Engagement with Seldom-heard Groups

Workshop Responses

January – March 2023

And October 2023

Contents

Introduction

Bath and North East Somerset Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the District. The Local Plan will establish the planning framework for the district up to 2042. It will contain a vision, strategy and policies to guide and manage how the District grows and changes over the next 20 years, and how planning applications for new development are decided.

The involvement of communities and stakeholders is key to preparing a strategy for the District which allows it to grow sustainably, meets the needs of our communities, and protects and enhances the things we value most.

The Council is therefore working closely with communities in preparing the new Local Plan, carrying out a range of engagement and consultation throughout its preparation, in line with the Council's core policy of **'giving people a bigger say'.**

The initial stage of engagement comprises workshops and conversations with groups within the community relating to what they **value** about the places that they live and use, and any **key issues and priorities** within their local areas.

The Council consider it important to speak directly to groups of people who have, in the past, been underrepresented in planning-related engagement and consultation. The planning policy team have worked together with colleagues in the public health and sustainability teams to identify groups most likely to be impacted by spatial planning and who are seldom heard in consultation and engagement. These groups comprise:

- Young People
- People with physical disabilities
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Older people, including those with dementia
- People from a lower socio-economic background
- Disadvantaged families with young children

Engagement workshops and conversations have been held with a range of groups, with officers attending locations and events that were already taking place, in order to allow for participation of individuals who would not have the time to attend structured workshops. Each session was tailored to the relevant group, structured around the following six themes:

- Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience
- Moving Around
- Natural Spaces and Biodiversity
- Housing and Shared Prosperity
- Healthy and Inclusive Communities
- Identity and Belonging

This report sets out the methodology and format for each of the sessions, the overarching themes and key recommendations from respondents, and summaries of the detailed responses.

Responses are being used to shape the spatial objectives for the Local Plan, and policy officers are reviewing how key issues and recommendations might be addressed through preparation of policy options.

Some of the responses provided do not relate to the Local Plan, but wherever possible, these will be passed to relevant areas of the Council.

1. B&NES Youth Climate Conference

Who?

B&NES Planning Policy and Sustainability Teams attended **B&NES Youth Climate Conference** at Hayesfield School in Bath, facilitating 4x workshops with secondary school aged students attending the conference.

Around 80 students attended the workshops throughout the day. They were aged between 11 – 18. The majority of participants lived in B&NES. Some participants lived in Bristol.

Methodology and Format

Participants were separated into groups of 4 – 6 people. A B&NES officer sat with each group to facilitate discussion.

An overview of the purpose and process of developing the B&NES Local Plan was shared at the beginning of each workshop, including a short introduction to local authority planning.

Participants were asked to work out how old they would be in 20 years time, to demonstrate the timescales for the Local Plan.

Participants were asked to discuss the question / theme that was given to their table and write any feedback onto sticky notes, adding them to a chart provided. The questions comprised:

- What would support you to live a low carbon, planet-friendly lifestyle?
- What sort of house would you like to live in in the future and where?
- How could natural and green spaces in your place be improved for people and wildlife?
- How do you travel around at the moment? How would you like to travel and what needs to change to make that happen?

Participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously.

Questions were then rotated to the next table. Participants were asked to review the new question, review what the last group had written, add anything they felt was missing, and prioritise the two responses they thought were most important.

Each group was asked to feedback their chosen top two priorities to the wider group.

On the way out of the room, participants were asked to add a sticky note responding to the question "What is your one climate-related hope for the future?" to a chart.

A summary of the key findings from the workshops is set out below.

Overarching themes

Significant changes in **policy, behaviour and education** required to tackle the climate crisis

Working towards **self-sufficiency** a key goal for most participants in relation to **energy and food**

Better, reliable, and cheaper **sustainable transport** required as soon as possible

Key recommendations

1 Incentives required to persuade shops, businesses, and individuals to be more sustainable.

2 Key focus of Local Plan should be on renewable energy generation, particularly utilising solar.

3 Improvements required to all sustainable transport methods - cost, reliability, infrastructure provision.

4 All new houses should be carbon neutral or carbon positive, well-insulated, built from sustainable materials, and located where they will not be reliant on car use.

5 Key aim to 'see green' wherever you look, i.e. tree planting and small green spaces / areas of rewilding linking larger parks and natural green spaces.

1.1 Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience

Products and consumerism

- Sustainable products should be more affordable and accessible than non-sustainable products.
- Incentivise shops and businesses to become 'zero waste', i.e. net zero and plastic free.
- Shops should be required to show carbon footprint of products on packaging.
- Incentivise buying products with less non-biodegradable packaging.
- Incentivise big brands and large companies to create more long- lasting products and reduce waste.
- Restrictions required on easy, unsustainable consumerism, i.e. Black Friday should be abolished.
- Incentivise selling old clothes / products, and repairing items to expand their lifetime.
- Incentivise recycling and re-use (i.e. deposit schemes for packaging) / make it the easiest option. Charge for any waste going to landfill.

Renewable Energy

- Solar panels should be put on every building and suitable structure.
- All schools should have solar panels.
- Solar panels should be allowed on older buildings. Attitude change required in relation to harm. Solar panels should be seen as positive features of a building.
- Better access to solar panels required, including cost.
- Explore solar panels on cars.
- Wind energy should be utilised more.
- Funding require to explore other sustainable technology options.

Education

- Better education for people of all ages required to show the consequences of climate inaction.
- Schools and businesses should support environmental charities and join with them to educate people / share information.
- Signs should be put up in locations where CO_2 levels are high, to spread awareness.
- Provision of cycle training, particularly in schools, but also for adults.

Transport

- Public transport should be cheaper (or free) and more efficient than car travel, in order to make it the most popular option. Funding required.

- Promotion of sustainable transport methods required, including education. Incentives required to persuade people to move to more sustainable methods.
- All buses should run on sewage (as seen in Bristol),or be electric.
- Availability of synthetic fuel stations and infrastructure for electric cars (and in the future, flying cars!).
- Cheaper electric cars required – currently unaffordable for most people.
- Testing and infrastructure for sustainable self-driving cars.
- Better infrastructure for electric bikes and electric scooters to make these modes safer and more popular than car use.

Food

- Increase in access to vegan and vegetarian foods required, particularly in schools.
- Encourage flexitarian diet for those who do not want to give up meat and dairy.
- Encourage use of hydroponic farms for food growing.
- Ban pesticides, or incentivise use of natural pesticides.
- Encourage less food waste - businesses and households. Encourage composting.
- Encourage local food growing (personal and small businesses).

Housing

- All houses should aim to be carbon neutral or carbon positive.

1.2 Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

Natural and green spaces

- Aim to see 'green spaces' wherever you look, i.e. link parks with tree planting and small areas of green / rewilding.
- Plant more trees and don't allow development which impedes a tree's growth.
- All new housing developments should include a large natural space and a playground for families.
- Encourage use of existing and future green spaces for community food growing, including orchards, allotments etc and community gardens.
- Consistent maintenance required for green spaces in cities, which could be carried out by the community in some areas.
- Planting of more diverse flowers and provision of 'bug hotels' in parks to attract bees and other insects.
- Better bin and recycling provision for busy natural spaces used by people.
- All green spaces should be free to use (i.e. Parade Gardens)

Biodiversity

- Swift and swallow holes and bird boxes should be provided on all new buildings and more existing buildings.
- Owners of balconies should be encouraged to plant.
- Waterways need better protection. E.g. clean air zone for rivers.
- Green roofs and walls should be encouraged on all new buildings and existing buildings).
- Restrictions required around important habitats to stop human interference.
- All development should include 'hedgehog highway' features, i.e. small holes in fences / walls linking gardens and green spaces.
- Ban pesticides, or incentivise use of natural pesticides.
- Encourage farming techniques that support nature.
- Encourage rewilding.
- Water pollution impacts biodiversity. Water courses should be monitored carefully.

1.3 Moving Around

Walking

- More pedestrian crossings and better pavements required, to ensure safe walking.
- Preference to be able to walk to school within 5 - 15 minutes.
- Need to educate and normalise a 20-minute walk to school.

Cycling & Scooting

- Cycle to work and school schemes should be encouraged.
- Safe cycling and scooting infrastructure required, particularly joined up cycle-only lanes.
- Education for drivers required in relation to keeping other road users safe (pedestrians, cyclists, scooters, horses).

Buses

- More regular, reliable, and cheaper buses required, particularly at the weekend, and in rural areas. Buses are often cancelled or delayed.
- Buses should be electric, not use fuel.
- School buses should be accessible and free to all to encourage sustainable travel.
- Bus tickets should be transferrable to other methods of sustainable transport (e.g. joined up train, bus and cycle parking ticket). Bus tickets should at least be transferrable across different providers.

- Preference for creation of small travel hubs around Bath with shuttles between areas to make travel cheaper and more convenient.

Trains

- Trains need to be renationalised as they are currently too expensive for most young people to use.
- Trains should be electric.

Cars
- Cheaper electric cars required – currently unaffordable for most people.
- More electric vehicle charging points required (cars, bikes, scooters).
- EV charging required at home so that people can transfer to EVs.
- Lift sharing should be encouraged.
- Drivers need to be more considerate to those walking / cycling.

Planes

- Domestic flights should be banned so that people do not have the option to fly short distances.

1.4   Housing and Shared Prosperity

Energy and greening

- All houses should be carbon neutral or carbon positive.
- All houses should be well-insulated, to reduce energy use. Sustainable cooling methods should also be considered for when it is hot in summer.
- All houses should have solar panels or other forms of renewable energy, or access to sustainable community energy. Feeding excess energy into the grid will help with grid decarbonisation.
- Houses should be built using sustainably sourced materials.
- Green roofs and green walls should be encouraged.

Design

- Preference for properties that are allow self sufficiency in terms of food growing and energy.
- Houses should have gardens to allow for personal food growing. Shared gardens should be provided for apartments.
- All houses should be provided with access to compost bins for food waste (either personal or communal), and rainwater collection butts.
- Houses should be designed using materials that help atmospheric climate change, e.g. reflective roofs
- All new housing should provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

- If car parking is provided, this could be separated from the housing to encourage children to play on the street.

Location

- Preference for location of housing in rural areas, but with good, sustainable access to nearby cities and towns.
- New houses should be located where they will not be reliant on car use, in close proximity to train or bus access.
- Preference to live away from traffic-heavy roads, close to green space.
- Community gardens and allotments should be available in walking distance for all, including use of shared tools and appliances.
- As land availability is an issue, subterranean elements of housing could be considered.
- Mixed socio-economic housing required, varying in size and cost.

1.5 Healthy and Inclusive Communities

- Green spaces in cities and towns should be accessible to all, including people with disabilities.
- Encourage 'green breaks' at work – allow for additional breaks for workers to use green spaces.

Exercise to end the session

What is your one climate-related hope for the future?

- End the eco-anxiety of future generations by preventing global warming and the destruction of nature.
- No joy rides to the moon! Focus on our planet.
- Fast fashion doesn't exist and sustainable fashion becomes cheaper and more accessible.
- I hope that I'm not reliant on unsustainable sources of energy/transport.
- I hope I'm not reliant on my car and planes.
- My hope for the future is to have a completely green flying coach for transport.
- To make sure youth are always involved and considered. It is our future.
- For companies to start taking responsibility.
- Public transport.
- Transport cost proportional to environmental impact.
- For climate change to be greatly reduced because people work together to live a greener life.
- To make my house the most eco-friendly house in the world.
- I hope I'm not reliant on tech and vehicles.
- To make my dream house a reality.

- My hope for the future is where you don't have to worry about climate change as it's completely sorted out and everyone can live happily.
- My children and future generations can see a beautiful biodiverse world.
- All life living in harmony together, breathing clear air in a green healthy abundant world.
- That plant and animal species don't go extinct before we sort this mess out.
- That climate change and ecological issues can be resolved in a grassroots way that builds communities and helps them thrive.
- No pollution and planet going net zero.
- That everyone tries to at least lower your meat intake. Even have days when you go veggie.
- Community-based, intersectional, grassroots ecological action, leading to communal and green ways of living, growing food, eating, working and getting around.
- That the world would go net zero, both developed and developing countries.
- To create/develop entirely sustainable areas/buildings.
- Become a self-sustaining species and community.
- Green transport, public and private: cars, buses, trains etc.
- Synthetic fuel stations to stop the scrapping of fossil fuel cars.
- Less factories, no pollution, less climate change.
- Equality for future living on the planet in communities.
- Less pollution and stop the world getting hotter.
- To make sure everyone is willing and able to help as much as they can.
- More nature friendly homework.
- Flying cars!
- More affordable electric and hybrid cars.
- The norm for plastic and packaging is either minimal or non-existent.
- Reduce use of pesticides on sides of roads and on sport fields.
- If helping the environment wasn't weird, but instead the norm. That it is easier and cheaper to be eco-friendly e.g. public transport.
- To have better more renewable energy and more accessible information on packaging about climate footprints.
- Cycle routes, green spaces, trees, good public transport, plant-based food, sustainable, electric bikes and safe, connected cities.
- Everybody living in tree houses.
- More electric cars sold for a reasonable price.
- To add more green space and nature.
- Less extreme weather and more green spaces.
- Repopulate the trees.
- Everyone has equal access to learning about the causes and impacts of climate change.

Future consultation and engagement in development of Local Plan

The Council will seek to engage with school aged students at the next stage of Local Plan engagement, though as the Youth Climate Conference is an annual event, future engagement will likely be carried out with individual schools.

2. Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association (BEMSCA)

Who?

B&NES officers attended the Monday lunch club of **BEMSCA** at Fairfield house. We had originally planned to speak to around 15 members, but another event was rescheduled to the same day. Instead, we spoke to two staff members, one male, and one female, and both from ethnic minorities, aged between 30 and 65.

They had each been heavily involved in other focus groups run within the organisation, and were able to offer both their own opinions, and also insights that had been gathered in other engagement that had been carried out with the group. Our contact within the organisation also reached out after the event to share that they had spoken to members, and there was a general consensus on the issues and topics that had been raised with us. We recognise that this is less ideal than speaking to a wider group, but are confident that many key issues were brought to our attention.

Methodology and Format

The purpose and process of developing the B&NES Local Plan was shared with those we engaged with. The desire to consult with different groups of people to hear their views was explained, as was the timeline for developing the local plan. Participants were informed that their views and experiences would be shared and used to inform the Local Plan development, but that we could not give assurance that any specific recommendations put forward would be implemented. Personally identifiable information was not collected so participants were assured of confidentiality. Participants confirmed consent to taking part in discussions.

The last minute change of plans led to a shift in format. Where we had originally intended to run more of a formal workshop, the six key themes of the local plan were instead used to guide semi structured discussion.

Overarching themes

Need for **lifecycle inclusive housing**

Value **green space** in Bath but feel it could be improved, especially play areas and benches

The emphasis of Bath as a Roman and Georgian city leads to glossing over the rest of its heritage

Key recommendations

1   **Edible landscapes and creation of allotments should be encouraged.**

2   **Community spaces and parks should all be made accessible and suitable for inter-generational use.**

3   **New homes should be designed for the full life course.**

4   **More social housing required, as well as good quality, accessible homes suitable for downsizing.**

5   **The economic impact of the clean air zone on low-income people should be properly considered, particularly in relation to current lack of suitable public transport to replace car journeys.**

2.1 Healthy and Inclusive communities

Food environment

- There was a feeling that the loss of community land with productive trees has had a negative impact on the food environment
- "In the parks there should be more edible landscapes…I haven't seen a fruit bearing tree in the longest time"
- It's difficult to get allotments, allotment culture is generational and seems to be lost in younger generations, though there has been somewhat of a recent renaissance.
- People don't recognise food that is grown, or know how to prepare it, and so productive plants in the public domain would need information boards next to them with suggestions of how to prepare and cook the food.

Community spaces

- There's a need for intergenerational and cultural spaces to bring communities together
- Parks need community activities in them, such as bowls, and ping pong tables, so people can come together outside
- Warm spaces should become a permanent fixture, though they also need community activities in them.

2.2 Identity and Belonging

- There's an overemphasis of Bath as a Roman and Georgian City, even history such as WWII is ignored in Bath. BEMSCA ran workshops with local elderly people and discovered they had never been asked about their experiences during the war, and those stories would die with them.
- "All different cultures are in the heritage of the city" , e.g. first steel pan band in the UK was in Bath.
- People only reach out to hear about their culture during black history month which feels like tokenism.
- Lack of artwork and monuments – especially when compared to Bristol. Bristol is a graffiti city but Bath could express in different ways.
- The use of Bandstands has reduced, but is a really good way to provide free or cheap access to culture for everyone – all generations and cultures.
- "no matter what changes we go through we have to protect [Bath's] magic… what if you go one change too far?"
- Bath is "somewhere where generations have cared"

2.3 Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

Green spaces

- The amount of green space in Bath is really valued.
- People often don't know about their local green space – especially if they have accessibility concerns
- Bath heritage app could be used as a model for an app about walking routes, which show accessibility.
- Need to bring people of all ages into green space together
- There used to be village greens with shared land and productive trees, but this has been lost and now leaves a gap.

Issues with accessibility

- People need to physically visit parks with a tick box etc
  - Are they accessible? – Hedgemead park has stepped access
  - Are there enough benches? – older people sometimes need to just move between benches
- Benches in the parks are an important social resource for lonely older people, as when they sit to rest people will come sit next to them and they get a chat.
- Often go for walks on the golf course rather than in the park as the paths are accessible.

Play parks

- Play areas are really run down, and not attractions.
- Importance of play parks for all generations – "who doesn't like to hear children playing?"
- Real issue of nothing to do for young families

2.4 Housing and Shared Prosperity

- Independence is the priority – people need to be able to downsize but want to be able to stay in Bath
- Need to design houses suitable for the life course, i.e:
  - No steps into the house
  - Easy to use taps, such as using hand gestures
  - Space for wheelchairs to navigate
  - People already don't want to have to leave the homes they raised their children in, so they really don't want to have to leave Bath. Therefore, they hold onto bigger houses that aren't suitable
- Feel the development down by the riverside has delivered in terms of local centres and affordable housing

- Need good housing standards – "substandard living"
- Nothing available for young people, it's really tough to get on the housing market

Social Housing

- There isn't enough
- People want to downsize but don't want to risk losing their nice house for somewhere worse.
- There is council property on the Circus and the Royal crescent, so it's a lottery of where you end up.
- Their members often don't have high standards – "one member has her own home for the first time at 70…it's hers and she has her own front door key"
- "You get on with it because at least you have a roof over your head"

2.5 Zero Carbon and Climate resistance

Low emissions zone

- Low emission zones are difficult for those on low incomes who often carry out multi-stage journeys, dropping off in multiple places. They can't afford to replace their old car, but there aren't the bus services they need to get where they need to go. These journeys often go back and fourth through the centre. It doesn't mean they don't value the environment, but there's an economic impact.
- This also poses a problem for those who live within the low emissions zone, don't drive but can't access public transport for their destination so rely on lifts – people won't want to collect them.

Retrofit

- Need to retrofit old homes for energy efficiency, especially with rising prices.
- There have been issues with listed buildings, which is leaving people cold and struggling with bills – these old buildings are losing as much heat as they produce.

2.6 Future consultation and engagement in development of local plan

Participants were keen to be consultant in further stages of the local plan, and were happy to run a workshop on-site at Fairfield house, with higher numbers.

3. Sheltered Housing Lunch Club, Twerton

Who?

B&NES officers attended a lunch club for the elderly run in a community room in a sheltered housing complex. There were around 15 individuals aged 70+, with 10 females and 5 males. The participants all lived in B&NES, largely from the local area of Bath, and most had lived in B&NES most of their lives.

The individuals were already divided between three tables for lunch, so one B&NES officer sat with each table to facilitate the conversation.

Methodology and Format

An overview of the purpose and process of developing the B&NES Local Plan was shared with the group as a whole, before they were separated into smaller groups of 4-6. The desire to consult with different groups of people to hear their views was explained as was the timeline for developing the local plan. Participants were informed that their views and experiences would be shared and used to inform the Local Plan development, but that we could not give assurance that any specific recommendations put forward would be implemented. Personally identifiable information was not collected so participants were assured of confidentiality. Participants confirmed consent to taking part in discussions.

The six themes of the local plan were divided, so that each table was assigned two themes to guide semi structured group discussions. Participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously. As well as allowing for a more people to participate, the choice of venue for the discussion provided a naturalistic environment and level of engagement. A summary of the key findings from the discussion is set out below.

Overarching themes

High saturation of **students** has damaged the **local identity and sense of community** in some areas

People have become more **reliant on cars due to cuts to bus services**

Housing is **increasingly unaffordable** and isn't meeting local needs, particularly young families

Key recommendations

1 The temporary warm spaces that have been created during the cost-of-living crisis should become permanent community centres.

2 Increase and improve access to and quality of public toilets.

3 Housing should be provided close to local centres with access to a shop, a post office and bank and new development should include a new local centre.

4 Housing should suit the whole life cycle, e.g. downstairs bathrooms and flat access

5 Existing social housing stock should be provided with solar panels and better insulation, not just new-build housing.

3.1 Healthy and Inclusive Communities

Creating community

- Warm spaces have been successful in allowing older people to socialise, and such spaces should be developed long term at the heart of all communities.
- The sense of community has been lost with community halls closing, and people keeping to themselves. There's been a loss of retail on Twerton high street, and people are increasingly feeling isolated.
- Areas such as Southdown are good as people can walk to everything (shops, GP etc), whilst Claverton Down, despite feeling it was privileged, didn't have shops in walking distance.

Health

- Access to RUH from all areas needed – people don't think about access to healthcare services when buying houses, then get stuck when they get older and need to access things
- Need to bring back access to public toilets. Lack of public toilets deters some people from using local parks and green spaces.
- Better street lighting required in local areas for safety.

3.2 Identity and belonging

Saturation of Students

- There was a strong feeling that the high saturation of students in the city, especially in areas such as Oldfield park, is having a negative impact on other residents. It's causing a loss of local identity, as students pass through very quickly, without making roots. Whilst students were often okay neighbours, they're in a different stage of life, and so don't interact as much with neighbours, reducing the sense of community, which is particularly isolating for older residents. Some individuals had left Oldfield Park as they felt unwelcome there. Further, there was the feeling that HMOs were often not as well cared for, and lead to high numbers of cars for the area, leading to parking issues, and unkempt gardens, making areas less pleasant. On top of this, there were questions raised around council tax, and the worry that the high number of students was a financial burden on the other residents. There was a feeling that local residents had slipped down the council's priorities.

Loss of identity

- Local areas have lost their identities as independent shops have declined (i.e. hairdressers, newsagents, general stores, fruit shop). Social element of high streets in decline.

3.3   Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

- Existing green spaces and parks in Bath are crucial for mental well-being of residents, with the green space near the river especially valued.
- Feel there have been some good improvements in Bath e.g. 'The Urban Garden' and Alice Park
- Rewilding efforts also need to 'look nice'. Does not support allowing grass to grow without wildflower mix being put down. Looks unkempt.
- Important that trees don't create too much shade
- Parks need to be accessible and have drop curbs
- These spaces generally feel safe, but definitely not at nighttime.

3.4   Moving Around

Buses

- Being near a good bus route is really valued
- Bus services have been cut on important routes in the city, including routes to the RUH. Only option is to drive to hospital appointments. Some residents aren't able to drive.
    - o No.42 bus to the RUH brought up multiple times as a big loss
- Suggestion of park and ride on the east side of Bath.
- More frequent buses required.
- Too many student buses - felt the buses were full of students, didn't feel welcome on the bus.

Cars

- Lack of disabled parking in the city centre is a deterrent to use city centre facilities.
- Competition for parking spaces in local residential areas.
- Bath Clean Air Zone restricts access to the city for those reliant on cars.

Walking

- Pavements not wide enough for wheelchairs and push chairs in some of the city, making a joined-up trip difficult.
- Locksbrook Road – heavy, fast-moving traffic including a lot of HGVs. Makes an unpleasant environment for those on foot or cycling.

3.5   Housing and Shared Prosperity

Social Housing

- Competition for social housing. Long waiting lists. Not enough social housing available for those in need.
- Social housing often not accessible. Lack of lifts / ramps. Need for more bungalows or flats with lift access.

- Some resentment toward asylum seekers quickly housed in social housing that had long wait lists of 'locals'. "It's not their fault, but it's not fair"

Housing types

- Housing should be provided close to local centres with access to a shop, a post office and bank. New development should include a new local centre.
- Loss of family housing in parts of Bath due to high levels of student housing and HMOs.
- Need more affordable starter homes for young people who are still living at home.
- Many of those who owned homes still lived in large family homes they bought when they still had family at home, and now only use very few rooms – "I live in a four bedroom house, I only use one room"
- New housing should go beyond just big blocks of flats, need small houses with small gardens for small families.

Accessible housing

- Need more accessible 1-bed flats for downsizing (social housing).
- Need more bungalows
- Small changes to houses can make them much more accessible, especially as people age, such as downstairs bathrooms, or flats with the bathroom in-between the bedroom and living room so it's never that far away.

Affordable / cheaper housing

- Younger families being pushed out to Radstock/Midsomer Norton to be able to afford housing
- Feeling that the push for HMOs for students is driving up prices.
- "Too much student accommodation, not enough affordable housing"
- One individual lives in a static caravan in order to stay in Bath near their connections
- Used to have student lodgers to be able to afford Bath prices.

3.6 Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience

- Existing social housing stock should be provided with solar panels and better insulation, not just new-build housing.
- Flooding in local areas – sometimes the solution might just be clearing drains properly.
- Unhappy about move to restrict car use, but would switch to buses instead
- Open plan designs aren't fuel efficient

Future consultation and engagement

The group were keen to be consulted on further stages of the local plan.

4.   Wheelchair Basketball Club, Bath
Who?

B&NES officers attended two wheelchair basketball sessions in Bath – a children's session, and an adults session. At the children's session we spoke to parents and carers on the side-lines, and at the adult session the athletes rotated through several skills sessions, which included a station talking to us. We spoke to the adult athletes in groups of threes and fours.

We spoke to 7 parents and carers, 6 female and 1 male, all white British, with an age range of 30-50. We spoke to 9 adult athletes, 3 males and 7 females, all white British. They were largely aged 18-25, with one male in his 40s and another 50+.

The participants were largely from B&NES, including Bath, the Somer Valley, and Keynsham. Some participants were from Somerset, such as Wells, but we felt their comments remained relevant and underlines the distances people need to travel to access activities like this.

Methodology and Format

The purpose and process of developing the B&NES Local Plan was shared with the groups engaged with. The desire to consult with different groups of people to hear their views was explained as was the timeline for developing the local plan. Participants were informed that their views and experiences would be shared and used to inform the Local Plan development, but that we could not give assurance that any specific recommendations put forward would be implemented. Personally identifiable information was not collected so participants were assured of confidentiality*. Participants confirmed consent to taking part in discussions. (*at the end of the discussion participants were invited to share a contact email address if they wished to potentially be involved in future engagement activity).

Semi structured group discussions were guided by the six themes of the local plan. Participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously. As well as allowing for a more people to participate, the choice of venue for the discussion provided a naturalistic environment and level of engagement. A summary of the key findings from the discussion is set out below.

Overarching themes

Make accessible the norm

Include those with disabilities in design and decision making

Design for independence and dignity

Key recommendations

1 **All new builds to have level thresholds**

2 **Official accessible stamp/charter, approved by wheelchair users**

3 **No 'kissing gates' or inaccessible through-routes**

4 **People with disabilities to be directly included in design**

5 **Increased prevalence of accessible playgrounds**

4.1 Healthy and inclusive communities

What makes places feel welcoming?

- Where accessible is the norm.
- Not having to ask for access
- Feeling comfortable just turning up somewhere without researching the accessibility heavily before.
- The main entrance is accessible. It's not nice having to go use a back entrance by the bins.
- You don't need someone with you to go into the premises to ask for a ramp.
- "You get tired of fighting for basic things"
- "You shouldn't have to ask"
- "It's important that things don't feel like a big deal"
- "in the same way that there's white privilege, there's able-bodied privilege"

Include people with disabilities in design

- Only a wheelchair user can confirm if something is truly wheelchair accessible.
- "I'd love an official accessibility stamp, like you need a food hygiene rating to serve food"
- "I've never got to speak to anyone about this before", "I don't think I've ever been asked"
- Important to plan for the future – there will be more disabled people in the future. More infants are born e.g. prematurely and surviving that previously might not have and many of these will grow up with complex needs, life limiting conditions and disabilities – we need to plan spaces with this in mind.
- No sense at all in design, e.g. steps to the disabled toilet.
- Experience of 'press for access' buttons with the disability symbol that are at the top of stairs.

Sense of community

- Need for free accessible spaces where able-bodied and disabled people can easily come together.

Hostile Design

- Some places feel very hostile to people with disabilities. Can feel very humiliating
- Can have impact on mental health and social anxiety about going out

Accessible playgrounds

- Feeling that disabled children can often be forgotten as people primarily think of acquired disabilities.
- Also need to be inclusive of disabled parents with able-bodied children.

The Play Park, Exeter

- Almost entirely wheelchair accessible, even a ramp up to the climbing frame.
- Roundabouts and trampolines are level access.
- It's free to access enclosed, so suitable for children with both physical and intellectual disabilities
- Usable by both disabled and able-bodied children, so there's no segregation, they can all play together.

Fairfield Animal Park, Frome

- Has an accessible swing which wheelchairs can be strapped into. There are operating instructions online and it doesn't require staff to operate, so 'no fuss'.
- Contrasted to an accessible swing at Longleat which was fenced off and locked, and required parents to find a staff member to come, open the swing, and then stand there the whole time.
- Also picnic benches that wheelchairs can easily roll up to, so people with disabilities can easily sit with their friends and family.

Good Practice Examples

Bath Uni

The main routes are accessible and when they're not they're well signposted. Means they can walk/push with friends, rather than having to go via back alleys and indirect routes to avoid steps.

Remembering children in wheelchairs, not just adults. Also disabled adults with able bodied children. Need for child centred accessibility.

Bath Spa Station Area

Felt that all the areas around the station are accessible.

Design flexible spaces

- Groups of people with disabilities 'overload' spaces. Spaces are designed to accommodate one or two wheelchairs, for example only 2 disabled parking spaces, and buses only have one wheelchair spot. This makes it much more difficult for disabled people to come together.

Relates to making accessible the norm. Catrin took this photo at Stoke Mandeville Stadium (a centre for many parasport events) after speaking to this group. This is a place that often gets high numbers of wheelchair users, but not exclusively. It has a higher than average number of disabled spaces, but all the other parking spaces are all like this. They can still be used by able bodied people, but if wheelchair users need to park in them, they still have hashed lines allowing space to open doors.

4.2 Identity and Belonging
- The feeling that 'heritage' can be used to avoid accessibility.
- "old buildings are not an excuse, like, I'm sorry, am I ruining your aesthetic?"

Good practice example

- National Trust - Shows it can be done if there is a will.
- Hidden lifts in old buildings, e.g. disguised as a bookcase. Look nice and have no stigma.

4.3 Natural Spaces and Biodiversity
- Natural spaces are largely seen as inaccessible.
- Keynsham is generally quite accessible for getting outside. Bath Skyline isn't.
- Kissing gates are a big barrier. This issue was independently brought up by every group we met with. Very big problem for wheelchair users. Some places (e.g. Cheddar Reservoir) have larger kissing gates that some wheelchairs can get through, but still not everyone. This **isn't** solved by having larger gates that need to be unlocked.
- Natural spaces often have gravel paths which are difficult to wheelchair users. Paths need to be wide enough for bikes to easily get past wheelchairs or there's some conflict
- Won't go to a natural space for the first time alone. Feel like they really have to plan.

- You can't always trust the information on the leaflet or website when it says its accessible – often you get there and it isn't.
- It would be helpful to have clear plans showing maps and access
- "I can drive a car, I should be able to go out by myself"

Good Practice Examples

- National Trust
    - Much more accessible than average
    - Provide off-road wheelchairs – often only in adult sizes. National Trust worked with a company to develop these – however these don't address the problems of independence raised by the adults, they still require someone else to push them, they're not designed to be pushed by the wheelchair user – no push rims.

- The American Museum
    - There's an online access guide that clearly shows which parts have level access.
    - The only area without level access is one toilet block – but there is another accessible toilet.

4.4 Moving Around

Parking

- Disabled spaces without hashed lines are useless to wheelchair users. Put disabled parking by the drop curbs, but don't make it so the parked car blocks the dropped curb!
- There aren't enough disabled spaces in Bath for the number of disabled people, especially as this number keeps growing. There's a growing number of older people who have blue badges, who need to be close to things but don't necessarily need hashed lines, but then there aren't any spaces with hashed lines left for wheelchair users.

Public transport

- Only one wheelchair space on each bus, makes it difficult for groups of wheelchair users to go out together. Acknowledged that these spaces are often not used, suggested more folding seats that can be used by wheelchair users and ambulant people. Also issues around bus drivers – it's down to the bus driver whether they accept wheelchair users, often claim the bus is too full. It takes a while for buses to be set up to accommodate a wheelchair (moving floor) which can lead to some anxiety, especially for those with newly acquired disabilities.
- Links to the overarching themes of dignity and not having to feel like a special case, being able to move around with others with disabilities

Pavements

- Dropped curb often not near parking spaces
- Dropped curbs too far apart, especially if one gets blocked.
- Many dropped curbs aren't flat enough, especially for wheelchairs with back casters (can't wheely to lift front casters) and motorised wheelchairs.
- Drainage grooves in pavements (e.g. outside M&S in Bath centre) – if a caster gets stuck sideways in them you can't get them out again. Also drains at the bottom of dropped curbs. Really simple things easily fixed and identified by wheelchair users. – links to overarching theme of involving those with lived experience in design and testing out models

4.5 Housing and Shared Prosperity
Accessibility requirement thresholds too low

- The current accessibility requirements on new builds are far too low, when you consider how small a proportion new builds are of existing housing stock. Able bodied people can still live in accessible housing so it should be the standard. Especially as we're going to see increasing levels of disabled adults and children with improved medical technology keeping more disabled children alive. Modern design tends to be accessible anyway, thresholds are the main issue.
- It's not just about getting into your own house, it's about being able to easily visit friends, for that sense of community.
- Potential policy option: All new builds to have level thresholds

Different tenures

- Renting – can't make permanent changes for access. Landlords resistant to disabled tenants.
- Shared ownership schemes – independent people with disabilities struggle to get full mortgages, so shared ownership is, in theory, a good thing. However, one individual was denied permission to install a stairlift as they weren't allowed to make 'big' changes for the first year. This was followed up with the housing associating claiming the house wasn't suitable for them as it wasn't fully accessible. However, the individual knew it met their needs, and also they didn't have an abundance of options.

4.5 Zero Carbon and Climate Resistance

- Wheelchair users are always going to need to drive big cars. The trend toward pedestrianisation is generally a good thing, but this must be accommodated. Low traffic neighbourhoods particularly need to be flexible – bollards blocking roads also prevent blue badge vehicles.
- Pedestrian areas must have enough benches for those who can't walk long distances.
- Desire to cycle but struggle to afford accessible bikes. Lots if schemes are funded by children in need so targeted at children.

- Need to accept that some members of the population will struggle to fully adopt active travel etc due to additional challenges they face so in designing things like low traffic neighbourhoods remember that one size doesn't fit all.

Future consultation and engagement

We asked participants if they would like to share their contact details for subsequent engagement/development of the local plan. Many shared their contact details which have been passed onto the planning policy team for future consultation.

5. Family Food and Play Hub, Somer Valley

Who?

B&NES officers attended a Family Food and Play Hub session in the Somer Valley. Parent and carers were sat in small groups on tables around the edge of the room, whilst children played together in the centre. We used the organic groups that formed to create small discussion groups, which we spoke to in turn.

We spoke to 9 parents and carers, all female, 8 white British, and 1 white European, with an age range of 20-35. The participants were all living in Writhlington and Radstock, though around 3 lived in the Mendip district. At least one had a child with SEND, and there was a mix of those living in social housing, some renting privately, and some that owned their own homes.

Methodology and Format

The purpose and process of developing the B&NES Local Plan was shared with the groups engaged with. The desire to consult with different groups of people to hear their views was explained as was the timeline for developing the local plan. Participants were informed that their views and experiences would be shared and used to inform the Local Plan development, but that we could not give assurance that any specific recommendations put forward would be implemented. Personally identifiable information was not collected so participants were assured of confidentiality*. Participants confirmed consent to taking part in discussions.

Semi structured group discussions were guided by the six themes of the local plan. Participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously. As well as allowing for a more people to participate, the choice of venue for the discussion provided a naturalistic environment and level of engagement. A summary of the key findings from the discussion is set out below.

Overarching themes

Reduction in bus routes is leaving the area isolated and exacerbating existing social problems

A lack of local facilities and services is causing anti-social behaviour in young people

Poor quality of parks, especially play areas

Key recommendations

1 **Encourage creation of more community spaces, particularly for young people.**

2 **Any new housing should be provided with sufficient infrastructure, including new health centres or GP surgeries, school places, green spaces, and shops.**

3 **Better lighting required in local parks.**

4 **More car parking required in development that is not well-connected by public transport. Better public transport required.**

5 **More large social houses and flats for families required.**

5.1 Healthy and inclusive communities

Communities

- There was a strong feeling that there was 'nothing to do' in the area, which was leading to a rise in anti-social behaviour, especially in teenagers. The recent stabbing of a teenage boy in Radstock was raised as an example. The rise of gangs and drug dealing was mentioned by several women, with fears including children picking up needles.
- "There's nothing for kids to do as they get older", which is leading to the rise in anti-social behaviour because "they have nothing better to do". It was felt there was a real need for spaces for this age group, "even if it's just somewhere to sit and talk"
- This is leading to a break down in the sense of community as younger people are completely disengaged – "[teenagers] show no respect, because they aren't given anything"

Healthcare services

- The high numbers of new housing in the area is leading to issues, with 'too many patients' at the nearest Health centre/GP.

Food

- There have been closures of corner shops and small grocery shops recently, and there's a lack of nearby supermarkets. They felt 'thankful for our corner-shops', but were feeling the squeeze of their higher prices. Cheaper options are hard to get to.
- "It just doesn't promote a healthy lifestyle"

5.2 Identity and Belonging

- Every group that we talked to independently raised the issue of a former pub (The Fir Tree Inn, on A362 Frome Road) that has been shut for 'years', with it commonly believed that the building's listed status was acting as a barrier. It was described as an 'eyesore'. Participants offered ideas such as using the building for a community centre, youth club, cafe or food shop. Women spoke about the Mulberry Park Hub and The Hive in Peasedown and would like to see something similar in Writhlington at the closed building site. They would prefer the building not turned into accommodation, though considered that 'Anything would be better than a closed building'.

5.3 Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

Safety

- It was felt better lighting was needed in the park between housing estates, near Writhlington Village Hall. Women described feeling scared walking through the park in the dark.
- Play areas were described as unsafe and with broken glass.

Play areas

- There were complaints that play equipment had been removed and not replaced from the local park [NB: This may be Old Rd Play Area]. They had been involved in a consultation for developing the play area but had very recently been told they couldn't find the money, and so the play area was being closed. This contributed to the overall feeling that things were constantly being taken away and not replaced.
- "There is less and less to do for children and young people in the area"
- The play areas were compared to Peasedown, where it was felt they had lots of good facilities, like a football pitch, basketball courts and a skatepark.
- The play areas that were there were aimed at older children, and so younger children required intensive supervision in order to use the facilities.

5.4 Moving Around

Buses
- The reduction of bus services was really felt. Many of the women and their partners didn't drive, and therefore were really struggling.
- "If you can't drive you're trapped", "If I didn't have a car I wouldn't live here"
- One participant shared their fears as the bus route their partner took to work was being cancelled – "I don't know what he's going to do"
- The lack of buses was further enhancing the lack of activities for local young people, "they can't even get a Saturday job as they can't get there" – "we can't promote independence in our teenagers"
- This is also exacerbating the lack of affordable food, "you can't get out and get anything affordable"

Cars

- New housing estates aren't building in enough car parking – they understood the council agenda to reduce car use but felt without increasing public transport provision they still had to accommodate cars
- Lots of traffic through Radstock

5.5 Housing and Shared Prosperity

Jobs
- Many commute out of the area for work

New housing

- Felt there had been lots of new housing with no accompanying increase in infrastructure, even when it had been promised, causing more strain on the area.
- Not against more housing in principle, and recognised some need, but felt local services and infrastructure were already struggling, such as the numbers of school places, so new housing development had to come with new infrastructure.
- "Don't want our green space used for new housing when the infrastructure is not here"

Social Housing

- There aren't enough larger social houses for families to move into
- One participant was struggling with a divorce, but couldn't afford the private rent being asked for a big enough flat for her family. She couldn't work extra hours as the bus times didn't allow her to get back for childcare. She had been applying for social housing but wasn't getting any of the houses she was applying for as most social housing was two-bedroom flats, and therefore there was a very high demand for any bigger flats and houses able to accommodate families.

5.6 Other Issues

- Issues were raised that were out of the scope of the Local Plan, such as about youth provision, school meals, and children's healthy weight services. These were passed onto the relevant council teams.

6. Young Professionals in Bath

Who?

A workshop for Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs was held online. Five people attended the workshop.

Methodology and Format

The conversation was structured around a set of prompt questions, but participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously. The prompt questions comprised the following:

- What sort of homes would you like to live in - in the future, and where?
- What are the right types of workspaces for businesses to thrive?
- What changes would you like to see to support you to live a low carbon lifestyle?
- How can we make the city and district healthier and more inclusive?

Initial exercise

Prior to the main discussion, participants were asked to answer the following questions using the chat function in Microsoft Teams:

In three words what do you value about places in B&NES now?

culture
community
diversity
Safety
Beauty
community
connection with water
connection with nature
walkability
green
outside spaces
heritage
green space

In three words what would you like to see take shape in future?

play
activity
art
varied housing options
resilience
sustainability
waterfront access
activity
housing variety
better city river interfaces
green space
younger communities (young professionals)
affordable housing for young professionals

Overarching themes

Living and working in city centre is preferable, but expensive

Quality of walking routes is key to encouraging walking

Easy travel between Bristol and Bath is very important to attract people from Bristol to jobs in Bath.

Key recommendations

1 Better promotion required for existing health and well-being related events and activities.

2 Locate new workspaces in areas close to local facilities and easily accessible by public transport.

3 Incentivise installation of renewable energy, double glazing and insulation.

4 Focus on making walking the preferred method of moving around the city.

5 To design inclusive places, the Council needs to diversify its engagement and involve a more diverse set of people in policy-making.

6.1　Healthy and inclusive communities

- The city has enough gyms.
- There is a lot going on that is already valuable / good – activities and events in parks, the recent Wellbeing Festival. Would be good to promote these opportunities more proactively and digitally.
- Wellbeing is still an important part of the city's identity. This should be promoted more.
- Thinking about inclusion, B&NES needs to talk to diverse people and ask for their views.

6.2　Housing and Shared Prosperity

- For younger people, staying in the city centre is desirable. Will trade-off paying more rent against less travel costs.
- While it's important to preserve greenery there are a lot of run down, empty and derelict spaces in the city centre that could be brought into more productive use. E.g. Lower and Upper Bristol Road.
- Who doesn't want a Bath town house?
- Co living may not be for all young people if you haven't been a student, you are less likely to want to share a kitchen or bathroom.
- There are already a lot of co working spaces. Making these successful is about the people, about the community, as people are choosing this to have a more social or networked experience than working at home.
- The spaces and facilities found alongside workspace are important – shops, nearby parks - somewhere to go in lunch breaks.
- There is empty office space post pandemic. Some businesses are still hybrid working some are going back to full time in the office.
- It's attractive to businesses being in the city centre near the railway as have a good talent reach across Bath/Bristol.
- Older buildings have an attractive atmosphere so business might gravitate towards these rather than new office spaces but should be mindful that access can be an issue.
- Important to think about synergies and connections between Bristol and Bath.

6.3　Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

- There could be better integration of river and riverside plots with the city.

6.4 Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience

- What are the incentives for installing renewable energy? This is more attractive to do if you know you will be somewhere for a few years (e.g. family housing). Can B&NES help with information or supply? E.g. for installing double glazing in heritage buildings, insultation, or PV panels on homes?

6.5 Moving Around

- Bath is a fun walkable city – by walking 20 mins along the canal you can get to a range of places.
- It's important to support walking
- The quality of walking routes is important (somewhere like Wells Way can be quite negative). Scooters can create hazards and lighting can be poor for example along the river.
- Need to think beyond fair weather walking to quality of experience year-round.
- Making car access difficult can be counterproductive as need to drive around for 1hr looking for parking.
- Joining up transport is an issue - need more certainty about making what's needed work with what can be delivered.
- Need to consider maintaining access to the city for disabled travellers.

7. Chew Valley School

Who?

A workshop was held at Chew Valley School for 28 students of a range of ages, spanning from 11 to 18.

Methodology and Format

B&NES and Design West gave an introduction explaining the Local Plan making process and the role of the workshop as research. An overview was given to the six themes set out to capture the range of the Local Plan. The young people worked in six groups led by sixth formers. They began with discussing what they valued now and concluded with what they'd like to see in future. They brainstormed reflections on six thematic questions and sketched some ideas to illustrate the local plan.

Initial exercise

Prior to the main discussion, participants were asked where they like going by marking places on maps of the area, and were also asked what is good about that place in three words?

Important destinations marked on the maps were; Salt and Malt fish and chip shop and Woodford Lodge on Chew Valley Lake, Pensford Viaduct, Temple Cloud Park, fields with nice views, Felton Common, Chew Magna Park, Chew Valley Rugby Club, Scout Hut, Community Farm, Knowle Hill, Winford Brook and Wier, Mushroom House (Stanton Drew Toll House), Bishops Sutton Park, Chew Moos Ice Cream Parlour, Greyfield woods, the bus from Pensford to Bristol, walks from Norton Malreward, the lakes and reservoirs.

Responses from the three words exercise comprised:

Overarching themes

Active travel and sustainable transport options in rural areas.

Preservation of existing landscapes and traditional building designs and character.

Accessible public spaces, facilities, and amenities.

Key recommendations

1 All new development should allow for self-sufficiency in relation to energy and food and should be carbon and biodiversity positive.

2 The watery character of the Chew Valley should be protected, river quality improved and natural spaces enhanced and made more accessible, particularly for recreational users.

3 Better provision of sustainable transport options required to persuade people not to use their cars.

4 Any new development should contribute to the rural and traditional character of existing places.

5 Existing buildings should be made use of for community uses.

6 New housing should be smaller and more affordable than the existing housing stock, suitable for young people and older people.

7.1   Zero Carbon and Climate Resilience

- Improve bus routes into villages to encourage people not to use their cars.
- More cycle paths e.g. from Chew Magna to Bristol.
- Keep Bishop Sutton to Blagford bus service.
- Do not extend Bristol Airport.
- More wind turbines and solar panels on new buildings.
- More electric car charging points.

7.2   Moving Around

- More routes to and from town (Chew Magna) – stopping at social places such as the lake and other scenic or social areas so that people are able to use the valley and spend time with others.
- Improve safety for cyclists and walkers by improving pavement and road quality.
- More cycle paths on mainstream roads.
- A cycle path all the way around Chew Lake.
- More frequent and affordable buses in the Chew Valley.
- Bus stops, buses and cycle lanes.
- Speed limits in tight lanes, as there are dog walkers who walk along them.
- More easily, accessible signposted walking paths.
- More bikes, rental bikes and electric bikes.

7.3   Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

- Increase trees, wildflowers (to attract bees and butterflies) and grass with no mow areas and tree planting events.
- Emphasise preserving the landscape and keeping rivers clean.
- Increase rubbish bins and litter picking programmes with rewards.
- Maintaining green communities like rivers and wildlife – putting rubbish bins and recycling bins everywhere.
- More benches in fields and on walks.
- More regulation on housing development (and if not concealed make them suit landscape).
- Make explicit spaces for dogs and improve the control of dog poo and left around dog poo bags.
- Increase dedicated natural areas.
- Rent bikes out at Chew Lake to make it easier to use the new cycle path.
- More uses for Chew Lake i.e. kayaking, paddleboarding and swimming.

7.4   Identity and Belonging

- Classic design blends in with other houses, that keeps the essence and history of building traditions but in contrast being modern.
- Preserved (same feel to places).
- Maintain the traditional feel of villages – blend in with older houses.
- Look after things – keep things up to date and clean, mow the grass more often.
- Fill potholes in pavements, make the road wider to improve congestion add zebra crossings x3.
- Maintain rural surroundings – green, wildlife and countryside.
- Green roofs to reduce flooding and increase biodiversity.
- More solar panels x3 and other renewable energy sources to decrease carbon emissions.
- Improve the social area quality within Chew Magna and generally.
- Improve special areas and parks in the Chew Valley.
- Creating stilt houses on the lake.

7.5   Housing and Shared Prosperity

- More environmentally friendly, greener houses – vertical green walls, solar panels, water butts and energy efficient boilers.
- Affordable local housing to buy and rent.
- Accessible houses – bungalows, smaller (less 5 bed more 3/2bed) with more services.
- More paths and green spaces around homes and workspaces.
- Hot desking and co working places that students can use after school.
- Homes with study areas.
- Bigger windows – open office spaces to promote collaboration.
- Bring back library vans for primary schools (as stopped over Covid).
- In future more advertising for younger people to move into affordable houses.

7.6 Healthy and Inclusive Communities

- Make social places more accessible to disabled people with ramps and firm, flat and wide paths.
- For a healthier community prevent the misuse of the fields and litter.
- Community events transforming derelict buildings e.g. the Catholic Church in Chew.
- Use the town halls more for public events to bring together community.
- Better disabled accessible walking paths and trails.
- Public transport for the elderly and those unable to drive.
- More social places like coffee shops or parks.
- More display boards for community events.
- High accessibility to sport not just at school in other places.
- More secondary schools.
- Schools working closely together with community halls and events.
- More water fountains on trails.
- Improved food quality.
- Green spaces within communities.

Exercises to end the session

How in three words would you like Chew Valley to be for young people in the future?

How would you illustrate the local plan?
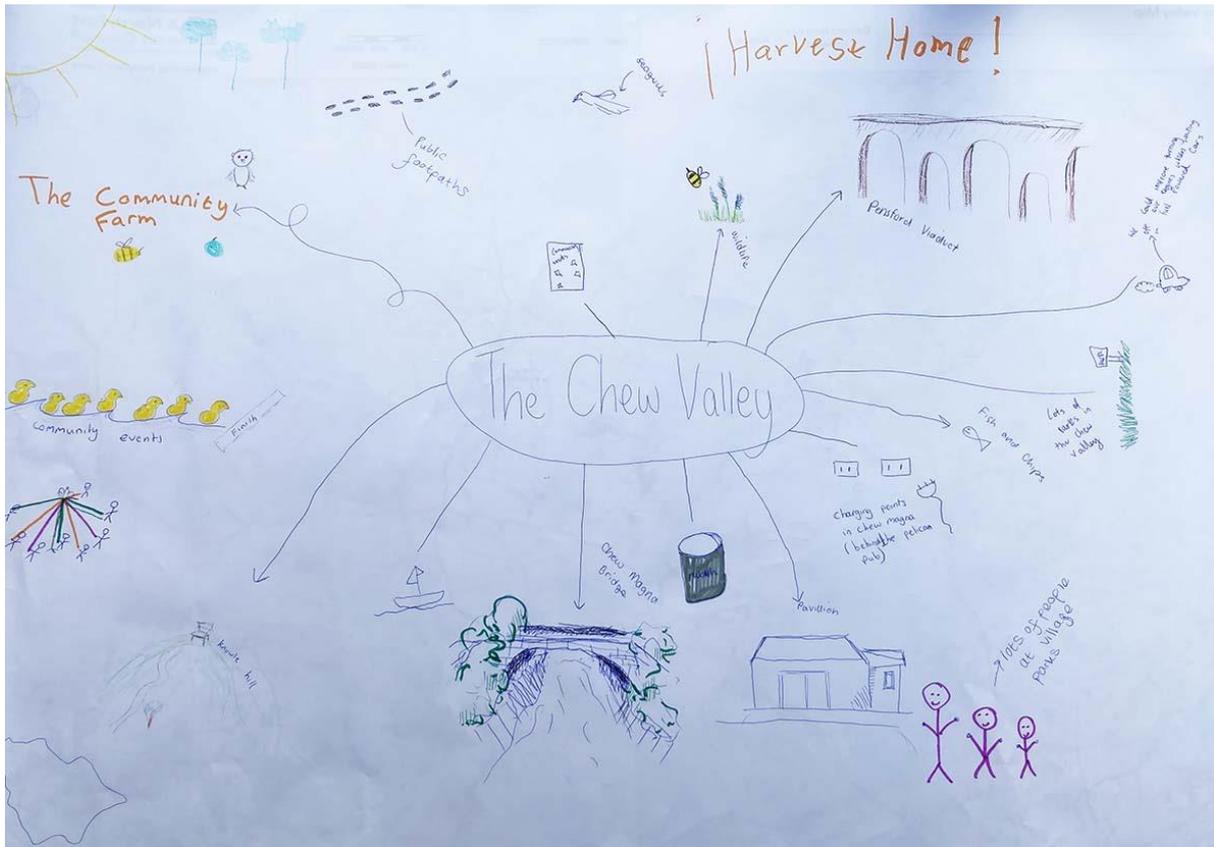
L to R - Chew Valley Mind Map, Chew Valley Lake, Blagdon Bus Stop, Eco House with Green Roof.

8. Interactive Poster Engagement

Methodology and Format

B&NES Council wanted to reach people in lower income groups, particularly those accessing food banks, but recognised that this group are especially time poor. Therefore, we wanted a novel way to engage with this group.

We therefore designed interactive posters, including a tick-box poster, where people could state to what degree they agree or disagree with 6 statements relating to each Local Plan theme, and a poster which allowed people to write in any additional thoughts or comments they had.

We utilised existing public health networks to locate potential venues of food cafes and food banks. We also utilised warm spaces to increase our geographical spread.

We displayed posters in 7 locations across B&NES, with two in Bath, three in the Somer Valley, and two in Keynsham. The locations were:

- Keynsham Leisure Centre
- Keynsham Children's Centre
- Radstock Community Centre and Library
- Radstock Children's Centre
- The Hive, Peasedown
- Oasis Pantry, Central Bath
- Oasis Pantry, Roundhill

Who?

In total, 49 people engaged with these posters. As we located the posters in venues helping people in the lowest socioeconomic groups, we hope that participants were largely people on low incomes. However, as the posters were not continuously monitored, we do not have any further demographic details.

Overarching Themes

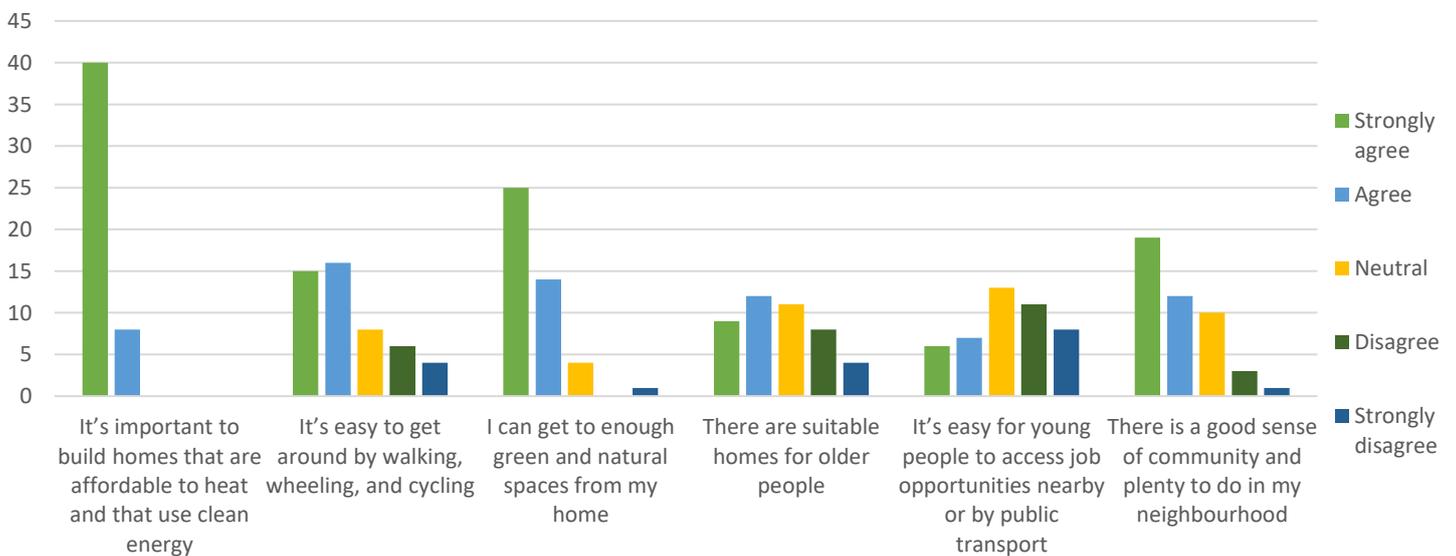People do not feel there are sufficient opportunities for young people

Local variation on how easy it is to access activities and things to do

There is demand for increased affordable housing, especially in the Somer Valley

People strongly agree that new homes should have green and affordable energy

Overall Results

Overall Results

8.1 Identity and Belonging

- Respondents felt that there was a good sense of community and plenty to do in their neighbourhoods, with 42% strongly agreeing and 69% agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, it is worth noting that the strength of these findings may be skewed by an overwhelmingly positive response from Peasedown, which had a very high number of responses, where 75% strongly agreed. Our other engagement suggests that Peasedown has a reputation for having a lot for locals to do. If Peasedown is removed from the analysis, 24% strongly agree, and 59% agree or strongly agree.
- Comments written by respondents suggest that there is a shortage of things to do for young people in the district.

8.2 Natural Spaces and Biodiversity

- Overall, respondents agreed that it was easy to access green space. In total, 57% of respondents strongly agreed, and 89% agreed or strongly agreed.
- 100% of Bath-based respondents agreed with this statement, compared to 88% of Somer Valley respondents, and 60% of Keynsham respondents.

8.3 Moving around

- It was generally felt that it was relatively easy to get around by active travel, although there was strong locational variation, with 75% of Peasedown respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, compared to just 20% of Radstock respondents.
- Comments from Peasedown-based respondents asked for increased walking and cycling infrastructure, to connect them to the local cycle paths, and to allow them to easily cross the ring road.

8.4 Zero carbon and climate resistance

- Respondents felt it was very important to build homes that are affordable to heat and use clean energy, with 83% of respondents strongly agreeing and 100% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. 100% of Bath-based respondents strongly agreed that this was important.

8.5 Housing and shared prosperity

- Across all areas there was a wide variation of opinions on the availability of homes for older people, with 47% agreeing, 25% of respondents feeling neutral, and 27% disagreeing that there are suitable homes for older people.
- Comments from Peasedown suggested that developers should be building more bungalows to better suit aging residents.

8.6 Healthy and Inclusive communities

- 'It's easy for young people to access job opportunities nearby or by public transport' was the most disagreed with statement, with 42% of respondents disagreeing, compared to just 29% who agreed.
- Whilst individuals in Bath felt neutrally about the topic (53% neutral), 60% of Keynsham respondents and 56% of Somer Valley respondents disagreed with the statement.
- This supports other engagement work carried out, where we heard about the shortage of jobs and activities for young people, especially in the Somer Valley. It was felt that the decline in public transport was one of the main factors for this.
- We also received a lot of localised responses about GP services, which we will be passing on to the appropriate service.

9. Whitchurch Village Playgroup

Who?

Two B&NES officers attended a playgroup in Whitchurch Village in October 2023 to talk to parents and grandparents about the B&NES Local Plan. Around 12 adults were in attendance with their children, around half of whom were parents, and half of whom were grandparents.

Methodology and Format

B&NES officers moved around the room to carry out semi structured discussions with both individuals and small groups. The discussions were initially guided by two key themes, 'housing' and 'movement and facilities'. Participants were encouraged to shape the conversation and share their views and experiences spontaneously. Printed maps of the village were also used to identify the location of various facilities.

Discussion questions used to shape conversations comprised:

Housing – If any housing was to be built in the Village, what size and type of hosing would meet the needs of local people?

Movement and Facilities – Which of the facilities listed below do you use? Where do you go for each? Please show us on the map. What mode of transport do you use to get there? Are there any key facilities missing from the list?

ATM (cashpoint)	Library
Bank	Pharmacy
Community centre / hall	Post Office
Convenience Shop	Primary School
Dentist	Pub
Garage	Play park
GP	Place of worship Pre-school provision
Hairdresser	
Hub with internet	Secondary school
Library	

Overarching themes

Preference for no additional homes, but if built, they should be affordable family homes for local people

Facilities in the village are very well-used, such as pre-school and community hall

Facilities in Whitchurch Bristol and Stockwood Bristol often used

9.1 Housing

- Most attendees would not support any additional housing in the Village. The Village has seen significant growth over the last 10 years, and there are not considered to be enough facilities to support any more, i.e. doctors surgery places.

- Three attendees supported a small amount of additional housing if it could provide young families with more affordable housing.

- If housing was to be built in the village, attendees think that it should be family-sized housing for local people, accessible housing for those with disabilities, and housing suitable for older people due to the aging population. If there is a need, social housing should also be provided.

- The Village is not considered to be a suitable location to house B&NES students. If student housing was provided, it would likely be used by Bristol students.

- Young local people moving to Keynsham to new developments such as Hygge Park where they can afford a flat.

9.2 Moving Around and Facilities

- The community hall is very well used by local people.

- Pre-school and primary school very well-used by people in the village and also people from Whitchurch Bristol.

- Play park was provided by the parish, and is very well used. People travel from Whitchurch Bristol to use it too. Some people walk across the fields to the west of A37 to get to it.

- It is difficult to get a quick appointment at the doctor / nurse (Stockwood). NHS should advise on whether new housing will make this worse for exiting residents.

- Post Office closure means that there is no Post Office in walking distance anymore.

- Music shop in the village now provides convenience goods. It is the only place in the village that does. Some residents walk to Whitchurch Bristol or Whitchurch Stockwood (co-op) for convenience goods. Some drive into Bristol. Some rely on online shopping.

- The only pub in the village in a restaurant chain. Residents walk to the Shield and Dagger in Whitchurch Bristol to go to the pub.