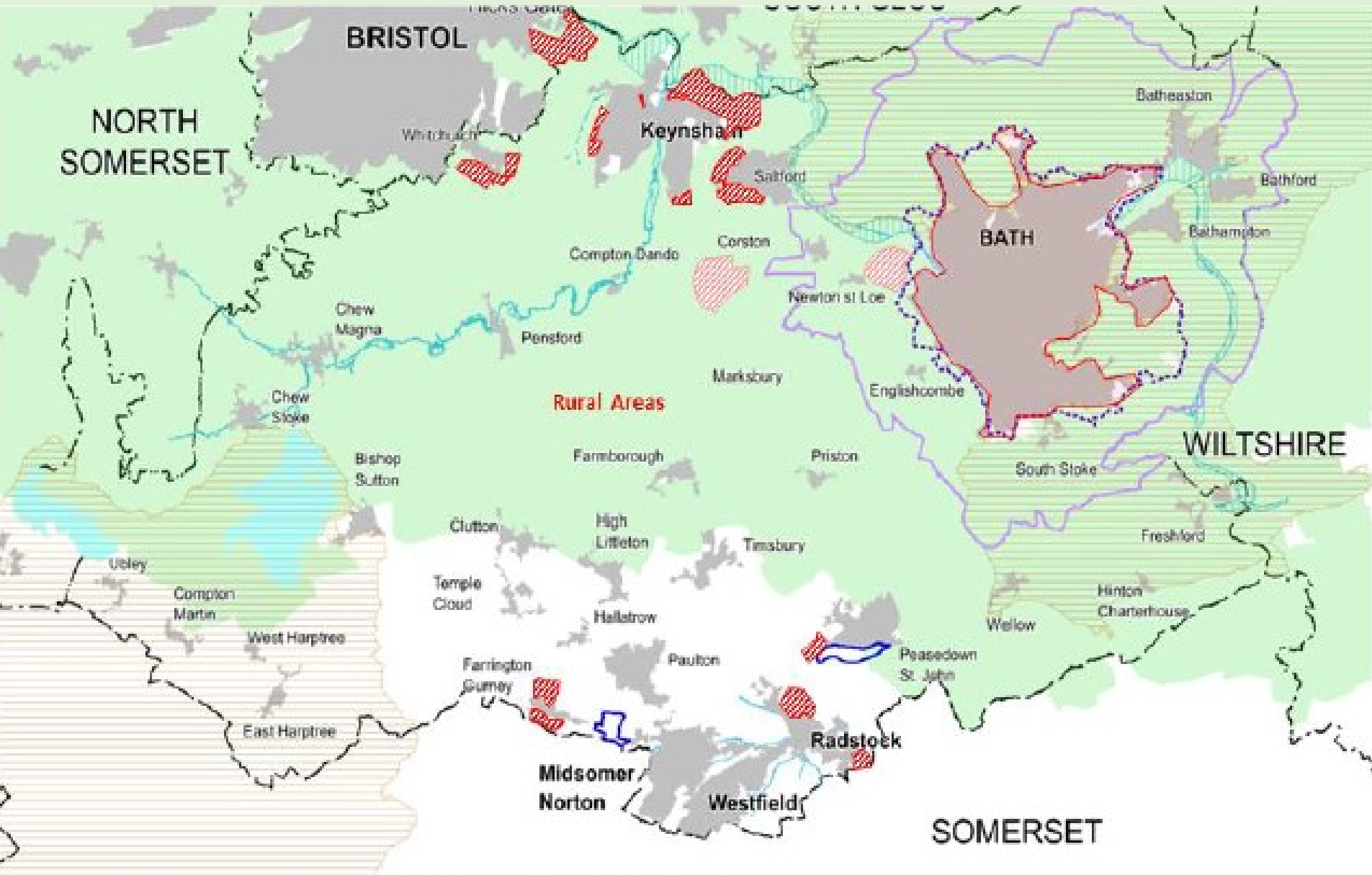


Figure 1: Map showing locations of strategic site options

Duchy of Cornwall proposal

