

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET - CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

AGENDA - ISSUE 2: RURAL AREA

Day 5 (Tuesday 24th after Keynsham discussion)

Participants to Note: As the discussion on Keynsham may be shorter than previously anticipated, this session may start earlier at 1pm and participants should be ready at that time.

I have previously expressed various concerns about the clarity of the policies for the rural area. In response, the Council is suggesting a number of potentially significant fresh changes, deleting some of the previously suggested changes and changing the text of the submitted plan. Participants should look at the table at the end of the Council's statement for this session - BNES/9. Any such new significant changes would need to be the subject of further consultation, but can inform discussion at the hearing. My preliminary view is that the submitted plan is unsound because of a lack of clarity in the policies that would apply to residential development in the rural area and the danger of a local veto on necessary development. The discussion at the hearing can therefore focus on whether the changes now suggested would make the plan sound.

Several representations refer to the conduct of particular Parish Council's or of Parish Councillors. These are not matters on which I want any discussion as they are not relevant to my task.

1. The Council is suggesting deleting the reference to any named villages in relation to RA1. Do potential RA1 villages need to be identified in the Core Strategy or is it appropriate for this task to be delegated to lower order development plans on the basis of objective criteria?
2. Should RA1 apply only to villages outside the Green Belt as now suggested?
3. Is the scale of development envisaged at RA1 villages appropriate (about 30 dwellings) or should more flexibility be allowed?
4. With the changes now proposed, is the status of villages in the Green Belt clear between the Core Strategy and saved local plan policies?
5. Is a *small proportion of market housing* referred to in policy RA4 justified to enable, where necessary, affordable housing to be delivered on exception sites?
6. Is the safeguarding of land for potential village by-passes at Whitchurch and Temple Cloud/Clutton justified? Is there any realistic possibility of such by-passes coming forward in the plan period? What is the view of Bristol City?

Simon Emerson, Inspector, 11 January 2012