

**BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET
CORE STRATEGY
EXAMINATION**

**Issue 2
Sub Matter Rural Area**

**Representations on behalf of
Barratt Homes Bristol
Whitchurch Bypass**

STATEMENT

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Appearance
DATE 24th January 2012

APPENDICES

1. Extract from Bath Local Plan Inspector's Report
2. Statement of Decisions in respect of Local Plan Inspector's Recommendations.
3. Extract from Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (March 2011).

1. Objections are made to the continued identification of land for a safeguarded potential bypass to Whitchurch (paragraph 5.44 of Core Strategy). There is no justification for this proposal in terms of the advice in PPS12 namely paragraphs 4.8 – 4.12 ‘Infrastructure’; paragraphs 4.36 justification of Core Strategies; paragraph 4.37 evidence base, paragraph 4.38 Alternatives; paragraph 4.39 Sustainability Appraisal; paragraph 4.44 Effectiveness; paragraph 4.45 Deliverability and paragraph 4.46 ‘flexibility’.
2. The Whitchurch bypass has been included within Development Plans since the 1970s. The justification for the bypass appears to be twofold. The first is the potential to reduce environmental problems in Whitchurch (although in their evidence to the Local Plan Inquiry the Council stated that although more residents would experience an improved environment than would be disadvantaged, traffic flow in the centre of Whitchurch, although reduced, would remain considerable due to the high level of circumferential movements around south Bristol). The second justification relates to the requirement for the bypass as a result of the once proposed Bristol south west urban extension.
3. In response to objections submitted in relation to the safeguarding of the land for the Whitchurch bypass within the Local Plan, the Inspector concluded:- (Appendix 1):

“In my view the possibility of a future urban extension is not good enough reason to retain these safeguarded routes, and gives no indication that the routes are likely to be developed during the plan period. In the event that an urban extension is planned in the Whitchurch area, studies would be required on the traffic implications and proposals for new routes/bypasses should be properly formulated, costed and funded at that time.”
4. The Inspector clearly concluded that the site should not be safeguarded pending the possible need for the bypass and recommended its deletion.
5. The Council published its Statement of Decisions in response to the Inspector’s Report in November 2006. In relation to the bypass they concluded as follows (Appendix 2):

“Previous studies have indicated that neither of the two A37 bypasses at Whitchurch and Clutton/Temple Cloud are justified by existing traffic levels but this is likely to change as a result of the Regional Spatial

Strategy proposals for south Bristol development including the proposal for an Urban Extension at south Bristol. Since the inquiry, there are new proposals for a South Bristol Ring Road in the Final Joint Local Transport Plan 2006. It is therefore inopportune to release land that has long been safeguarded for the Whitchurch bypass until the precise land needs of th Ring Road are known.”

6. The site therefore remained safeguarded within the adopted Local Plan and has been carried forward in the Core Strategy.

7. In respect of the A37 bypass, Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (adopted March 2011) includes the Whitchurch bypass within a list of ‘Plans and Aspirations for other Significant Transport Schemes’. However, paragraph 11.9.1 of the document states (Appendix 3):

“It should be acknowledged that as the funding levels emerge from the Comprehensive Spending Review, opportunities to bring forward these schemes through the major schemes process in the period to 2026 appear significantly constrained.”

8. Indeed the Infrastructure Delivery Programme Core is particularly vague on the justification and delivery of the Whitchurch bypass. Indeed the alignment for the bypass has been safeguarded for many years with no prospect of its implementation or indeed justification for the bypass itself.

9. The fact that the funding is clearly not available for the Whitchurch bypass to be taken forward in the period to 2026 conflicts with the advice in PPS12 ‘Local spatial Planning’ which effectively requires proposals to be pursued where they have a realistic prospect of being implemented within the plan period. The bypass has no prospect of being delivered and therefore land should not be safeguarded for it within the Core Strategy.

10. It is therefore unclear as to why the Council continue to safeguard this land when there is no economic argument for it and no requirement to serve the south east Bristol urban extension which is no longer proposed. These were the two reasons put forward in the Council’s evidence to the Local Plan Inquiry in response to objections submitted. The Council stated:

“In response to representations from Bristol City Council a joint study was commissioned in 2003 to examine the need for the Whitchurch bypass and for a park and ride facility to serve the A37 corridor. The study concluded that at the present time a strong economic case could not be made for the construction of the bypass. Whilst more residents would experience an improved environment than would be disadvantaged traffic flow in the centre of Whitchurch, although reduced, would remain considerable because of the high level of circumferential movements around south Bristol.

The Council is not minded to respond to this report by removing the Whitchurch bypass from the Local Plan because a possible forthcoming major change in planning policy may result in a southward extension of the built up area of Bristol and a consequent need for new transport infrastructure. As part of its contribution towards the preparation of a new Regional Spatial Strategy the West of England Partnership is at present consulting the public about how it would be best to accommodate a considerable increase in house building the Greater Bristol area over the next 20 years. Two of the three suggested scenarios include an urban extension in the Whitchurch area of up to 10,000 homes together with new employment and other facilities.”

11. The urban extension is not being pursued, there are no funds, economic or environmental argument for the bypass and therefore it will not proceed beyond 2026 let alone within the plan period. Accordingly, there is no reason why this land needs to be safeguarded for that purpose. In addition the Council have provided no evidence for its continued identification or assessed alternatives.
12. It is therefore recommended that the references to the safeguarding of the Whitchurch bypass be deleted from within the Core Strategy.

APPENDIX 1

Extract from Bath Local Plan Inspector's Report

APPENDIX 2

Statement of Decisions in respect of Local Plan Inspector's Recommendations

CHAPTER D - ACCESS

REC. NO.	POLICY/ PARA	INSPECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION	COUNCIL'S DECISION AND REASONS	MOD NO.
-	Policies Paras T.14 & T.15	No change.	Agree with recommendation	-
-	Policy T.16 Paras D9.1 & D9.2	No change.	Agree with recommendation	-
R13.17	Policy T.17 Para D9.3	Modify the plan by deleting Policy T.17 and Paragraph D9.3.	<p>The Inspector recommends that long standing widening lines be abandoned in the absence of any firm proposals to increase the width of the highway. These lines are only used as an instrument of development control when re-development proposals are submitted to the council, so no blight is caused, but adherence to them by developers in the past has enabled the Bath Transportation Package to include the provision of a bus lane in Lower Bristol Road to the west of Windsor Bridge Road. It would be unfortunate to prejudice the possible provision of additional bus or cycle lanes in this area by deleting this safeguarding measure from the local plan.</p> <p>Since the Local Plan Inquiry the Regional Assembly has recognised the importance of The Bath Package by identifying it in Table 1 of their priorities for regional funding allocations for schemes to be completed prior to 2016. These priorities have now been accepted by the Department for Transport. The Joint Local Transport Plan submitted in July 2006 also identifies the Bath Package as a priority for construction in the period to 2011, and indeed a Major Scheme Bid for the package was also submitted in July</p>	M/D/42 - M/D/46

CHAPTER D - ACCESS

REC. NO.	POLICY/ PARA	INSPECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION	COUNCIL'S DECISION AND REASONS	MOD NO.
			<p>2006 to central government for funding.</p> <p>Previous studies have indicated that neither of the two A37 bypasses at Whitchurch and Clutton/Temple Cloud are justified by existing traffic levels but this is likely to change as a result of the Regional Spatial Strategy proposals for south Bristol development including the proposal for an Urban Extension at south Bristol. Since the inquiry, there are new proposals for a South Bristol Ring Road in the Final Joint Local Transport Plan 2006 (JLTP) and these are recognised in the Government's Regional Funding Allocation in 2006. It is therefore inopportune to release land that has long been safeguarded for the <i>Whitchurch</i> bypass until the precise land needs of the Ring Road are known.</p> <p>In addition and since the Local Plan Inquiry, the JLTP now lists the <i>Temple Cloud/Clutton Bypass</i> as sub-regional priority requiring further work between 2011 and 2016.</p> <p>The release of land safeguarded in Policy T.17 could therefore seriously compromise the proper planning of parts of the District where considerable development is envisaged.</p> <p>Disagree with the Inspector and retain Policy T.17 as circumstances have changes since the Local Plan Inquiry. However the eastern route of the</p>	

CHAPTER D - ACCESS

REC. NO.	POLICY/ PARA	INSPECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION	COUNCIL'S DECISION AND REASONS	MOD NO.
R13.18	Policy T.18 Paras D10.1- D10.4	The Council to consider whether it is necessary to retain Policy T.18, or whether its wording could be used to replace much of the preceding text in paragraphs D10.1 – D10.4.	Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass should be deleted as set out in Pre-Inquiry Change PIC/D/8.	-
-	Policy T.19	No change.	If T.18 is deleted there would be a policy about on-street parking (T.19) but not off-street parking in centre of Bath resulting in a gap in policy in the Local Plan.	-
-	Policy T.20	No change.	Agree with recommendation	-
R13.19	Policy T.21	Modify the plan by deleting Policy T.21.	Agree with recommendation	-
R13.20	Policy T.22	Modify Policy T.22 by inserting at beginning: "The Council will safeguard land shown on the Proposals Map for Park and Ride purposes at Lambridge, Bath, adjacent the A4.	Agree with recommendation and to modify the Local Plan accordingly	M/D/47
R13.21	Para D11.1	Modify Paragraph D11.1 by adding at the end: "This includes uses which might increase the risk of collision between aircraft and birds. Applicants should consult the Council about the current extent of the safeguarded areas because they are reviewed and amended from time to time by the CAA"	Agree with recommendation and to modify the Local Plan accordingly	M/D/49
R13.22	Policy T.23 Para D16.5	R13.22 Modify Policy T.23 deleting "shown on the Proposals Map" and inserting "as defined by the CAA".	Agree with recommendation and to modify the Local Plan accordingly	M/D/51
R13.23	Policy T.24 Paras D12.1- D12.7	Modify Policy T.24 by deleting criterion 6.	Agree with recommendation and to modify the Local Plan accordingly	M/D/52 - M/D/53
-	Policy T.25	No change.	Disagree. The Council does not accept that criterion 6 duplicates criterion 5. The latter applies to the development site; the former to the surrounding highway network.	-
R13.24	Policy T.26	Review the residential parking standards (C3) set down in the schedule to Policy T.26 to ensure they comply with national	Agree with recommendation	-
			Disagree. The Council believes that parking restrictions at the workplace	-

APPENDIX 3

Extract from Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (March 2011)

Emerson's Green East and the Science Park development.

Callington Road Link/Bath Road Improvements

11.7.32 Existing congestion on the Bath Road and in south Bristol will increase with proposed new development unless transport infrastructure is enhanced. The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) recommended, that this scheme be given further consideration.

11.7.33 South Bristol contains large areas of unemployment and deprivation. Callington Road Link / Bath Road Improvements will improve access by all modes and enhance employment opportunities, by improving access to jobs and potentially encouraging new business into the area.

11.7.34 Road and non-road options are being considered for the disused railway line between the A4174 Callington Road and the south end of the A4320 St Philips Causeway. The beneficial impact of this new transport link would be enhanced by complementary improvements to adjoining roads. On the Bath Road and Callington Road the scheme involves widening to create additional lanes on certain sections and junction improvements.

11.8 Funding Opportunities and Options

11.8.1 The majority of this chapter focuses on funding available from central government through the major schemes process. Whilst it is recognised that we need to maximise available investment from this funding source there will be an increasing need

throughout the delivery of JLTP3 to secure funding from other sources, including our partners.

11.8.2 We have been successful with one-off awards of funding, most notably with the £22m Cycling City programme due for completion in March 2011. It will be vital to ensure that the good work and initial growth and mode shift from such interventions is maintained from the start of the JLTP3 plan period onwards.

11.8.3 Opportunities through the Local Enterprise Partnership, developer funding, prudential borrowing, Regional Growth Fund, Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Community Infrastructure Levy and Tax Increment Financing need to be exploited to ensure transport investment is provided to achieve the wider outcomes of the plan.

11.8.4 Whilst it is recognised that there is no simple 'off the shelf' solution to securing additional funding we remain committed to working together and with other partners to try and ensure the strongest chance of increasing transport investment.

11.9 Future ideas to 2026

11.9.1 Through the ongoing development of Core Strategies and wider visioning works it is recognised that there will be further schemes to develop through the life of the JLTP3 (see Box 11a). It should be acknowledged that at the funding levels emerging from the Comprehensive Spending Review, opportunities to bring forward these schemes through the major schemes process in the period to 2026 appear significantly constrained. New or other

existing funding sources will continue to be developed. As the Core Strategies develop the list of schemes may alter.

Box 11a: Plans and Aspirations for other Significant Transport Schemes

- Further Rapid Transit routes in the main urban centres of Bath, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare;
- Further Park and Ride schemes;
- Further rail enhancements (with Network Rail and train operators);
- Improvements at M5 Junction 19;
- Cycling and walking major scheme;
- Banwell Bypass;
- Second Avon Crossing (possible Highways Agency scheme);
- A38 - A370 Barrow Gurney Bypass;
- Whitchurch Bypass
- Salford Bypass;
- Yate Package;
- A4174 Avon Ring Road Package;
- Temple Cloud/Clutton Bypass;
- Infrastructure to support Weston-super-Mare new villages;
- Investigation of additional transport links including a new road link between the M5 and South Bristol, A36/A46 link and M4 link.

Find out more

-  Comprehensive Spending Review, 2010
-  Core Strategies of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils
-  Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study, 2006
-  Joint Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011

Issue xviii)

- 5.221 Although the land east of Lippiat Lane falls between two existing developments, which include the school, and there may be potential within a development to improve the access to the school, this is a substantial greenfield site which relates clearly to the open countryside setting of the village. As a result I consider that the HDB should not be extended to include the site.
- 5.222 Land east of Mill Lane forms part of the open countryside setting of Timsbury with residential development to the west of Mill Lane. Mill Lane is contiguous with the HDB where it adjoins the site and I find no reason to change it.
- 5.223 Wheelers Yard, North Road is currently in use as a concrete works. Whilst there may be support for its redevelopment for housing to provide environmental benefits to the village, the site is in active use and remains a source of local employment. The site should be included in any future settlement boundary, but there is no justification for its inclusion in the HDB within this plan. In the interim any proposals for redevelopment would fall to be considered against the amended Policy HG.4 and new Policy ET.3(3).

Issue xix)

- 5.224 Although the residential development at south east Whitchurch is generally of a lower density than that to the west, the area is not within the Green Belt, and I consider that it is well related to the built up area of the village. The route for the Whitchurch bypass runs through the area, but in my view this is not a good reason to exclude it from the HDB which should logically follow the Green Belt boundary in this location. I therefore recommend that the HDB is amended to incorporate land south east of Whitchurch.

Issue xx)

- 5.225 With the recommendations which I make for the deletion of Policy ET.3A and the amendment of HG.4, this objection is largely met. However, I do recommend that the potential for the redevelopment of Coomb End is investigated further by the Council and if appropriate that it be included within a table of allocated housing sites.

Recommendations:

R5.21 Modify Policy HG.4 by deleting the existing text and inserting:

“Residential development in Bath, Keynsham, Norton Radstock and those villages defined in Policy SC.1 as R.1 and R.2 settlements will be permitted if:

- i) it is within the built up area of Bath or within the defined housing development boundary; or

Recommendation: no change

D9: Transportation Infrastructure- Policy T17

2/B26	T2000/Railfutures	T.17
78/B21	Mr S Osgood	T.17
81/B2	Rosewell Nursing Home	T.17
167/B6	Mr & Mrs M Pickman	T.17
566/B7	Clutton Parish Council	T.17
631/D10	Cameley Parish Council	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
708/B28	The Widcombe Associatio	T.17
731/D17	Stowey-Sutton Parish Council	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
2058/B1	Cll R Nicholl	T.17
2176/B3	Bath & North East Somerset Conservative Group	T.17
2247/B1	Mr & Mrs J Empson	T.17
2331/B2	Mr P V Tainton	T.17
2333/B2	Mr A H Rogers	T.17
2342/B2	Mr M Clifford	T.17
2345/B2	Mr M T Whitton	T.17
2947/B4	Bath Chamber of Commerce	T.17
2959/B4	Mr L F James	T.17
2966/B1	Cllr R Nicholl	T.17
3126/B18	Bath Friends of the Earth	T.17
3268/B1	Ms J Allen	T.17
3278/D34	Persimmon Homes (Wessex) Ltd	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
3298/B7	Cam Valley Wildlife Group	T.17

Supporting Statement

120/D352	Mrs H Woodley	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
614/D20	Temple Cloud Residents Association	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
3126/D64	Bath Friends of the Earth	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
3643/D3	Cllr Steve Willcox	PIC/D/8 (T.17)
3648/D4	Mr & Mrs K Redding	PIC/D/8 (T.17)

Issues

- i) Should the routes identified in Policy T.17 continue to be safeguarded?
- ii) Should the following schemes be included in Policy T.17:
 - the LTP schemes to convert Rossiter Way to two way traffic and to create a pedestrian priority area in Claverton Street.
 - the completion of the A46/A36 link and the creation of a park and ride facility to the east of Bath.
 - the construction of an access link road between Cloud Hill and the A39.
 - the safeguarding of the Welton link road between West Road and Radstock Road.
 - a bypass for Saltford.

Inspector's Reasoning

Issue i)

- 13.86 The schemes listed in Policy T.17 were inherited from the former Avon County Council, the bypasses of Whitchurch and Temple Cloud/Clutton having been included in Development Plans from before 1974. In response to objections, the Council has agreed that the eastern route of the Temple Cloud/Clutton bypass should be deleted in view of the severance of Clutton and the nature conservation issues which it raises. However, the Council is concerned that there is the potential for an urban extension to Bristol in the Whitchurch area which would have implications for traffic movements on the A37. The Council therefore wishes to retain the safeguarding of land for the Whitchurch and Temple Cloud/Clutton bypasses
- 13.87 A joint study was carried out in 2003 in conjunction with Bristol City Council regarding the economic case for the Whitchurch bypass, but it concluded that there was not a strong case at that time. No further evidence has been put before me to support the economic case for either of these bypass routes. The JRSP refers in Policy 4 (P) to "reducing environmental problems in Whitchurch, Clutton and Temple Cloud" which provides a strategic context for considering bypasses as well as other measures for reducing congestion and the impact of traffic on the environment in these settlements. It does not however provide an endorsement for the bypass schemes.
- 13.88 Given that the need for the bypasses has not been fully determined, Policy T.17 does not comply with the provisions of paragraph 5.22 of PPG12 because it seeks to define precise routes on the proposals map without any commitment in terms of definitive studies or financing. PPG12 states that where the precise route of a proposal is not known, but where the proposals are sufficiently advanced, the authority may define the area over which it intends to apply a safeguarding policy. However, this assumes that there is a clear commitment and need for the road scheme. In my view the possibility of a future urban extension is not a good enough reason to retain these safeguarded routes, and gives no indication that the routes are likely to be developed during the plan period. In the event that an urban extension is planned in the Whitchurch area, studies would be required of the traffic implications and proposals for new routes/bypasses should be properly formulated, costed and funded at that time. It is in the context of firm commitments that the routes should then be included in a future DPD. In the meantime I recommend that the Whitchurch and Temple Cloud/Clutton bypass safeguarded routes are deleted from Policy T.17.
- 13.89 I accept the Council's explanation that the route of the Lower Bristol Road through the Western Riverside site should not be defined until such time as the master plan for the development is brought forward. The supporting text in paragraph D9.3 states that the safeguarded section of the Lower Bristol Road is currently also the subject of a review. Given the

uncertainty surrounding the scheme I refer to the advice in paragraph 5.22 of PPG12 and recommend that this safeguarded route is also deleted.

Issue ii)

- 13.90 The Rossiter Road and Claverton Street LTP schemes do not require additional land and as such no safeguarding is required in Policy T.17.
- 13.91 The A46/A36 link and the east of Bath park and ride facility are the subject of a separate study (Bristol/Bath – South Coast MMS). As such it would be premature for the plan to include these schemes.
- 13.92 There are no proposals for the other three schemes put forward by objectors. PPG12 states that only schemes which are firm and likely to proceed during the lifetime of the plan should be included as proposals. The Council indicates that the suggested road schemes are not included in the LTP and where they are subject to the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study they are at an early stage in their planning. No modification is therefore necessary in response to these objections.
- 13.93 In the absence of any schemes which require safeguarding in the plan, I recommend the deletion of Policy T.17 and the supporting text in paragraph D9.3.

Recommendation:

R13.17 Modify the plan by deleting Policy T.17 and Paragraph D9.3.

D10: Car Parking - Policy T18 and Paragraphs D10.1, D10.3 and D10.4

3181/B4	Bath & District Consumer Group	D10.1
3010/B4	Mr M Grigg	D10.3
3263/B2	Bath Football Club Trustees Ltd	D10.3
3116/C109	Bath & North East Somerset Allotment Association	D10.3/A
334/C16	Ms P Davis	D10.3/B
3116/C108	Bath & North East Somerset Allotment Association	D10.3/B
3262/B2	The PPG Partnership	D10.4
120/C278	Ms Helen Woodley	D10.4/D
3257/C263	Somer Valley Friends of the Earth	D10.4/D
120/B16	Ms Helen Woodley	T.18
120/B17	Ms Helen Woodley	T.18
120/B18	Ms Helen Woodley	T.18
2251/B3	Federation of Bath Residents Associations - Transport Group	T.18
2947/B2	Bath Chamber of Commerce	T.18
2965/B16	Morley Fund Management Limited	T.18

Supporting Statements

1999/C21	Bristol City Council	D10.4/B
3257/C264	Somer Valley Friends of the Earth	T.18/A

**Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan
including minerals & waste policies**

Public Local Inquiry Proof of Evidence

**B&NES 153
A37 BYPASSES**

Representation(s):

Delete Clutton/Temple Cloud and Whitchurch bypasses:

2/B26 – T2000

3126/B18 – Bath Friends of the Earth

Delete Eastern Route of Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass:

167/B6 – M. Pickman

566/B7 – Clutton Parish Council

2094/B1 – Bromilow International *

2247/B1 – J & L Empson

2331/B2 – P.V. Tainton

2333/B2 – A.H. Rogers

2342/B2 – M. Clifford

2345/B2 – M.T. Whitton

3298/B7 – Cam Valley Wildlife Group

Delete east and west routes of Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass:

2966/B1 – R. Nicoll

Delete Whitchurch bypass:

2959/B4 – L.F. James (Haulage Yard Staunton Lane)

3268/B1 – J. Allen

**Support the deletion of the eastern route of the Clutton/
Temple Cloud bypass:**

120/D352 – Helen Woodley

614/D20 – Temple Cloud Residents' Committee

3126/BD64 – Bath Friends of the Earth

3643/D3 – Steve Willcox

3648/D4 – Keith and Ann Redding

3651/D7 – Persimmon Homes (Wessex)

Retain the eastern route of the Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass:

731/D17 – Stowey Sutton Parish Council

631/D10 – Cameley Parish Council

Local Plan reference:

Policy T.17 – Transport infrastructure

Para D9.3 – Transport infrastructure

PIC No. PIC/D/8

Policy T.9 – Sustainable Transport Routes

Para D5.6 – Sustainable Transport Routes

Rev. nos. D5.6A T.9/B, T.9/E, T.9/F, T.9/H
PIC No. PIC/D/7

Policy SR.9 – Recreational routes
Para B4.64 – Recreational routes
Rev. nos. B4.64/A, SR.9/B
PIC No. PIC/B/33

1.0 OBJECTION ISSUE(S)

- 1.1 The majority of the objections addressed by this proof are in respect of the safeguarded eastern route of the Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass. Its deletion was called for because a new road in this location would:- split the village of Clutton in half; be too close to existing houses in Clutton and Hallatrow; compromise the provision of safe and attractive cycle and pedestrian paths; prevent the re-instatement of the railway line; damage a designated nature conservation site and diminish a wildlife corridor. The Cam Valley Wildlife Group (3298/B7) called for amendments to the safeguarded route in order to avoid a number of areas which make an important contribution to biodiversity.
- 1.2 A further objector called for both east and west routes of the Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass to be deleted; two objected to the Whitchurch bypass and two organisations sought the omission of both schemes. Mr. L.F. James (2959/B4) objects to the safeguarding of the line of the Whitchurch bypass because it goes through his haulage yard and has been causing blight for many years. Mrs. J. Allen (3268/B1) may also have an interest in the land affected by the Whitchurch bypass because she calls for either a more detailed line to be published or the reservation removed. She is also calling for the Green Belt and Housing Development boundaries to be changed to permit development when the bypass has been built (3268/B2, 3268/B3).
- 1.3 Transport 2000/Railfutures (2/B26) object to both bypasses on grounds that because they will not be built within the Plan period route safeguarding is contrary to Government advice. Bath Friends of the Earth (3126/B18), who also oppose both bypasses, object to the loss of Green Belt land and the increased traffic and pollution which any road building will lead to. It is assumed that Robin Nicoll, who opposes both routes of the Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass shares this view.

2.0 CONTEXT

- 2.1 These two bypasses of settlements on the A37 have been included in Development Plans since the days (pre-1974) when Somerset County Council was the Highway Authority of the area. Blight has not been a major issue because much of the land affected has been either in the Green Belt or outside the housing development boundaries of the settlements. The prospect of planned detailed studies to determine the need for the bypasses has repeatedly been used to justify their retention in successive Structure and Local Plans although the current Joint Replacement Structure Plan (CD A2.9) refers only to measures to reduce environmental problems in Whitchurch, Clutton and Temple Cloud (Policy 4P). In view of this history the citing of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) in support of their continued

retention could justifiably be questioned. The GBSTS is however already under way with a clear brief to examine the needs of the A37 corridor.

- 2.2 Some work has already been done. In response to representations from Bristol City Council a joint study was commissioned in 2003 to examine the need for the Whitchurch bypass and for a park and ride facility to serve the A37 corridor. The study concluded that at the present time a strong economic case could not be made for the construction of the bypass. Whilst more residents would experience an improved environment than would be disadvantaged traffic flow in the centre of Whitchurch, although reduced, would remain considerable because of the high level of circumferential movements around south Bristol.
- 2.3 The Council is not minded to respond to this report by removing the Whitchurch bypass from the Local Plan because a possible forthcoming major change in planning policy may result in a southward extension of the built up area of Bristol and a consequent need for new transport infrastructure. As part of its contribution towards the preparation of a new Regional Spatial Strategy the West of England Partnership is at present consulting the public about how it would be best to accommodate a considerable increase in house building in the Greater Bristol area over the next 20 years. Two of the three suggested scenarios include an urban extension in the Whitchurch area of up to 10,000 homes together with new employment and other facilities. The implication in terms of movement in the A37 corridor is one of issues which the GBSTS will be addressing. Its findings will be known in the summer of 2005 and a draft Regional Spatial Strategy will be published in the autumn. It would therefore be inadvisable to completely delete the bypasses at this stage.
- 2.4 The Council has, however, felt confident enough to delete the eastern route of the Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass which has attracted so much opposition. For a large part this route follows that of the former Bristol and North Somerset Railway which has potential to provide an important link in the Council's strategic cycling network. Whilst a new road would not preclude this its attraction for cyclists would be seriously reduced. This together with the severance of Clutton and nature conservation issues make it most unlikely that this would be the favoured option should it ever be decided to build a Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass. The Council therefore decided to consult the public about the deletion of this eastern route as a Pre-Inquiry Change. Although only one of the original objectors wrote in support of the Council's action (Bath Friends of the Earth – 3126/D64) it is assumed that the others welcome it. Only Cameley and Stowey Sutton Parish Councils which support the construction of a Clutton/Temple Cloud bypass have opposed the deletion of the eastern route in the apparent belief that this will reduce the chances of this happening.
- 2.5 If the eastern route is deleted there would be no need for the separate cycleway and recreational route designations along the line of the former railway. Their deletion and replacement with the Sustainable Transport Route designation which has been applied to most of the rest of the former railway line within the Local Plan area is therefore proposed.
- 2.6 In respect of Mr. Allen's call for more details of the Whitchurch bypass to be shown on the Proposals Map (3268/B1) as an alternative to its complete deletion, the Council believes that this could be misleading and would be contrary to standard practice. Although the above mentioned evaluation study included some design work, this has not been endorsed by either Bristol City or Bath & North East Somerset Councils.

3.0 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Council believes that in view of possible changes in planning policy within the next two years it would be inadvisable to delete the longstanding reservation of land for the Clutton/Temple Cloud and Whitchurch bypasses at the present time. It considers that in deleting the more contentious optional route of the former it has gone as far as it can in making a response to objectors.
- 3.2 Any proposal to build a road will attract objections and there will always be “winners” and “losers”, especially if the road is located within or close to a built-up area. It is interesting to note that the public consultation exercise which was carried out in June 2004 as part of the Whitchurch bypass study revealed the extent of public support for the Council’s stance on this issue. Whilst only a small majority were in favour of actually building the bypass at present (50% to 43%) a much larger majority (55% to 33%) favoured the reservations being retained in the Local Plan.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is requested that the Inspector recommends that no changes be made to the Local Plan other than those proposed in the Pre-Inquiry Changes August 2004, for the reasons set out in the proof.

CORE DOCUMENTS

CD A2.9 – Joint Replacement Structure Plan 2002