



The Future for Bath and North East Somerset

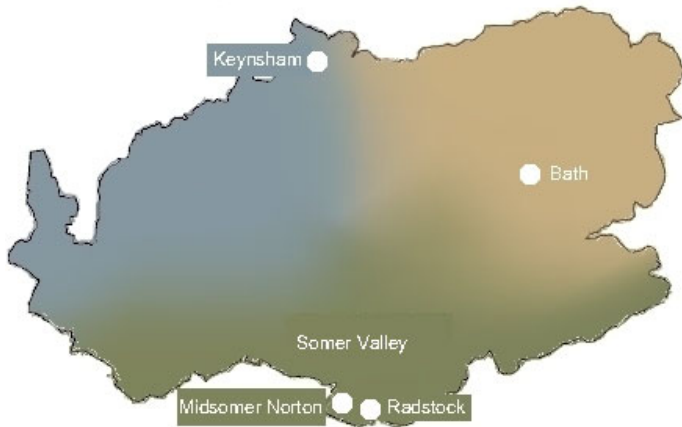
Contents	Page
The Future for Bath and North East Somerset _____	5
Future for Bath _____	7
The case for change _____	8
Narrow economic base _____	8
Low wage economy _____	8
Lack of modern workspace _____	9
Affordable housing shortages _____	9
Visitor numbers _____	9
Declining retail status _____	9
Eroded environmental quality _____	10
Transport and congestion _____	10
Strong foundations _____	10
Beauty and unmatched heritage _____	10
Enviably quality of life _____	10
World-renowned brand _____	11
UK's only hot springs _____	11
Outstanding education sector _____	11
Good regional access _____	11
Excellence in sports _____	11
Green credentials _____	12
Arts and culture _____	12
Strong civic pride _____	12
Bath out of balance _____	12
A fractured city centre _____	13
South-west 'fracture zone' _____	13
The absence of gateways _____	13
Turning its back on the river _____	13

	Page
Room for expansion	14
Identity and vision	15
In search of Bath’s ‘soul’	15
Hot springs	15
Social and cultural renaissance	15
The growth of industry	15
A place of healing and enrichment	16
Defining Bath’s DNA	16
Water and wellbeing	17
Pleasure and culture	18
Imagination and design	19
Knowledge and invention	20
Living heritage	21
Spatial framework	22
Living heritage	22
Bath as a World Heritage Site	23
Legible city	23
Uplifted public realm	23
More people living in the city centre	23
National centre for conservation skills	23
Retail strategy	24
A transformed Southgate	24
Niche shopping to the north	24
Enhanced independent sector	25
Shopping, culture and pleasure	25

	Page
‘Smart City’ quarter _____	25
Water and spa culture _____	26
Bath Western Riverside _____	27
Bath Western Riverside East _____	27
Green Park Station _____	28
From the river to Victoria Bridge Road _____	28
Bath Western Riverside West _____	29
Crest Nicholson scheme _____	29
Sport and leisure _____	31
Expanded city centre _____	30
People and place _____	31
Access and movement _____	31
Riverside _____	32
Public space and public life _____	33
Planning and delivery _____	34
Business Plan and Spatial Framework _____	34
Implementation and Delivery _____	34
Urban Regeneration Panel _____	35
Professor Les Sparks _____	35
Honor Chapman _____	36
Dickon Robinson _____	37
Alan Baxter _____	37
Professor Chris Baines _____	38
Sir Richard MacCormac _____	38
Projects _____	39

	Page
The Future for Somer Valley	40
Community strategy	40
A strong sense of place	40
Decline and change	40
Challenges	40
Opportunities	41
Economy and skills	41
Town centres	41
Midsomer Norton	42
Radstock	42
The Future for Keynsham	43
Identity	43
History	43
Geography	44
Drivers behind the Vision	44
The way forward	45
Keynsham as home	45
Keynsham as a learning community	45
Keynsham as a 21 st -century market town	45
Keynsham as a working town	46
The next steps	46

The Future for Bath and North East Somerset



Context

Bath and North East Somerset is on the threshold of significant and far-reaching changes which will affect the lives of everyone who lives or works in the area. Major regeneration and development is due to be delivered in Bath, Keynsham and Radstock over the next few years. Furthermore, over the next twenty years the national and regional growth agendas will result in a step-change in employment and housing growth. At the same time, the Council is undertaking a comprehensive review of its planning policy framework.

see also southwest-ra.gov.uk

The purpose of the vision

These changes must be guided by a place-shaping vision and set of values to ensure that growth and redevelopment contribute to the Council's overarching Vision for Bath and North East Somerset as a distinctive place, with vibrant and sustainable communities where everyone fulfils their potential.

The Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset establishes a series of 'shared ambitions' and 'improvement ambitions' which provide a highly relevant framework of values for the future of the district.

More details on the Community Strategy, including the Local Area Agreement, can be found at:

communities.beintouch.org.uk

The Future for Bath and North East Somerset comprises a series of place-focused visions for the revitalisation and growth of the district and, in particular, the main urban centres of Bath, Midsomer Norton and Radstock, and Keynsham. It seeks to realise a number of the ambitions of the Community Strategy and to provide a direct response to the Economic Development and Enterprise section of the Local Area Agreement.

Although the Future for Bath and North East Somerset focuses primarily on economic development and physical regeneration, it also aims to be a catalyst for cultural and social regeneration. The spatial objectives and aspirations of the vision work will be tested through the preparation of the emerging Core Strategy. This strategic planning document will provide the planning policy framework for development and for protecting the environment up to 2026. As well as looking at options for accommodating future growth within the main urban centres, this will also consider urban extensions at Bath and Bristol.

see also bathnes.gov.uk/core-strategy

Some elements of the vision work can be implemented under the existing Local Plan while other parts are not reliant on the planning system. Some of the specific proposals for development and regeneration described in the visions will be carried forward as part of the Site Allocation Development Plan Document, the sister document to the Core Strategy.

The Community Strategy and Future for Bath and North East Somerset Visions will be key drivers in shaping the development of new planning policy through the Local Development Framework process. The vision work has highlighted some of the challenges facing Bath and North East Somerset and outlines options for managed growth in a way that enhances the city and district's distinctive heritage, character and identity.

Challenges include:

- A shortage of affordable housing
- A relatively low-wage economy
- A narrow economic base
- A lack of modern workspace
- Declining retail status
- Lower visitor numbers
- Traffic congestion
- The need to tackle the causes and effects of climate change

Developing a sustainable future

Protecting the built and natural environment while developing a strong, sustainable economy is an essential element of the proposed visions for the future of Bath and the communities of North East Somerset.

Objectives the Council is considering to develop a more sustainable future include:

- Tackling the causes and effects of climate change
- Promoting the district as an exemplar for sustainability
- Taking the lead on sustainable energy and the development of a low-carbon economy
- Encouraging local sourcing and production of materials and food
- Developing a sustainable local transport, movement and access strategy
- Developing a more sustainable approach to the area's tourism
- Encouraging local skills in sustainable construction, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy systems installation
- Continuing and building on the Council's successful waste policy and award-winning achievements in recycling (Beacon Council status)

Committed to equal opportunities

Bath and North East Somerset Council is committed to equality of opportunity for everyone and believes that the diversity of the local community is a major strength that contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the area.

How to have your say

This document is part of a community engagement exercise on the Future for Bath and North East Somerset and is closely tied into the ongoing Core Strategy work on planning policy for the next twenty years.

The consultation runs until 18 January, 2008, after which all responses will be considered and incorporated into any recommendations that are made to the Council and will form part of the decision-making process.

Members of the public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to use this opportunity to make their views on the proposals known.

This can be done in any of the following ways:

- Fill in the online questionnaire on the website at: bathnes.gov.uk/future for Bath, Keynsham or the Somer Valley by following the appropriate link and then choosing 'Respond to the Consultation'.
- Email us at future@bathnes.gov.uk
- Write to us at The Future for Bath and north East Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Development and Major Projects, 10 Palace Yard Mews, Bath BA1 2NH
- Telephone us at 01225 477696
- Pick up a leaflet from local libraries, doctors and dentists' surgeries, and council offices in Bath, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton and take part in the advertised surveys and questionnaires
- Go along to public meetings and information workshops as advertised in the local press and at council offices
- Speak to the relevant B&NES Council officers or your ward councillors

The Future for Bath

Bath is one of the most beautiful cities in the world

In 1987 the entire city area was inscribed on the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) list of World Heritage Sites in recognition of its 'outstanding universal values'.

This designation pays tribute to Bath's cultural and social history and to a range of features including its thermal springs, its Roman archaeology and, not least, the harmony of landscape setting, urban design, architecture and materials which so successfully reinvented the city in the 18th century.

A study of Bath's history demonstrates a fascinating pattern of evolution linked to the city's 'raison d'être': its three hot springs and the social and cultural life they have inspired. The development of Bath is not a story of gradual, organic growth but one of bold and dramatic cycles of change which transformed the reputation and physical form of the city centre at peak times in its history and which were, inevitably, followed by periods of inertia and decline.

The key catalyst for each major cycle of revitalisation appears to have been the reinterpretation or reinvention of the hot springs for health, pleasure and commercial gain. These cycles have defined and redefined the city's identity and international reputation over the centuries and have left us the remarkable legacy of today's World Heritage Site.

The premise of the Future for Bath Vision is that for a concurrence of factors, not least the emerging availability of large development sites within and adjacent to the city centre, Bath stands on the threshold of the next major cycle in its evolution as a city: an opportunity no less significant than the Georgian transformation.

The proposals for the Future for Bath outlined here were initially prepared by Bath and North East Somerset Council in the summer of 2005. Since that time they have been tested extensively in presentations to leading stakeholders including representative community groups, business and cultural forums, residents' associations, campaigning organisations and government agencies.

They have been informed by a panel of national and international experts brought together by the Council to help guide the future development of the city. These pages aim to explain some of the principles and values and give residents of Bath, the business community and other stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the debate and decision-making process about Bath's future.

The Case for Change

Bath's outward image of beauty and elegance, world-class heritage and apparent prosperity conceals a range of economic and social problems which, if left unchecked, will lead to the long-term decline of the city.

There is a growing perception of Bath as an increasingly staid, self-satisfied and complacent city that is currently failing to achieve its world-class potential. There is also criticism that Bath has over-traded on its World Heritage Site status in recent decades without significantly reinvesting in its future and that the city's streets, public spaces and cultural and leisure attractions are beginning to look tired and dated.

Development has proved difficult in Bath over the years and a number of the policies that seek to preserve the city are now in danger of helping to cause its decline.

If Bath is to arrest decline and build strong foundations for its continuing success, a step change is required which, while respecting Bath's outstanding universal values as a World Heritage Site, acknowledges and positively engages with the necessity for change and growth.

The need to tackle the causes and effects of climate change, and to develop a low-carbon economy is also a crucial driver of change.

Other key drivers of change include:

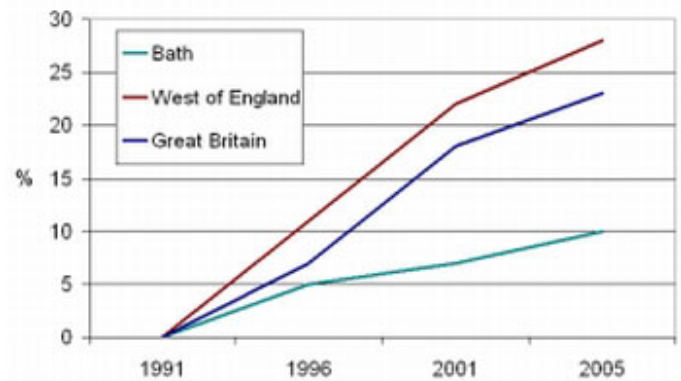
Narrow economic base

Bath has become increasingly dependent on tourism, retail and other public sector industries to support its economy. While these sectors must be nurtured and developed for the future, they do not provide a sustainable economic platform for the city's long-term prosperity.

The vulnerability of Bath's economy is further exacerbated by the failure to replace the city's former manufacturing industries with new enterprises. While the city still retains a number of key employers such as the Ministry of Defence and Wessex Water and maintains its strengths in the sectors of engineering, professional and business services, and publishing, a significant expansion of the city's existing economic

base is required to generate new, higher-wage employment opportunities and to create a broader and more balanced economy.

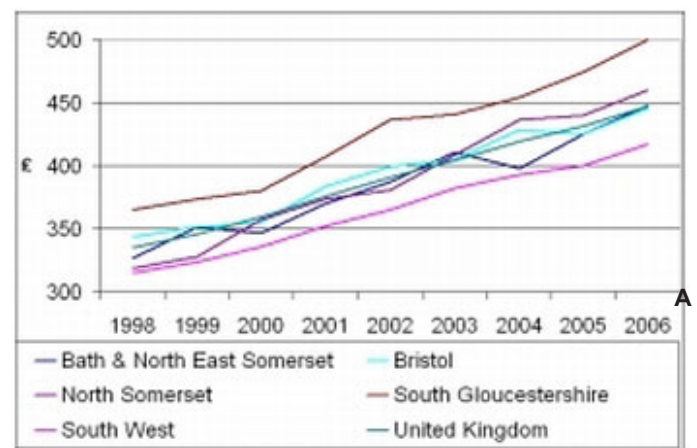
The lack of employment growth in Bath in recent years is evident on the graph below which compares data from Bath, the West of England and Great Britain. This reflects the lack of investment and development within the city over the past two decades: a fact which can be illustrated by the absence of tower cranes on Bath's skyline.



Graph comparing changes in employment levels 1991-2005 for Bath, the West of England and Great Britain as a whole (annual employment survey employee analysis, annual employment survey rescaled employee analysis, annual business inquiry employee analysis)

Low wage economy

Bath's economy is currently dominated by service industries, in particular retail, tourism and the public sector. While these industries will continue to play an important role in Bath's future economic and cultural life, they are unable to generate sufficient wealth to secure the future prosperity of the city.



Graph showing the average weekly wage of full-time employee jobs across the West of England (Annual survey of hours and earnings, workplace analysis)

As the graph of average full-time weekly earnings for the West of England demonstrates, wages in Bath and North East Somerset fall behind those of its neighbouring local authorities.

Lack of modern workspace

One factor severely constraining the growth of Bath's economy is the shortage of modern office and other workspaces. Too many existing businesses are operating from unsatisfactory spaces in converted Georgian houses or above shops which do not permit open-plan working and fail to meet modern access and disability requirements.

Bath's current stock of office accommodation thwarts the expansion of existing businesses and prevents inward investment. A range of new offices and workspaces must be developed if the city is to achieve future employment and economic growth.

Affordable housing shortages

Another key factor constraining the success of the city is its current shortage of housing. This problem is most acute in the supply of affordable homes. There are currently more than six thousand households on the Council's Social Housing waiting list and only five hundred or so properties become available each year.

Family and social networks are damaged and there is an acknowledged difficulty in recruiting public and private sector staff, particularly key workers, due to the lack of affordable housing.

In addition, 40% of local housing stock was built before 1919 and 20% is more than 150 years old; 38% of all our heads of household are over 60 years of age and 7.9% of all households live in fuel poverty.

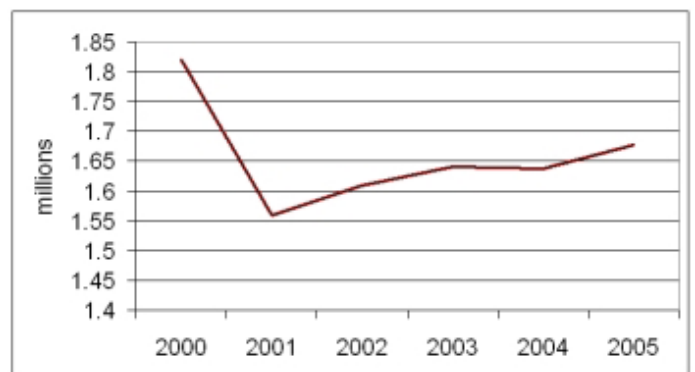
The city has one of the most expensive property markets in the South West with house prices exceeding those in Bristol and Reading. The combination of house prices and Bath's low wage economy, with average earnings falling behind other nearby cities such as Southampton, Swindon, Bristol and Exeter, has resulted in one of the worst house prices to earnings ratios in the country

Visitor numbers

While Bath continues to attract millions of tourists and shoppers to the city each year, these markets are fragile and susceptible to external factors and competing new attractions and destinations over which the city has little control.

This vulnerability to external trends and events is evident in the graph showing the number of visitors to Bath attractions which demonstrates the impact of the American terrorist attacks of '9/11' in 2001 on the city's visitor economy. While the impact of '9/11' is the most dramatic, the graph also demonstrates a marked downturn in visitor numbers between 2000 and 2004.

As a short-break visitor destination, Bath faces increasing national and international competition. Within the United Kingdom this comes from other cities and towns which have undergone significant reinvestment and are currently enjoying a renaissance. However, perhaps the greatest competition in recent years has come from other European cities such as Barcelona, Paris, Amsterdam and Prague which, with the advent of low cost air travel, are increasingly accessible.



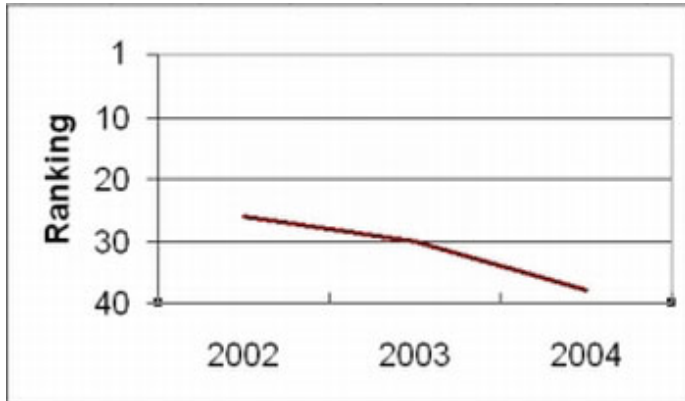
Graph showing the number of visitors to Bath's attractions (Bath & North East Somerset Council's Heritage Services)

Declining retail status

Once the leading shopping destination in the South West, Bath has lost its edge in recent years as other towns and cities have developed highly competitive retail offers. The graph below, showing the Experian National Retail Vitality Ranking, illustrates a significant decline in Bath's national retail status between 2002 and 2004. Although these indicators are generally a measure of 'clone' high streets across the country and may not present a complete picture of Bath's retail economy, this data combined with other sources of information and anecdotal evidence suggests a downward trend.

The threat posed to Bath by the success of the regional shopping mall at Cribbs Causeway near Bristol may shortly be eclipsed by the new Broadmead (Cabot Circus) and Quakers Friar

shopping destination in Bristol's city centre. This new development combined with the eclectic mix of independent and speciality retailers in Clifton and Clifton Village represents serious regional competition for Bath.



Graph showing Bath's position in the Experian retail ranking 2002-04 compared to other UK retail centres

Eroded environmental quality

Despite its beauty and outstanding heritage, many feel that Bath has failed to enhance and refresh its offer and is beginning to look stale and outdated in places.

In particular the public realm is failing to reach its potential. Over the past century, Bath has surrendered some of its best public spaces to the motor car. Its remaining public spaces currently include a mismatch of different paving surfaces, highways signage, poor quality dustbins and pseudo-Victorian benches and finger posts. The city's public realm fails to deliver the sense of order, coherence and completeness for which Bath became a world exemplar in the 18th century.

See also People and Place section in this document.

Transport and congestion

Bath suffers from the perception that it is a difficult city to access due to traffic congestion. Although its problems may not be as acute as many other towns and cities across the country, the perception nevertheless undermines the success of the city as a visitor and business destination.

The city is constrained by its transport infrastructure including the narrow streets and raised parades of the historic city and the topography of the Avon Valley in which it sits. If Bath is to unlock its full development potential it requires an integrated transport solution

for the whole city, including significant investment in the latest public transport technology. This will need to form part of a sub-regional transport solution as many of Bath's traffic problems are influenced by factors beyond the city boundary.

See information on the Bath Package, the Council's major scheme bid to the Department of Transport, which is currently under consideration. (bathnes.gov.uk/bathpackage)

If many of the issues outlined above are not addressed as a whole, there is a risk that Bath will eventually become an historically interesting offshoot of a Greater Bristol with little vibrancy, community or wealth creating economy of its own.

Strong Foundations

Bath is blessed with a range of impressive and enduring assets which provide an enviable foundation for its future reinvention and success. These include:

Beauty and unmatched heritage

Bath has many remarkable features that have resulted in the city's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its outstanding architecture and urban design, its sublime landscape setting, its honey-coloured stone, its Roman archaeology and its mysterious hot springs continue to delight and inspire locals and visitors alike. Further proposals for the future management of Bath's heritage can be found in the City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan which was prepared by the Council, English Heritage and a range of local stakeholders.

See also bathnes.gov.uk/worldheritage

Further ideas for refreshing and interpreting Bath's heritage attractions can also be found under the section Developing a Spatial Framework: Living Heritage of this document.

Enviably quality of life

The remarkable beauty of Bath's built form combined with the outstanding natural beauty of the surrounding countryside of Somerset, Wiltshire and the Cotswolds represents an almost unbeatable combination. The ability to live and work in, or near to, a World Heritage city with easy access to a range of world class places, attractions and facilities across the South West creates an enviable quality of life.

Despite its current challenges, Bath continues to be one of England's most 'liveable' cities, attracting visitors and new residents on the basis of an image and lifestyle which brings together the best of urban and rural life.

World renowned brand

Bath enjoys a level of international recognition, interest and attention that far exceeds its modest size and which continues to attract millions of visitors to the city each year.

However, while the 'Bath brand' continues to command respect it has, like the city itself, become increasingly tired and stale in recent years and almost exclusively associated with heritage.

Successful cities of the future must offer more than one choice or experience. Bath will, therefore, need to diversify and provide more than world-class heritage if it is to continue to attract and retain visitors, businesses and new residents long into the future.

UK's only hot springs

Bath has the only naturally occurring hot springs in the United Kingdom. In addition to being able to experience the largest of the three springs, the King's Spring, rising within the awe-inspiring setting of the Roman Baths, residents and visitors can once more bathe in the city's thermal springs at the recently opened Thermae Bath Spa, which reconnects Bath to its source and *raison d'être*.

Outstanding education sector

Bath is fortunate to have an impressive range of educational establishments, including a number of acclaimed state-funded and independent schools and a college of further education.

It has also two highly respected universities, a rarity for a city of its size. However, neither of these has any significant presence in the city centre, with the University of Bath occupying a campus location to the south at Claverton Down and Bath Spa University housing the majority of its facilities to the west of the city at Newton St Loe. Consequently, Bath lacks some of the vibrancy and diversity of other university cities such as Canterbury, Bristol, Oxford or Cambridge where 'town and gown' functions are more successfully united, and is failing to capture the full economic value of its intellectual capital within the city.

The expansion of universities across the United Kingdom and the associated increase in demand for student housing also poses a major challenge for some of Bath's residential communities, particularly to the south and south west of the city where, as with many other towns and cities, 'studentification' has become an increasingly contentious issue.

However, the Ernst & Young Future for Bath and North East Somerset Business Plan emphasises that the universities are key to Bath's future economic and cultural success. Consequently, continued positive and proactive engagement between the Council and the two universities is required to address existing challenges and to maximise the future potential for the city and its residents.

Further education and learning proposals are put forward under the Knowledge and Invention section of this document.

Good regional access

While Bath's access and movement problems are acknowledged, the city does benefit from excellent rail links east to London and west to Bristol, the South West and South Wales. Access to and from the M4 motorway is relatively convenient and Bath is located within easy access of Bristol International Airport.

In addition to rail, the city has an improving bus network which enjoys an increasingly high level of patronage in comparison with most other cities.

Excellence in sports

Bath's sporting prowess includes its internationally renowned Rugby Club and its University Sports Training Village, which is already a permanent training home for a number of current and potential Olympians. The city is also known for its leading community cricket club, prize winning tennis and a popular local football team. The city supports a variety of sporting events, including the annual Bath Half-Marathon.

In July 1995, Bath was the location for the European Youth Olympics, in which 2,366 athletes and officials from 47 countries participated. The University of Bath is currently on a shortlist of four sites to host the Great Britain team's preparation camps in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games and in 2008 Bristol and Bath will host the UK School Games.

Bath also has a nationally respected course for horse-racing to the north of the city at Lansdown and a well known motor-racing circuit at nearby Castle Combe.

Green credentials

Bath has a long association with the green movement and a number of leading national thinkers, experts and campaigners live in or near to the city. In addition, key national organisations such as the Soil Association, Sustrans and the Schumacher Society are based in the South West.

Over the years, Bath has been a focal point for green initiatives and innovations, including award-winning recycling and one of the country's first environment centres (Envolve). Bath was also the city that spearheaded the national Farmers' Market movement, when the country's first Farmers' Market opened at Green Park Station in 1997, supported by Bath and North East Somerset Council and the Soil Association.

Within the Council in recent years a new momentum has grown in response to the climate change and energy agendas. A four-pronged strategy focusing on buildings, transport, waste and food is being actively progressed.

Bath and North East Somerset Council signed the Nottingham Declaration in December 2005 and the Bath and North East Somerset Local Strategic Partnership was recently the recipient of a Treasury grant to fund an innovative energy efficiency project called Our Big Energy Challenge, the first of its kind in Britain, with a target to reduce energy consumption by at least ten per cent by 2009.

Arts and culture

The city fosters and benefits from an impressive range of artistic activity and provision including festivals such as the Bath International Music Festival, Bath Literature Festival, Bath Fringe Festival, theatres (including Bath's Theatre Royal), public and commercial galleries, arts studios and a variety of artistic organisations, networks and high calibre educational establishments supporting music, theatre, the visual arts and design.

Bath also benefits from a wide and respected range of museums and cultural attractions including, among others, the Roman Baths, the Fashion Museum, the

Holburne of Menstrie Museum and the Building of Bath Museum. However, despite these many attractions there is a growing view that Bath is not achieving its full potential as a centre for contemporary arts and cultural activity.

Strong civic pride

Bath benefits from a high level of public interest and civic pride, particularly with regard to its heritage and built environment.

While the passion and active interest of local amenity groups must be commended and encouraged, it is important that the community as a whole is actively engaged in the proposals for the future of their city, to ensure an outcome which reflects the needs and aspirations of the many rather than the few.

Bath out of balance

The section on Bath's Case for Change outlines a range of socio-economic challenges that must be addressed. Economic growth has fallen behind the South West region and the rest of the UK, and if Bath is to arrest decline and build a platform for its future success and sustainability.

These issues have been tested and explored by Ernst & Young in the Future for Bath Business Plan.

The current data suggests that Bath is out of balance. There is a growing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'; the highly skilled and the unskilled, the old and the young. While the city has many wealthy residents, it does not generate sufficient wealth and opportunity to help bridge the gap. Bath needs better employment and training opportunities, new enterprises, better retention of graduates and young professionals, a significant increase in housing stock, particularly smaller and more affordable units, and a lively and diverse cultural life if it is to begin to overcome the unfairness and polarity inherent in today's city.

In addition to the socio-economic issues already highlighted, Bath also suffers from a range of physical and structural problems that impede the success of the existing city centre. These include:

- A fractured city centre
- South-west 'fracture zone'
- The absence of gateways
- Turning its back on the river

A fractured city centre

Bath has a very dominant north-south axis which runs from Milsom Street to Southgate. While this forms a strong, legible spine of retail activity which enjoys the highest footfall in the city centre, the streets which cross that spine on the east-west axis fail to achieve sufficient footfall and value.

For further proposals to strengthen the east-west axis see the Water and Spa Culture section of this document.

South-west 'fracture zone'

While the tight urban grain and Roman, medieval and Georgian buildings which form the core of Bath's historic centre create a positive sense of place, it takes little time to move west beyond Kingsmead Square to realise that any enjoyable experience of the city centre has ended.

In fact, the south and south-western quarters of the city centre, including parts of James Street West, Green Park Road, Avon Street and Southgate, represent one of the most regrettable periods in Bath's urban design and architectural history.

The fragmented mixture of unfortunate post-war development, redundant post-industrial land, traffic congestion and inaccessible riverside forms a 'fracture zone' which dislocates the city and its communities, particularly those to the south west which currently fail to enjoy a close relationship with the city centre.

The plan below shows this fracture zone, shaded in yellow and roughly following the river, with the present dominant north-south axis shown as a red line.

This fracture zone must be repaired and healed to ensure that the redevelopment of the south and south-western riverside quarters, including Bath Western Riverside, become successful, permeable and continuous parts of the city centre.



A plan of Bath's city centre with the Royal Crescent, Circus, Queen Square, the Abbey, Bath Spa Railway Station and Green Park Station highlighted in black. The present south-west 'fracture zone' is shown shaded in yellow, with the strong north-south retail axis as a red line.

The absence of gateways

Entering the city centre, particularly from its southern, western and, to a lesser extent, northern approaches, is a disappointing experience. There is no positive sense of gateways or points of arrival and, particularly to the south and west, initial impressions of the city fall far short of its World Heritage Site status.

New development opportunities within the 'fracture zone' provide the opportunity to create strong and distinctive entry points to the city centre to welcome and orientate the visitor.

Turning its back on the river

Despite its World Heritage Site status, Bath has a particularly unattractive and inaccessible riverside. With the exception of Parade Gardens, the city has failed to engage positively with the River Avon.

While there are obvious historical reasons for cities turning their backs on rivers during the industrial era, in recent years a number of towns and cities across the world have successfully rediscovered their rivers and waterways.

There is a major opportunity for Bath to learn from international best practice and to reclaim and celebrate its riverside.

For further proposals for the riverside see the Developing a Place-making Strategy: Riverside section of this document.

Room for expansion

Bath's city centre is currently facing a level of potential change and growth unprecedented since the 18th century.

Significant development proposals are now emerging or proceeding for the Podium and Cattle-Market site, the Recreation Ground, Manvers Street, Southgate, Bath Quays North and South and Bath Western Riverside. Development proposals for a range of smaller sites such as Saw Close are also in progress.

Such developments represent a major opportunity to revitalise and sustain the city and its surrounding area. However, without sensitive and imaginative planning, they also pose a challenge to the established character and compact form of the existing city centre.

To address this challenge, Bath must seek to bring together a clear vision and development strategy, intelligent planning policies, leading expert guidance, outstanding design talent and the realities of commercial viability to ensure that individual developments contribute the land uses and the high quality buildings, public spaces and access and movement solutions that the city needs and deserves to secure its future success.

The plan below identifies the main areas in the city earmarked for development.



Bath: room for expansion, showing the main areas earmarked for development. The green shaded area denotes existing parks and the brown shaded area denotes the Charlotte Street car park which is not currently identified as a development site.

Identity and vision

Looking ahead to 2026, the Future for Bath pictures a vibrant, confident and highly distinctive city with a successful and sustainable economy, strong ethical values, high quality and popular public spaces, an attractive riverside and a happier and more fulfilled community.

The city has a strong regional, national and international identity, built upon Bath's beauty, heritage and essential character. It is easy to access and move around by public transport, on foot or by bicycle.

It balances the needs of local residents, workers and visitors and is recognised around the world as a leading centre for water and wellbeing, pleasure and culture, imagination and design, and knowledge and invention.

In search of Bath's 'soul'

In order to look forward, Bath must first look to its past and understand the layers of history and culture which represent the soul of the city.

Hot springs

Bath exists because of its three thermal springs, the only naturally hot springs in the United Kingdom. Regarded as sacred since ancient times, the King's, Cross and Hetling Springs have been the focal point for legend, pilgrimage, worship, healing, enjoyment and commercial gain for thousands of years.

The city has evolved in a series of distinctive cycles of growth followed by stagnation. The most significant of these, the Roman, Monastic, Elizabethan, Georgian and Victorian eras, were all inspired by the rediscovery or reinterpretation of the hot springs and left a physical, economic and cultural legacy of outstanding beauty and international significance.

Social and cultural renaissance

This continuum of cyclical change reached its zenith in the 18th century when, emboldened by Royal patronage, Bath reinvented itself as the leading national resort for health, pleasure and fashion. The resulting renaissance drew 'refined' society to take the waters: the aristocratic, the rich and famous, the talented, the beautiful and the aspiring, as well as the corrupt and debauched.

Famous names included architects John Wood (the Elder and Younger), Thomas Baldwin and Robert Adam; entrepreneur, quarry-owner and philanthropist Ralph Allen; dandy, gambler and master of ceremonies Richard 'Beau' Nash; painters Thomas Gainsborough and Thomas Lawrence; writers Jane Austen, Alexander Pope and Tobias Smollett; leading political and military figures Horatio Nelson, William Pitt, Admiral Phillip and General Wolfe; scientists William Herschel (who discovered the planet Uranus from Bath in 1781) and his sister Caroline; and leading national medic Dr Oliver, the first honorary physician at Bath's newly opened Royal Mineral Water Hospital (and inventor of the Bath Oliver biscuit).

Directly or indirectly these and other luminaries contributed to a century of unparalleled creativity and productivity.

The 18th century, more than any other in the city's history, shaped the unique qualities of design that make Bath an acknowledged masterpiece among European cities and continue to support the city's economy centuries later.

The growth of industry

During the 19th century in Bath another significant but distinctly different cycle of growth occurred which bore little relation to the hot springs or to the fine buildings, spaces and landscape of the city centre.

The impact of the Industrial Revolution and the arrival of the Kennet and Avon Canal and the Great Western, Midland and Somerset and Dorset railways led to a major expansion of Bath to the south and west.

While the city centre was reinventing itself as a genteel, middle-class Victorian spa resort, offering the latest hydropathic technology and treatments, new forms of heavy industry were spreading along the river valley, providing employment in large engineering companies and energy suppliers, and generating new and much needed housing for their workers.

Brunel's Great Western Railway opened in the city in 1840, the same year that the world's first postage stamp was sent from Bath.

The city was also a significant centre for book-binding and printing during this era, not least the Pitman Press which operated under the direction of Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of the world's most widely used system of shorthand.

Perhaps the most significant name in Bath's industrial history was that of the company Stothert and Pitt, which became one of the world's leading manufacturers and exporters of cranes and other forms of heavy industry. In 1980, the Director of the British Science Museum declared that the work of Stothert & Pitt was Bath's greatest contribution to world history.

During the second half of the 20th century, Bath's reputation as a leading spa and health destination and its success as a centre for manufacturing industries slowly died. The spa treatment buildings closed amid controversy over the safety of the hot springs and major factories such as Stothert and Pitt disappeared from the city's landscape, leaving large areas of redundant land along the western riverside.

A place of healing and enrichment

While the above summary only skims the surface of Bath's fascinating history and evolution, key themes emerge which help define the 'soul' or cultural heritage of the city.

Bath has been, since at least Roman times, a place to spend time to nourish and heal the body, to enrich and enliven the spirit and to stimulate and inspire the mind. It has also been a place of industry where innovation, particularly in the fields of design and engineering, broadened the size, population and reputation of the city, eventually bequeathing an area of land that today holds the key to its future expansion and success.

Moreover, throughout its history, Bath has attracted and fostered passionate and talented individuals whose boldness, imagination and initiative have shaped the distinctive spirit, form and character of the city.

In order for Bath to prosper in the future, it must create and communicate the right culture and conditions to the wider world to excite, attract and foster the innovators and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Defining Bath's 'DNA'

Bath's colourful past provides a uniquely relevant source of inspiration and guidance when seeking to create a vision and business case for its future growth and sustainability.

The city must not become a heritage museum, entirely focused on the conservation of its past, introverted, fixed and fearful of change. It must, rather, celebrate its soul and purpose as a living city, which embraces its heritage, the needs and wellbeing of its existing community and its significant future potential.

Taking account of the city's cultural heritage, these proposals seek to distil that story into a series of key themes, from which the city's future identity can meaningfully flow.

This is an attempt to define the essence of Bath - its 'DNA' - to ensure that its cultural heritage and its inherent potential are at the heart of the plans for its future regeneration. The key themes identified are:

- Water and wellbeing
- Pleasure and culture
- Imagination and design
- Knowledge and invention
- Living heritage

These overlapping themes provide the basis of a unique and authentic future identity for the city.

Integration and authenticity

Attempting to define Bath's 'DNA' in a series of separate but overlapping themes is inevitably an artificial process.

Ultimately, it will be the integration and communication of all of these themes and values in future regeneration, place-making, cultural, tourism and marketing initiatives that will enable Bath to connect its past to its future in a successful and authentic way.

However, of the 'DNA' themes outlined, Bath's key differentiator is Water and Wellbeing, which provides an overarching concept, a set of values and a point of difference to underpin the city's future life and 'brand'.

Water and wellbeing

Past and present

Bath's impressive wellbeing credentials include the sacred hot springs, the legend of Bladud, a history of pilgrimage and healing, the Roman Baths and Temple, the Abbey, a range of Spa treatment facilities and hospitals such as the Hospital of St John the Baptist and the Royal Mineral Water Hospital. The city's reputation for treating the sick and the infirm over the centuries earned it, albeit irreverently, the title of the 'great hospital of the nation' (Tobias Smollett).

In more recent times Bath has developed a national reputation for academic expertise in the biological sciences; medical research and expertise in rehabilitation and rheumatology; complementary medicine; world-class sports and fitness; high quality hotel-based health spas; its farmers' market and speciality food outlets and, not least, the restorative effect of its built and natural landscape.

Future

Looking to the future, there is a growing global fascination with health and wellbeing and an increasing consciousness of the role that individuals must play in managing their personal health and happiness.

This has resulted in a mind-boggling and ever-expanding market targeted at the individual which encompasses spas and relaxation, beauty and fitness, diet and nutrition, complementary medicine and, increasingly, personal creativity, spirituality, ecology and ethics.

Irrespective of changing fashions and trends, Bath has the history and authenticity to position itself as the United Kingdom's leading centre for Water and Wellbeing, with attractions that appeal to mind, body and spirit.

The recent opening of Thermae Bath Spa is the first major step towards achieving the city's future potential.

The University of Bath's world-class sports support services such as physiotherapy, sports medicine, physiology, coaching and sports management combined with the strengths of Bath's conventional and complementary medical sectors also provide impressive building blocks in the development of a

competitive health-based economy.

Personal and collective wellbeing calls for better balance and integration of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors, which mirrors the fundamental principles of sustainability.

As environmental issues such as climate change and energy consumption come clearly into focus, the need for cities to take greater responsibility for their carbon footprint and to develop closer relationships with their surrounding rural areas is increasingly understood.

The future wellbeing and sustainability of Bath is dependent on its relationship with its surrounding area of North East Somerset and the wider region.

The city is already beginning to explore a range of opportunities including local sourcing of food and other products, the generation of sustainable energy and the management and recycling of waste, which must be actively pursued in the future.

Water is the source of all life and, in Bath's case, its *raison d'être*. The city's recent reconnection to its hot springs, its location as the headquarters of regional water company Wessex Water and the growing recognition of the role that its river and canal network could play in improving the public realm, ecology and wellbeing of the city and its people represents another major opportunity.

The multi-faceted role and meaning of water in human existence is currently an area of international interest and research and a growing source of inspiration within the fields of science, medicine, wellbeing, art, music and spirituality.

In summary, the Future for Bath Vision proposes the expansion of the holistic concepts of Water and Wellbeing as the foundation of the city's identity and puts forward a range of initial cultural and regeneration proposals that have the potential to revitalise the city centre and improve the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the city's communities, businesses and institutions.

Pleasure and culture

Past and present

Bath's long tradition of spa bathing was linked to an equally strong and colourful tradition of pleasure and abandon, particularly during the 17th and 18th centuries when Bath's reputation as a place for assembly, culture and entertainment, gaming, frivolity and debauchery was well established.

One of the country's leading 18th-century pleasure gardens was situated at Sydney Gardens; concerts and 'cards' could be enjoyed at the Upper and Lower Assembly Rooms and Guildhall; and plays were performed by the country's leading actors at the Orchard Street Theatre and Bath Theatre Royal.

Although the city became increasingly genteel in the 19th and 20th centuries, the sounds of bathing, music and merriment could still be heard until 1978 at the annual Roman Rendezvous events at the Roman Baths.

Today the city still benefits from its grand parades, parks and gardens; its museums, galleries and studios; shops, bars and restaurants; its year-long programme of cultural festivals, its excellent theatres and cinemas, its nationally renowned rugby club and other outstanding sports facilities.

However, a growing number of people feel that Bath has lost its 'edge' and direction. Many who love the city talk of it being insular, staid or 'look but don't touch'. The city's cultural and entertainment offer is fragmented and too often tame.

Creativity and animation is almost absent from the tired streets and spaces of the city centre. There is a growing need for reinvestment in a number of the city's cultural attractions and entertainment venues and for investment in a limited number of new facilities.

Future

If Bath is to experience a 21st-century renaissance, it must reposition pleasure, culture, creativity and playfulness right at the core of its future regeneration.

These themes should be central to the city's potential future identity as a leading exemplar of wellbeing.

Elsewhere in Europe a spa town or 'ville d'eau' is far more than a place to drink or bathe in thermal water and receive medical treatment: a spa is a destination that inspires, relaxes and entertains.

Bath has huge potential to raise its game. This will require investment in the gradual refurbishment or reinvention of many of its heritage attractions and arts and entertainment venues, to create an exciting fusion of old and new.

Similarly, the city must reclaim and invest in its streets, public spaces and parks for public events and social gatherings and as an international platform for the contemporary arts.

The co-ordination and marketing of a more radical and exciting year-round programme of arts, cultural, sporting and health-related activities and events would require strong creative leadership and, potentially, a dedicated programming agency.

This concept and its relationship with destination management and tourism will need to be explored further in the forthcoming strategies for Cultural Management, Destination Management and Public Realm.

Although known for its impressive range of shops, Bath's retail offering is in need of enhancement and rebranding. The new development scheme for Southgate; the potential of the Green Park Station area for markets and fine food, arts and crafts and dining; and the reinvention of the northern part of the city centre including the current refurbishment of Shire's Yard (Milsom Place) are explored further under the Spatial Framework section of this document.

These issues will also be examined as part of the forthcoming Bath & North East Somerset Retail Strategy.

Bath is the city of the individual and, as such, must not be afraid to provide a forum for the original, the adventurous, the 'new age' or the eccentric. The city is loved for its alternative fringes and these should be celebrated for their individuality and creative potential. Nor should Bath become so elegant and refined that it lacks a hint of its former debauchery!

Encouraging signs of change are discernible. The recent opening of Thermae Bath Spa and the Egg Theatre, the anticipated opening of cutting-edge arts and comedy venue Komedia at the former ABC cinema in Westgate Street, the conversion of the Gainsborough Building in Hot Bath Street to a spa hotel, the Taste of Bath food festival and the recommendation for a small casino licence all point to a more vibrant, entertaining and enjoyable city centre.

With such emphasis on pleasure, it is also important to ensure that the revitalisation of the city centre strikes a sensitive balance between the desire to stimulate public life, animate public spaces and build a lively night-time economy and the need to protect the rights of those who live in the centre of the city, or anyone in search of peace and quiet.

Imagination and design

Past and present

Bath represents one of the finest and most elegant examples of 18th-century architecture, urban design and public realm in Europe.

In its day, the approach taken to city-making in Bath was radical, avant-garde and controversial, as well as highly commercial.

For centuries, the combination of spa culture and the city's outstanding environment has attracted and inspired people of imagination, innovation and style, including architects, designers, fashionistas, engineers, scientists, inventors, writers, musicians, artists and craftspeople.

Bath's economy benefits from a range of creative industries, including high-calibre architectural, landscape, graphic design, film and marketing practices and leading national publishers and printers.

The University of Bath houses one of the UK's leading schools of design and engineering, and nationally and internationally respected practices such as design engineers Buro Happold and architects Feilden Clegg Bradley, are based in the city.

Bath Spa University College enjoys a national reputation for its graduate and postgraduate courses in applied art and design, digital design, fashion and textile design, music, performing arts and broadcast

media and the City of Bath College runs a respected range of creative arts courses for young people and adults as part of its community learning programme.

Bath also houses the Museum of Fashion, a testament to its 18th-century reputation as a leading national centre of fashion and style.

Future

If Bath is serious about creating an original and distinctive international offering, the city's rich creative resources and potential must be understood, harnessed and nurtured.

Imagination and creativity have, like water, a magnetic appeal and where new and original things happen, interested and interesting people usually follow.

Bath needs to recapture the radical, adventurous and controversial spirit of its 18th-century incarnation in order to achieve its 21st-century revival.

The city must improve its capacity to retain and incubate its young creative talent to generate and grow new business; to understand and support its existing creative industries, and to attract leading new innovators.

The role of imagination and design in helping the world tackle climate change and energy shortages has never been more pertinent and the potential for Bath and its surrounding district to develop a niche market for 'green' or ecological design and engineering, including the ethical and stylish products of tomorrow, should be actively pursued.

The theme of Imagination and Design should be highly visible in the public realm. With appropriate funding, there is a significant opportunity to remove the dominance of the car and refashion Bath's streets and spaces, including the design, quality and originality of street furniture and finishes, to become the city's signature: its point of differentiation from other towns and cities.

Improved public space creates the opportunity to programme public events, performances, contemporary public art, street stalls and markets to generate a more vibrant and engaging public life.

Knowledge and invention

Past and present

Bath's formative role in the history of British medical treatment; its appeal through the ages to thinkers, writers, scientists and innovators; its 18th-century renaissance and 19th-century contribution to industry and invention; and its successful educational and research institutions, have already been established. See *In Search of Bath's Soul*.

However, the city's two universities warrant further attention.

The University of Bath is a top ten university in the United Kingdom, with a reputation for its faculties of Science, Engineering and Design, Sport Humanities and Social Sciences and its international School of Management.

It has also established the Centre for Innovation and Life Long Learning in the city centre which has been successful in providing incubation facilities for new businesses and has the potential for further expansion.

In addition to its national reputation in the creative arts, Bath Spa University has particular strengths in the humanities including, English and Creative studies, Historical and Cultural studies, Science and the Environment, Social Sciences and Education.

The city currently contains a number of successful intellectual or knowledge-based industries including: Future Publishing, The Bath Chronicle, Praxis, The Greenfuel Company, Mirifice, Picochi, Crame and Fitronics.

Future

Blessed by its attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit, but constrained by its size and infrastructure, Bath has the opportunity to develop strong niches of higher-value economic activity that play to its strengths and unique identity.

However, the city requires new and distinctive work spaces, a significant number of new and affordable homes and the requisite community, education, cultural and leisure attractions for its existing and future workforce.

Bath has a major opportunity to strengthen and balance its existing economy by moving higher up the

value chain, focusing on clean industries with intellectual or creative input.

The successful cities of the 21st century in the western economies are predicted to be 'smart' cities with strong educational, intellectual and creative cultures, providing high value activities.

Constrained by its development capacity, Bath is best suited for activities providing higher value and lower volumes of employees in the fields of knowledge, ideas, sustainability, design, research and appropriate niche production.

The city must encourage projects and new businesses that add value economically while simultaneously reinforcing ethical values as a base for the local economy.

In the Future for Bath Business Plan, Ernst & Young highlight Bath's appeal as a location for 'lifestyle' rather than large corporate business and, in particular, for owner-managed businesses, and recommend a managed expansion of the city's office quarter.

They also recommend that the city understands and builds on the key strengths of its two universities, not only in the retention of graduates and the incubation and growth of new business, but also in terms of research links to the business and science sectors.

This will require closer working between the city and the universities, which is already under way.

Bath also has significant untapped potential to develop a business tourism market, positioning the city as an international forum for new ideas, knowledge-sharing and debate and building on the strengths and connections of the city's universities, hospitals and businesses.

The business tourism market, particularly for small to medium-scale conferences, could provide Bath with high-spend and relatively low-impact visitors, significantly boosting the overall visitor economy.

However, the city must actively explore the potential to secure the public and private sector investment to provide a purpose-built conference and cultural centre in order to access this potentially lucrative market.

With the imagination and intelligence of its existing workforce and population, its colleges and universities, retained graduates and leading national thinkers and innovators, Bath now has the opportunity to increase and expand its potential as a centre for knowledge and learning and build a new economy to replace the city's former manufacturing industries.

Living heritage

The physical legacy created by more than two thousand years of Bath's social, cultural and economic history has become an intrinsic element of the city's present identity.

The Future for Bath proposes that Bath's history and heritage, and the story of its evolution, must be brought to life in an accessible and lively way to ensure that the meaning and value of the city's remarkable beauty and heritage is a source of inspiration for local people and visitors alike.

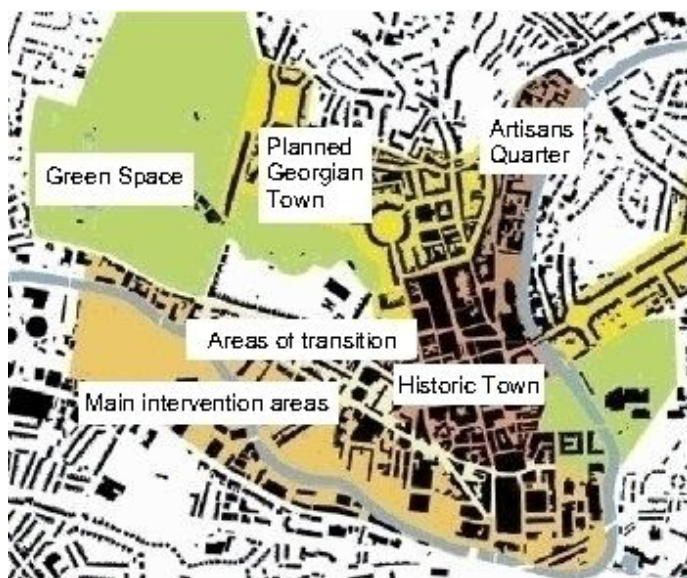
Further information and proposals on Living Heritage can be found under the Spatial Framework section of this document.

Spatial framework

The Future for Bath proposals explore a potential spatial framework for the future character and land use planning of key city centre redevelopment sites. This framework is by no means fixed and will be challenged, tested and consulted upon further as master plans, viability models and development strategies evolve. It will also be tested alongside other spatial options as part of the Council's forthcoming planning policy consultation on the Bath and North East Somerset Core Strategy and Local Development Framework.

The Future for Bath spatial framework proposes strong north-south and west-east axes to create a more dynamic and balanced flow of movement and activity across the city centre.

Around this structure, a series of loosely themed and overlapping 'urban quarters' or character areas are suggested, which are inspired by, and respond to, the principles of the vision and the existing form of the city centre.



The main 'character areas' of Bath as shown in the Ernst & Young Business Plan for Bath and North East Somerset

These 'quarters' are not single-use or tightly zoned areas. Where primary land uses such as shops or offices are proposed, a mix of other appropriate uses, for example housing, culture or leisure, should also be integrated.

The main spatial themes for the urban quarters are:

- Living heritage
- Retail Core
- 'Smart City' quarter
- Water and spa culture
- Bath Western Riverside, East and West
- Sport and leisure
- Expanded city centre

Living heritage

The principle of 'Living Heritage' is established under the Defining Bath's DNA section of this document.

Context



A plan showing Bath's main area of heritage sites (shaded yellow) with red circles showing key museums and cultural attractions

Bath's heritage offer includes breathtaking, world-famous architecture and urban spaces including the Royal Crescent, King's Circus and Queen Square; Pulteney Bridge and Great Pulteney Street; Bath Abbey and the Roman Baths.

It also accommodates an impressive variety of museums and galleries, the city's principal shopping area and a range of offices, hotels and guest houses, cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars.

The densest and richest mix of uses is situated within the boundary of the former Roman and medieval city. This merges with the planned streets and spaces of the 18th-century extension to the north and east which are predominantly residential with a finer-grain mix of other uses.

Despite this array of attractions and the city's success as a visitor destination, Bath currently fails to articulate a compelling and cohesive story about its exceptional attractions as a World Heritage site.

Confusion often begins before arrival with the plethora of uncoordinated images and messages that Bath sends out to the world via a range of tourism media. Then, on arrival in the city centre, there is a lack of clear information and way-finding systems to reveal the city and orientate and guide visitors towards their primary areas of interest.

Consequently, many of Bath's attractions sit passively, awaiting discovery. A number are also in need of reinvestment to refresh, update and animate their appeal in order to engage a wider and younger audience.

Bath has an internationally recognised brand which speaks strongly of history and tradition. The city's remarkable heritage must continue to be promoted and celebrated. But Bath must also talk of the present day and the future, offering diversity, choice and opportunities for increased interaction and participation.

Bath has an exciting opportunity to retain its essential character, but to reinvent itself with a contemporary twist.

Proposals

Bath as a World Heritage Site

Bath often fails to explain the importance of its UNESCO World Heritage Site status and its outstanding universal values to local people and visitors.

The city needs to articulate an engaging and cohesive story of its past and develop new ways of interpreting the relevance of its history in a 21st-century context. A series of options for improving the interpretation of the city's heritage are currently being developed.

Legible city

For Bath to improve its marketing and communication to the world it needs a strong visual identity or brand that encapsulates and expresses the city's 'DNA', its history and its future potential. This should be expressed and promoted through a range of media. One of the most effective ways of interpreting and

revealing Bath's cultural identity, heritage and current offer would be through a state-of-the-art explanation, way-finding and signage system.

This and other elements of legibility are being explored further as part of the forthcoming Public Realm and Movement Strategy.

Uplifted public realm

There is a significant opportunity to enhance the attractiveness and value of Bath's heritage buildings and the commercial success and vitality of the city centre through investment in a beautiful, simple, high-quality and pedestrian-friendly public realm. This could then be animated by a managed programme of appropriate activities to encourage a stronger sense of enjoyment and public life.

See also the Public Space and Public Life section of this document.

More people living in the city centre

As Bath begins to develop new sites for offices and other forms of employment, this will create opportunities to convert some of the existing used and unused office stock above ground-floor shops and restaurants in the historic core to residential apartments.

More residents living in the centre of Bath would help animate the city's streets and spaces and contribute to a safer and more balanced city centre.

National centre for conservation skills

In recent years, leading organisations in the heritage sector have predicted a national shortage of conservator skills within the United Kingdom.

Acknowledging Bath's World Heritage Site status and the expertise of existing local conservation training providers, an opportunity exists to explore the concept of a national centre of excellence for conservations skills in Bath.

With the prominence of the climate change agenda, such a centre might also combine traditional conservator skills with new approaches to energy efficiency in historic buildings. This proposal requires further testing with local and regional training providers and relevant national bodies.

Retail strategy

Context

As the plan below illustrates, Bath's main shopping core lies along a narrow, north-south axis that runs from Milsom Street to Southgate and the River Avon.

Until recently this linear route could be characterised as three overlapping segments with the more expensive and exclusive shops situated mostly to the north, a range of respected middle-market high-street brands located towards the middle, and less expensive, higher-volume shops towards the south.

With the exception of several streets in the north which accommodate a successful mix of independent retailers, the majority of shops on streets running along the centre's west-east axis, particularly Cheap Street and Westgate Street, generally fail to achieve the cachet, patronage and value of their counterparts on the main north-south shopping spine.

The redevelopment of Southgate now under way will present a shift in the existing structure of Bath's retail offer. The SouthGate scheme will draw a number of existing high street names and much anticipated new value brands currently absent to the southern part of the city centre, offering larger trading areas and a new shopping environment.

This new centre of gravity could potentially destabilise the existing pattern and balance of retail use, posing risks to the future success of the northern part of town.

However, change creates opportunity and the following outline proposals are aimed at reinventing Bath's retail offer as the best shopping experience in the South West. These and other proposals will be challenged and tested as part of the current Retail Strategy.



Bath's retail core, showing the main north-south shopping axis characterised as three, overlapping segments with the more expensive and exclusive shops situated mostly to the north, a range of respected middle-market high-street brands located towards the middle, and less expensive, higher-volume shops towards the south

A transformed Southgate

The redevelopment scheme for Southgate was progressed and provisionally approved prior to the initiation of the Future for Bath Vision. The new SouthGate retail area will transform the southern part of the city centre, providing:

- 37,567 m² of retail space, including a new Debenhams department store
- New leisure and restaurant space
- More than 90 new homes (including 23 affordable housing units)
- A basement car park with 724 parking spaces
- A modern, integrated transport hub linking rail and bus services
- A host of new streets and public open spaces

See also southgatebath.com

Niche shopping to the north

The plans for leading new and existing high-street brands to locate to larger format stores at SouthGate creates an opportunity to rethink and reposition Bath's shopping offer in the north.

The Council is a major landowner in this area and is interested to explore the extent to which, through a proactive management strategy, it can shape and influence the future retail experience in this part of the city.

In London, the nationally acclaimed success of the Howard de Walden Estate in reinventing Marylebone

High Street and Village and that of the Crown Estates with Regent Street, provide helpful pointers for Bath.

If, through the new SouthGate scheme, Bath is to meet some of the deficiencies in value retailing currently on offer, an opportunity exists to upgrade and expand the exclusive and niche fashion, footwear and jewellery shops in the north.

An exciting private-sector scheme is already emerging for the Shires Yard area between Milsom Street and Broad Street. See shiresyard.co.uk/milsomplace.

The future concept for the northern part of town will be explored further as part of the Retail Strategy and in emerging new planning policy.

Enhanced independent sector

In the past, Bath has achieved national recognition for its range of quirky independent stores offering food, original fashion and footwear, arts, antiques, crafts, leisure and other goods. It has also demonstrated a significant strength in antiques shops and markets.

National and international trends suggest that consumers are not only increasingly aware of environmental and ethical issues, but are changing their behaviour and exercising greater consumer power in terms of how and where they choose to spend their money.

Building on the theme of distinctiveness established in the Vision, Bath must support and value its local independent sector and, in particular, the provision of locally designed, sourced and produced goods. The importance of high quality markets as incubators of new independent shops and as contributors to a vibrant public realm should not be underestimated.

Areas such as Walcot Street; the streets on the city centre's west-east axis and the proposed new Green Park Station area all provide interesting opportunities for an expanded and differentiated independent sector.

Shopping, culture and pleasure

With the increasing dominance of the world wide web, internet shopping has experienced a significant growth in popularity. An expanding list of exclusive and high street retail brands and major supermarkets are now operating very successful web-based mail-

order services. For many people, visiting a shopping centre is no longer a necessity, it is a choice.

If Bath is to be the first choice for its community and for wider regional and national audiences, it must create a highly distinctive environment where a broad and distinctive retail offer to meet all needs is integrated with the city's beautiful heritage environment, an outstanding public realm, a vibrant public life and cultural attractions, excellent cafes and restaurants and a navigable centre which allows ease of access and movement.

'Smart City' quarter

'Smart City' is a spatial concept to create a new mixed-use business quarter for Bath, specialising in the sectors of knowledge, creativity and innovation.

Context

The area proposed for Bath's 'Smart City' quarter forms an arc covering much of the southern and western periphery of the present city centre.

In terms of new development, the 'Smart City' area includes sites at Manvers Street, Bath Quays North and South and the eastern end of Bath Western Riverside which would connect the new employment area to existing office areas at Queen Square and Gay Street to the north.

Much of this area is in close proximity to the new transport interchange at SouthGate which will bring together Bath Spa Railway Station with a new bus station providing easy access to public transport and rail connections east to London and west to Bristol.

The area already includes the University of Bath's Centre for Innovation and Life Long Learning with incubation facilities for new business, and the City of Bath College.

Much of the proposed 'Smart City' quarter falls within the 'fracture zone' identified in the Bath out of balance section in this document which includes ugly 1960s and 1970s architecture and a dominant road network that severs the city centre from the river.



A plan showing the proposed 'Smart City' area in Bath shaded in orange. This area could also expand further to the west to include the Green Park Station area and sites beyond.

Proposals

The 'Smart City' area establishes one of the key spatial proposals of the Future for Bath.

With pressure building for the acquisition of city centre sites for high value residential development, 'Smart City' focuses primarily on protecting and unlocking appropriate city centre sites for employment-led regeneration which, in addition to new offices and workspaces, would also deliver a mix of new shops, cultural and leisure facilities, cafes and restaurants, apartments and public spaces and an enhanced riverside.

The Manvers Street area would be an obvious choice for higher value office development, with the areas further west at Bath Quays, Green Park and Bath Western Riverside providing further flexibility for office and other workspaces for knowledge and creative industries and education.

In summary, the Future for Bath proposes that a proactive economic development, investment and marketing strategy is undertaken to attract or grow the following sectors of economic activity:

- Intellectual and creative industries
- A stronger presence of the two universities in the city centre
- Research into water, spa, wellbeing, physiology and medical sciences
- Design, eco-design and green technologies
- Business tourism
- Life-long learning and skills

Water and spa culture

Context

The poor connectivity between the south and south-western Bath communities and the city centre, the dislocation caused by the 'fracture zone', the absence of a western gateway and the weak east-west axis across the city centre are explained under the Bath out of Balance section of this document.

With major new development sites coming forward to the south and south-west of the existing city centre, not least the 70 acres of impending regeneration at Bath Western Riverside, the importance of a strong and successful east-west axis to connect the new communities to the city centre cannot be overestimated.

The basis of such an axis already exists. This begins as far east as the Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street and the Recreation Ground.

It then moves west around the heritage and cultural landmarks of Pulteney Bridge; the Victoria Art Gallery and Guildhall; Parade Gardens and Orange Grove; Bath Abbey; the Tourist Information Centre; the Roman Baths; Thermae Bath Spa; the Theatre Royal, Egg Theatre and Ustinov Studio; Kingsmead Square; the multiplex cinema and Green Park Station.

The primary spine to this route comprises Cheap Street and Westgate Street leading to Kingsmead Square, which then provides a short connection west to Green Park Station and the river via James Street West, and a fork south to Bath Quays via Avon Street.

With full or partial pedestrianisation and significant improvements to the public realm, the east-west axis appears to offer an exciting opportunity for Bath.

The secondary spines of Upper Borough Walls leading to a redeveloped Sawclose; and Abbey Church Yard and York Street leading along Bath Street to Thermae Bath Spa, also offer significant scope for improvement.

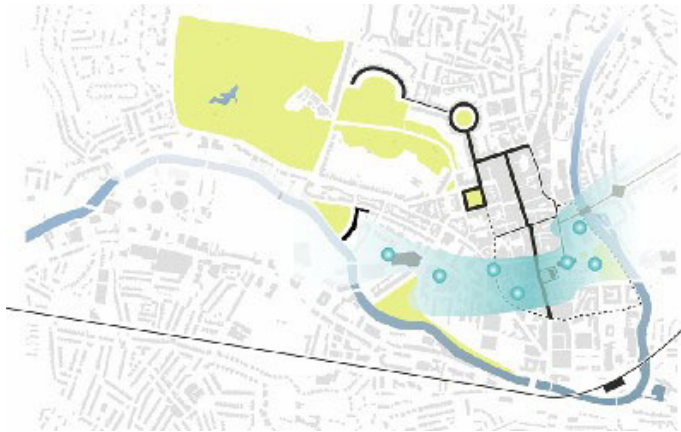
Proposals

The proposed east-west axis would connect Pulteney Weir – the only example in the city centre of successful engagement with the river – to the river and a potentially exciting new destination at Green Park Station under the proposals for Bath Western Riverside: East.

At the centre of this axis lie Bath's three hot springs – the King's Spring, the Cross Spring and the Hetling Spring – adding history, distinctiveness and mystery to the concept of a water route.

The east-west axis provides a unique opportunity for Bath to define a strong cultural core to balance and intersect Bath's main north-south shopping spine, which physically expresses the revival of spa culture and the themes of 'water and wellbeing' and 'mind, body and spirit'.

The plan below illustrates how the existing attractions based on the river and hot springs could be developed to encourage an east-west axis across the established north-south dominance and help expand the city centre.



Bath's potential east-west axis, showing how the main water-based attractions (circled in blue shading) cut across the present north-south dominance (shown as a black line) from SouthGate up to the Royal Crescent

In addition to the resurfacing of streets and spaces, improvements to the public realm might include a series of water features, a dramatic light feature, or high-quality public work of art visually linking the river at Pulteney Weir to the river beyond Green Park Station.

The clustering of existing heritage, cultural and spa-related attractions along this route could be enhanced with new attractions to strengthen the Water and Spa Culture concept.

The anticipated launch of cutting-edge arts and entertainment venue Komedia at Westgate Street, the new spa hotel adjacent to Thermae Bath Spa and the proposed redevelopment of Sawclose (which has also been identified as a potential small casino site) all

add weight to this concept.

Other potential ideas for future consideration include:

- A refashioned Parade Gardens
- A refashioned Kingsmead Square
- A new destination at Green Park Station

Bath Western Riverside

The regeneration of Bath Western Riverside (BWR) has been a major aspiration of the Council and the local community for more than 25 years.

Bath Western Riverside comprises about 70 acres of brownfield land and represents the most significant development opportunity in Bath and one of the most important urban regeneration opportunities in the South West Region.

BWR is identified in all regional, sub-regional and local policies and strategies as Bath's key site for the delivery of housing and employment targets.

Following years of feasibility studies and public consultation, the policy for the regeneration of the site was established by the Council's Planning Authority in 2003 in the Bath Western Riverside Supplementary Planning Guidance and in the subsequent Bath Western Riverside Supplementary Planning Document (2006).

See bathwesternriverside.com for more information

The Future for Bath Vision and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document divide Bath Western Riverside into two distinct but well connected character areas: the eastern end providing an extension to, and completion of, Bath city centre; and the western end providing a new high density, sustainable residential community.

Bath Western Riverside East

BWR East stretches from Green Park Station in the east to Victoria Bridge Road in the west and is contained between the Upper Bristol Road to the north and the Lower Bristol Road to the south.

The site currently includes Green Park Station; Sainsbury's supermarket and car park; the office buildings on the southern side of James Street West, including the Primary Care Trust; the small retail and office park off Ivo Peters Road; the Homebase store

and car park and the Sainsbury's petrol-filling station.

Green Park Station

The Green Park Station area is seen as an exciting, original and highly distinctive new destination within the city centre, offering a unique family-friendly experience by day and, by night, a new food, arts, cultural and entertainment quarter.

As the western anchor of the proposed east-west Water and Spa Culture axis, Green Park Station is envisaged as a focal point for the theme of 'mind, body and spirit' providing:

- a major market offering locally sourced and organic food and arts and crafts
- a range of fine food outlets
- specialist cafes, bars and restaurants
- a cookery school
- holistic therapies and products
- a showcase for design, eco-design and eco-products
- a showcase for high quality art and crafts.

The spectacular open space under the station canopy would provide an all-season covered plaza which would connect to the river via a major new external square providing a grand public space for events, activities and markets and for organised play activities for children.

Around this new public square and between Green Park Station and the river the following uses could potentially be clustered:

- 'lifestyle' retailing, including furniture, kitchen and cookery products, books, music, technology, art and design
- housing
- workspaces for creative industries
- a new cultural and conference building and hotel or a new commercial art gallery or museum
- cafes, bars and restaurants
- a nightclub

A new wider bridge connection to the western side and high quality landscaping to open up and celebrate the river would establish an impressive new area of riverside, providing a contemporary twin to Parade Gardens at the other end of the east-west axis.

The concepts for BWR East need further testing as part of the forthcoming Retail Strategy and Cultural Development Study and, if supported, would need to be considered alongside other options in the forthcoming

Local Development Framework.

See also the Pleasure and culture section of this document.

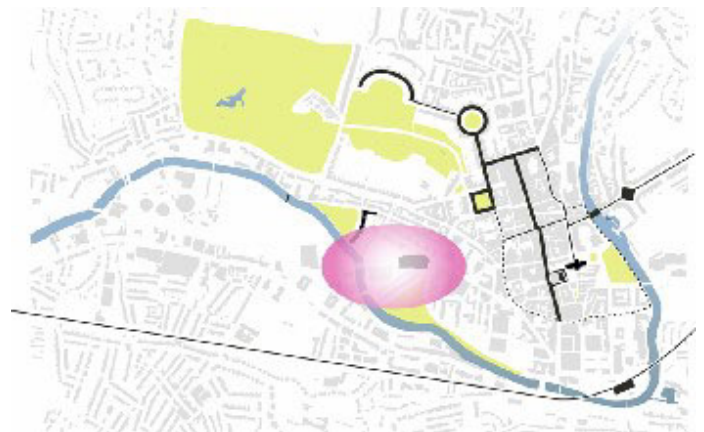
From the River to Victoria Bridge Road

Moving west over the river to the current site of the Homebase store and car park, a new urban quarter is proposed, providing a mix of:

- offices and workspaces
- an alternative site for a cultural and conference building and hotel (see Green Park Station above)
- educational facilities
- Sainsbury's supermarket
- apartments
- a small-to medium-scale gallery or museum

The initial proposals outlined for BWR East require further master planning, viability testing and an agreed land assembly strategy in order to move forward. They assume the relocation of Sainsbury's supermarket elsewhere within the BWR East area and the relocation of Homebase and other retail units off-site. These proposals require further discussion and negotiation with existing landowners and occupiers.

The proposals must also integrate with emerging master planning and land-use planning proposals for Bath Quays and Manvers Street to ensure a coherent, co-ordinated and phased approach to development is achieved across the city centre.



A plan showing the area earmarked for the Bath Western Riverside eastern section development, shaded in pink

Bath Western Riverside West

Bath Western Riverside West falls within the same north-south boundaries as Bath Western Riverside East and runs east to west from Victoria Bridge Road to Windsor Bridge Road.

The area includes the former Stothert and Pitt factory land, now owned by Crest Nicholson, Wessex Water's pumping station, the site of the gas holders, a number of car showrooms and small businesses along the Lower Bristol Road and, north of the river, the Council's civic amenity site and waste recycling centre.

Crest Nicholson scheme

The development proposals for Bath Western Riverside West have been the subject of an Outline Planning Application by Crest Nicholson to Bath and North East Somerset Council's Development Control Committee, which was considered by the committee on 17 January, 2007.

The committee was minded to consent to the scheme subject to the approval of the Secretary of State and the completion of a Section 106 Agreement between the Council and the developer.

Crest Nicholson has recently resubmitted its application with revised drawings, which is currently going through the planning process.

The Outline Planning Application has been prepared by a nationally and internationally renowned team of locally based design consultants including architects Feilden Clegg Bradley, landscape designers Andrew Grant Associates, engineers Buro Happold and sustainable energy advisers Energy for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Because of the status of the scheme, it is not covered in any detail with the Future for Bath documentation.

Key components of this landmark contemporary scheme include:

- Up to 2,000 new homes, more than 25% of which should be affordable housing units
- Two new riverside parks and a range of high quality public squares and spaces
- Two new bridges and the restoration of the listed Victoria Bridge
- A primary school and community centre
- Local needs shops

- Managed student housing
- A GP practice
- High standards of design quality
- High standards of sustainability and energy management, including 10% renewable energy, sustainable energy centre, combined heat and power and an on-site car club
- State-of-the-art public transport with the proposed new bus-based rapid transit system
- Cycle storage and cycle and pedestrian routes
- 'Shared Space' approach to the design of on-site roads
- 0.7 parking spaces per housing unit

Subject to the formal approval of the Outline Planning Application, a detailed planning application submitted by Crest Nicholson for the first phase of development at Bath Western Riverside West will be considered for approval by the Council's Development Control Committee.

Sport and leisure

Bath has outstanding sports credentials and a strong relationship between sport, leisure and wellbeing.

Context

If Green Park Station provides an anchor to the western end of the east-west 'Water and Spa Culture' axis, then the site comprising Bath Rugby Club, the Recreation Ground, Bath Sports and Leisure Centre and Bath Pavilion provides an appropriate eastern anchor.

At national and regional levels, participation in sport is being actively promoted alongside competitive sport and the traditional boundaries between sport and fitness, nutrition, conventional therapies (such as physiotherapy and hydrotherapy) and complementary therapies are dissolving into one overarching theme of wellbeing.

Sports England has, in recent years, provided funding for new Healthy Living and Discovery centres, demonstrating its support for a more holistic approach to health.

In Bath the establishment of Team Bath, the increasingly strong relationship between the city's Rugby Club and the University of Bath's Sports Training Village, the potential for Bath providing a training facility for the 2012 London Olympics and the Council's own commitment to sports development within the Bath and North East Somerset community

all offer promising content for a city-wide concept of health and wellbeing.

This concept also embraces Thermae Bath Spa, the work of the Primary Care Trust, the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, the complementary medicine sector and arts and culture.

Future plans for an expanded rugby club are not covered by the Future for Bath Vision.

However, the significant contribution of Bath Rugby Club to the profile and economy of the city is clearly recognised within the Vision.

Proposals

The following proposals are outlined to ensure the continued success of sport, leisure, health and wellbeing in Bath:

- Active promotion of sports for all
- Retained and enhanced Bath Rugby Club and explore potential for a new sports and leisure centre
- Increased focus on sport and health science as a future contributor to the Bath economy
- Closer working between local sports, leisure and health providers to achieve a coherent sports, health and wellbeing offer for local people and visitors to the city

Expanded city centre

The Future for Bath spatial framework would deliver an enlarged city centre with:

- More coherent, engaging and clearly understandable heritage attractions
- A stronger and more distinctive north-south retail core
- A redefined and strengthened east-west cultural axis
- A series of high quality and well connected new urban quarters at the south-eastern, southern and south-western fringes of the city centre offering new employment, education, retail, culture, leisure and housing opportunities

The course of the River Avon provides a natural boundary for primary city centre land uses and, in particular, retail.

The area between the river at Green Park Station and Victoria Bridge Road then provides a zone of appropriate 'edge of centre' development between the

south-western boundary of the expanded city centre at Green Park Station and the new residential community at Bath Western Riverside West.

This new high-density urban community would then occupy a similar relationship to the city centre and offer a similar mix of uses as the Georgian residential extensions to the north and east of the city centre.

The proposed expansion of Bath's city centre inevitably poses a range of threats and challenges to the compact form and established structure and character of the current city centre.

However, if handled correctly, it also provides a magnificent opportunity to realise many of the ideas and aspirations outlined under the Future for Bath Vision, and, in particular, to build a more successful and enduring economy and an increased level of public life and wellbeing for the city.



Map showing the areas of proposed expansion of Bath's city centre shaded in purple with the adjacent new residential community, the western end of Bath Western Riverside, in brown

People and place

Throughout the history of civilisation, the public realm – the spaces between buildings – has been a focal point for public life. The squares, promenades, streets, lanes, markets and riversides of our city and town centres are where people have always gathered to look at and meet others, to demonstrate and campaign, to barter and trade, to play, to parade, to celebrate and to share their grief.

The public realm can offer spaces for fun, entertainment and social interaction and quiet areas for those who value solitude and contemplation.

Public space is open and free to use. It provides an essential opportunity for all parts of society, for the familiar and the foreign, to mingle and connect.

Over the past century, the increasing dominance of the motor car has done much to damage the character and quality of public space and public life in cities and towns across the world. In Bath's case, accommodating the car within the city centre has been a particularly uncomfortable experience due to local topography and narrow medieval and Georgian streets.

Elsewhere in Europe pioneering cities, such as Copenhagen in Denmark and Freyburg in Germany, have done much in recent decades to reverse the hierarchy of car and pedestrian and to put people and sense of place right at the heart of urban life.

The economic success, popularity and increased wellbeing that these and other cities have subsequently experienced provide inspiration and guidance when considering the future of Bath's city centre and when planning new areas of development within the city.

The following proposals explore a range of options and plans for Bath's riverside, for transport and movement within the city and for an enhanced public realm.

- Access and movement
- Riverside
- Public space and public life

During 2006, the Council worked with a leading national firm of urban designers, City ID, to translate the concepts behind the Future for Bath into a

framework for a place-making strategy for Bath.

This work highlighted the opportunity to use Bath's unique character to guide the future design and development of the city's public realm. The place-making framework will be developed into a full Public Realm and Movement Strategy during 2007.

Access and movement

The task of improving Bath's congested and polluted road network and removing the dominance of traffic in the city centre is one of the most important, transformative and expensive challenges currently facing the city.

Significant progress has already been made in this direction by the Council in conjunction with the other West of England local authorities through the Local Transport Plan and Bath Package bids of more than £50m to the Department of Transport.

In particular, the Bath Package, if successful, would unlock almost £50m of public investment in new transportation measures including a new bus 'rapid transit system'.

Initially the rapid transit bus would run along a dedicated route between the city centre and an enlarged Park and Ride at Newbridge to the west and a Park and Ride at Lambridge in the east. However, future stages of the scheme envisage the delivery of an integrated city-wide network connecting Park and Rides on all approaches to Bath with the city centre. The proposed new rapid transit system offers new cleaner fuel options, high-tech passenger information, pre-purchasing of tickets and the external and internal appearance of a modern tram. It provides Bath's best opportunity for a radical change to its public transport network and the city recently learned that the Bath Package has achieved 'programme entry' with the Department of Transport.

The Local Transport Plan and Bath Package bids also deliver a range of additional access and movement benefits and innovations, including new restrictions on car access to parts of the city centre.

Proposals

Building on the potential success of the Bath Package bid, the Future for Bath Vision proposes the following objectives to guide the development of future access and movement proposals in Bath:

- Reverse the hierarchy of the car and the

pedestrian in the city centre, creating a series of streets and spaces that give priority to the pedestrian

- Develop and promote Bath as Britain's most 'walkable city' including improved pedestrian signage and way-finding systems
- Deliver Park and Ride sites on each axis of approach to Bath
- Deliver an expanded rapid transit network
- Consider the implementation of demand management measures including congestion charging
- New pedestrian and cycle routes
- Expanded car clubs
- More 'shared space' areas
- Safe walking routes to schools for local children

Riverside

The vital connection between rivers, wellbeing and sustainability is increasingly understood and appreciated at national and international levels. Rivers provide a strong and often distinctive sense of place for many cities, towns and communities, as well as a sense of connectivity to other places.

Although the shape and size of Bath's city centre is defined by the course of the River Avon, its once beautiful river is given little prominence in the current life of the city. The river should be seen as one of Bath's greatest natural assets. Sadly, with the exception of the small area around Pulteney Bridge and weir, the river is treated as an environmental liability and threat.

Although long stretches of the river offer good pedestrian access, in other parts access is limited or completely obstructed. The majority of Bath's riverside buildings turn their backs to the river and even recent developments such as the new SouthGate retail quarter and transport interchange, conform to this tradition.

The public realm along the river is often ugly and neglected and does little to promote Bath's World Heritage Site status. Nevertheless, despite these problems and constraints, the River Avon continues to provide a major amenity to the city, loved and appreciated by many.

In addition to the River Avon, the Kennet and Avon Canal also passes through Bath. There has been significant investment in improving the operation and

sustainability of the Kennet and Avon Canal in recent years, with more than £25m of assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The majority of Bath's key future regeneration sites, including The Podium, the Rugby Club, Manvers Street, Bath Quays and Bath Western Riverside, all share a direct relationship with the river. New flood-plain regulations and policies often restrict the developable area of these sites and add cost and complexity to development proposals. However, this should not deter Bath from learning from the world's best examples of riverside regeneration and using new development to unlock the enormous potential of its river and canal for the wider benefit and wellbeing of the city and its people.

Proposals

- Whole River Catchment Water Management Strategy
- New bridges
- New public spaces and promenades
- Activities and events

Whole River Catchment Water Management Strategy

The risk of future flooding in Bath and the restriction this currently places on the development of riverside land in the city centre could be eased by changes to countryside management along the entire length of the river or catchment area.

The Council is keen to participate in the development of a whole river catchment water management strategy, which is being led by a partnership of relevant organisations including water agencies, nature organisations, water and wetland champions and rural land owners and managers.

The successful delivery of a whole river catchment water management strategy has the potential to deliver the following benefits:

- Increased biodiversity
- Higher riverside land values
- Dependable long-term drinking water supply
- Moderated river flow and reduced flood risk
- Easier water's edge access for public enjoyment
- Even greater 'Bath-appeal' for residents and visitors.

Further information on this strategy will be made public as it develops.

New bridges

At present the river in Bath represents a barrier between the northern and southern communities of the city.

The forthcoming redevelopment of riverside sites to the south and south-west of the centre provides a major opportunity to build a more permeable and better connected city through the provision of new river bridges, particularly pedestrian crossings.

New public spaces and promenades

The redevelopment of riverside sites in Bath creates the opportunity to deliver a series of new riverside public spaces and promenades which form strong connections to the key streets and spaces of the city centre.

At points along the river, it is envisaged that certain developments will break through the sheet piling and step down closer to the water, creating distinctive areas of civic or community space.

Activities and events

New bridge crossings and riverside spaces create new opportunities for public events and activities. The city has the opportunity to engage events organisers, river and canal agencies and trusts; boating organisations and the cultural, sports and leisure sectors to develop a programme of water-based activities and events to animate and celebrate Bath's underutilised waterways.

A number of places, eg Copenhagen in Denmark, are also rediscovering their rivers for swimming and new riverside lidos and urban beaches are opening in a range of towns and cities throughout Europe. The opportunity for local people and visitors to swim in the River Avon, whether at a restored Cleveland Baths or in other parts of the river, should be actively explored as new riverside development schemes come forward.

Public space and public life

Context

In the 18th century, Bath was a world leader in the art of 'place' or 'city' making. A range of distinctive features including the city's grand and intimate spaces framed by the architectural splendour of its terraces, squares, crescents and circus; its wide pavements and parades; the delineation of public and private space; the exceptional quality and originality of its ironwork features; its sedan chair and bath chair; and, not least, the emphasis on assembly, culture, health and pleasure, all helped to establish Bath as a place of international significance and influence.

Much of Bath's 18th-century attraction as a city of wellbeing and pleasure was exclusive, being consciously targeted at the aristocratic, the rich and the fashionable. However, the imagination and the commitment to beauty and symmetry that informed the design and quality of Bath's public realm was then, as today, accessible and of benefit to all.

Sadly, much of the clarity, individuality and attention to detail that made Georgian Bath different from other places has now been lost. Many of the city's spectacular streets and public spaces are often clogged with traffic and its air polluted with fumes.

Mock-Victorian benches and fingerposts sit next to plastic litter bins and compete with the clutter of highways signage.

The enduring beauty of Bath's surviving Georgian street furniture and features – its railings, overthrows, lamps, foot scrapers and snuffers, and its pennant stone parades – serve as a reminder of a past when Bath's name was synonymous with gracefulness, elegance and quality.

Proposal

The key proposal for the future development of Bath's public realm is to use the city's unique history and character – its DNA – to inspire the creation of a 21st-century public realm that is simple, engaging and beautiful, and while respectful of the past is clearly of its time.

With major development schemes coming forward in future years, adding new urban quarters and new forms of architecture to the mix of the existing city centre, it is more important than ever that Bath looks

twenty years ahead to a completed city centre and plans now for a well designed, highly distinctive and coherent public realm which glues old and new together into a continuous whole. Such thinking is required to ensure that each successive new development adds to the clarity, cohesion and reputation of the city centre.

Elements of this overarching proposal include:

- A new 'family' of high quality street furniture and finishes, and a new signage and way-finding system to be implemented by new developments and introduced incrementally across the existing city centre over time. This should be of the highest design quality and distinctive to Bath.
- A series of new light, water and public art features to enhance and enliven public spaces and streets
- An increased provision of public lavatories within the city centre
- Dedicated city management for Bath
- A step change in destination management, establishing a more dynamic approach to the marketing, management and maintenance of the centre of Bath

A managed programme of public information, activity and events within the public realm incorporating contemporary art and crafts, culture, heritage, sport, street markets and play. There is some merit in exploring options for a public-private sector agency or partnership to lead and co-ordinate the management of the city centre and the delivery of marketing, tourism, culture and place-making strategies and programmes.

Planning and delivery

While the aspirations and ideas contained within the Future for Bath hopefully represent an appropriate and exciting future direction of travel for the city, it is acknowledged that the planning and funding required to translate vision into reality pose a significant and sobering challenge.

In order to make progress towards delivering some or all of the Future for Bath proposals, the city must actively engage with a range of factors, including:

- Market forces
- Viability
- Access to capital
- Regional/national dimension
- Council dimension
- Wider stakeholders
- Support from the community

- Overcoming regulatory issues
- Changes of policy
- Overcoming complacency

Most importantly, the successful delivery of the vision depends on strong public and private sector leadership.

Business plan and spatial framework

At an early stage in the development of the Future for Bath, the Council decided to appoint internationally respected business consultants Ernst & Young to produce a business plan to challenge and test the vision.

Ernst & Young also produced a financial model which identified more than twenty development sites, undertook an indicative financial appraisal of each site and assessed indicative overall funding requirements to realise the vision.

This process was supported by town planning experts Terence O'Rourke who tested the spatial proposals within the vision.

The Future for Bath Business Plan and Spatial Framework were produced in 2006 and have been available to the public since that time. The documents are, on the whole, highly supportive of the Future for Bath proposals.

The Business Plan was particularly supportive of the plans for economic growth and recommended that growth in Bath should:

- Be focused on the individual, and the theme of 'mind, body and spirit' established in the Vision
- Realise Bath's creativity and intellectual capital opportunities
- Clearly position the city in the market place
- Provide space for business growth
- Set a clear strategy for Bath's unique retail offer
- Establish a clear, focused tourism offer, with business tourism as a priority

The Future for Bath Business Plan also concluded that Bath was capable of contributing to the regional growth agenda, but that growth in the city needed to be carefully managed and controlled to ensure that it was in line with Bath's unique and distinctive status.

Implementation and delivery

A series of studies and strategies are under way to develop the Future for Bath proposals towards implementation. These include a Retail Strategy, Cultural Study, Place-Making Strategy, Business Development and Employment Space Strategy, Housing Development Strategy, and Parking Strategy.

A separate study on Destination Management is also being undertaken by Bath Tourism Plus. Each of these studies involves targeting key stakeholders within the relevant sectors. The outputs and proposed action plans from all of these studies will be integrated early in 2008 to inform:

- A Development and Regeneration Strategy and Delivery Plan, including a master framework for the city centre
- Development of new planning policy for Bath and North East Somerset through the Core Strategy and Local Development Framework process, which will be the subject of on-going community engagement exercises
- The development of an integrated marketing strategy for the city

The Council is also researching and exploring a range of public/private sector delivery mechanisms, such as City Development Companies and Urban Regeneration Companies, to establish the most appropriate model for Bath.

The Council is also in the process of identifying a range of suitable developers to be considered for the future development and regeneration of the city. If Bath is to realise the highly distinctive 'niche' developments proposed by the Future for Bath Vision, the Council will need to work with appropriate 'niche' developers who appreciate Bath's unique character and identity.

Urban Regeneration Panel

In 2004 the Council set up an advisory Urban Regeneration Panel to guide and challenge the proposals for the future development of the city.

The panel comprises six national and international experts with significant experience across a range of disciplines including heritage, urbanism, architecture, planning, development and regeneration, housing, engineering, access and movement and sustainability.

Members of the panel have been directly involved in major regeneration and development schemes within the UK and abroad and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to assist the Council with the development and delivery of the Future for Bath proposals.

The Urban Regeneration Panel members are critical friends and advisers to the Council in preparing for the significant development and regeneration agenda which lies ahead.

The panel is not, however, intended as a substitute for public engagement, which will continue to take place through a range of forums including ongoing public presentations, this document and the Future for Bath website, the Local Planning Authority's consultation on the Core Strategy and, with regard to individual planning applications for development schemes, through the statutory planning process.

The following six national and international experts make up the Urban Regeneration Panel.

Professor Les Sparks OBE DipArch DipTP MRTPI HonDDes FRSA (Chair)



Les Sparks is an architect/planner with substantial local government experience at senior level.

He was Director of Planning and Architecture at Birmingham City Council from 1991 to 1999 and previously Director of Environmental Services at Bath City Council from 1980 to 1991.

While at Bath he was instrumental in establishing the English Historic Towns Forum of which he is now an Honorary Life Member.

In 1999 he was appointed one of the founding Commissioners on CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment).

Professor Sparks was appointed a Commissioner of English Heritage in 2001, and is the Regional Commissioner for the East Midlands. He chaired the former Advisory Committee on the Historic Built

Environment (HBEAC) 2002-03, and is Deputy Chairman of the English Heritage Advisory Committee (EHAC).

He has been Chairman from 2003 of the CABE/English Heritage Urban Panel, and a member since it was set up in January 2000 by English Heritage to advise on major development issues in historic towns and cities.

He chaired the Expert Panel on Historic Buildings and Land for the Heritage Lottery Fund from 1999 to 2001. He acts as a specialist adviser to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Crown Estates Commissioners, and Nottingham City Council.

Professor Sparks was appointed to the Ministry of Defence Historic Buildings Advisory Group in 1994.

Since 1999 he has been a Visiting Professor at the University of West of England, Bristol, where he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Design.

He is a patron of the Urban Design Group and was formerly on the Steering Committee of the Urban Villages Forum. He is a Trustee of Birmingham Conservation Trust and has been a board member of Groundwork Birmingham. He worked part time as a planning inspector from 1999 to 2002, and is a consultant with planning consultants Terence O'Rourke plc.

Professor Sparks has served on various Government steering groups, on working groups of the Urban Task Force and the Urban Green Spaces Task Force, and on the Urban Capacity Group of the UK Round Table on Sustainability.

He was on the Demos/Comedia 'Richness of Cities' project team and was a member of the URBED/DTLR team managing the Towns and Cities: Partners in Urban Renaissance Programme.

He was a specialist member of the Beacon Councils Advisory Committee Round 4, and was a member of the DCMS Steering Group reviewing designation and management regimes for the historic environment.

In his professional career Professor Sparks has specialised in urban design and conservation and was awarded the OBE in 1997 for his services to Urban Regeneration.

Honor Chapman, CBE BSc MPhil FRICS MRTPI (Second Chair)



Honor Chapman has had a distinguished career spanning property, marketing, business and urban development in both the public and private sectors.

She has been closely involved with many of the key urban policy issues in the UK including the early planning of several of the new and expanded towns and the conservation of historic cities including Bath.

She has worked on many schemes in the UK and on the Continent including advising Daimler Benz on concepts and strategy for the redevelopment of the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin after the demolition of The Wall, and the Secretary of State for Wales on the concepts, case for and organisational structure needed to implement the regeneration of Cardiff Bay. As a board member of Cardiff Bay UDC and Chairman of the Development Sub-Committee, she played a crucial role in what became one of the largest urban regeneration schemes in Europe.

Honor retired from Jones Lang LaSalle (international property advisers) at the end of 2003 having been a partner and international director since 1979.

She also retired as a Crown Estate Commissioner having served for seven years. In the mid 1990s (on secondment), she established the London First Centre which markets London to major businesses worldwide.

In September 2003, she was appointed Chairman of the London Development Agency responsible for preparing and delivering the Mayor's business plan for London with an annual budget of more than £300 million.

She is now Chair and Chief Executive of London's new Centre of Excellence in Regeneration to identify and bring world-class experience to the professions of running, managing and developing UK towns and cities.

She holds a MPhil in Town Planning, BSc in Estate Management and Sloan Fellowship of the London Business School. She is a Fellow of the Royal

Society of Arts and an Honorary Fellow of the Society of Property Researchers. She chairs the Burlington Gardens Committee of the Royal Academy.

In 1997, she was awarded a CBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for her services to the property industry and in 1998 was given the College of Estate Management Award for a lifetime's contribution to the property industry.

Honor lives and farms in south Somerset.

Dickon Robinson CBE RIBA FRSA

As Development and Planning Director at the Peabody Trust, London's largest and longest established Housing Trust, Dickon Robinson has been responsible for leading the greatly expanded new build housing and regeneration programmes, which have repositioned Peabody as a key London regeneration agency.



He graduated from the Portsmouth School of Architecture and worked for a management consultancy engaged in environmental and behavioural research and the Hospital Design Partnership before moving into the housing arena as founder member and first Chair of the Soho Housing Association. He was also involved in community action groups in the West End, including the Save Piccadilly Campaign and the Soho Society.

In 1975, he joined the London Borough of Camden Housing Department. As Assistant Director of Housing for Property Services he was responsible for the council's private sector housing programmes and the housing investment programme, building new homes and modernising older estates.

In 1988, Mr Robinson joined the Peabody Trust as Director of Development and Technical Services. He was the Chair of the Foyer Federation between 1992/2001 and has been a board member of St Mungo's and Centrepoint.

He is a CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Commissioner and chair of CABE Space. He is also a member of the English Heritage Urban Panel, a patron of the Urban Design Group

and a visiting Professor of Architecture at the Mackintosh School of Art in Glasgow.

Professionally, and as a West End resident for the past 25 years, he has a particular interest in:

- Mixed used and mixed tenure developments
- Harnessing the arts for regeneration projects
- Promoting innovative construction
- Achieving architectural excellence
- Sustainable housing design

Alan Baxter

Alan Baxter is an engineer and urban designer with a wide range of interests and projects, which go far beyond the usual realm of engineering.



His firm, Alan Baxter & Associates, handles projects from the conservation of major historic buildings and new buildings of architectural significance to masterplanning and transportation studies.

He and his firm are handling a large number of significant urban design projects from the extension of Ashford in Kent to masterplans for Poundbury, Llandarcy, Kettering and Northampton.

His work also encompasses the authorship of key publications such as Places, Streets and Movement, Urban Design Compendium, Better Places to Live and Paving the Way. He provides advice on issues of relevance such as Codes and movement engineering.

On many projects the integration of urban, conservation, engineering and transport issues leads to valuable and creative solutions.

Mr Baxter is a member of English Heritage's Urban Panel, as well as their National and London committee, and has just completed a term on the Buildings and Land Panel of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

He is a patron of the Urban Design Group and a Commissioner of the Independent Transport Commission.

Professor Chris Baines

Chris Baines is one of the UK's leading environmental campaigners, and an award-winning writer and broadcaster.



He originally trained as a horticulturalist, and after an early career in public parks, commercial contracting and landscape consultancy he taught postgraduate Landscape Architecture at the University of Central England until 1985, when he was awarded a personal chair.

Self-employed for almost 20 years, Professor Baines works primarily as a freelance environmental adviser to central and local government and also to senior executives in the corporate sector.

He has long-standing professional links with major companies in the water, construction, minerals, energy and housing industries and also with the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities programme, the UK's National Urban Forestry Unit, The National House Builders' Federation and the BBC.

He was a member of the UK Commission of Inquiry in to Environmental Health and the government's Ministerial Sounding Board for the recent Rural White Paper.

Professor Baines is a member of the steering committee for CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Space and facilitator for the Green Leaders Forum, which brings together chief executives from more than twenty leading conservation charities and government agencies.

Professor Baines has just completed the maximum six-year period as a trustee appointed by the Prime Minister to the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

He also holds a number of honorary posts in the voluntary sector including Vice-president of the Wildlife Trusts; President of the Thames Estuary Partnership and the Association for Environmentally Conscious Building and a trustee of the Waterways Trust. He is also an Honorary Fellow of both CIWEM and ILAM.

Professor Baines writes and broadcasts frequently, particularly for the BBC. He is a regular speaker or chairman at national and international conferences, and he has a reputation as a joined-up thinker and a partnership broker. He works from home in inner-city Wolverhampton.

Sir Richard MacCormac CBE MA PPRIBA RA



Richard MacCormac is chairman of MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, which was established in 1972 and incorporated in 2002. Richard has taught and lectured widely, and published articles on urban design and architectural theory. He is regularly invited to be an assessor of architectural competitions and design awards. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Royal Academician. Richard has served two terms as a member of the Royal Fine Art Commission and has been a past commissioner for English Heritage. He served as President of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1991 to 1993. In 1994, Richard was awarded a CBE, and received a knighthood in 2001. He is chairman of the Royal Academy Architecture Committee and the Royal Academy Forum. Richard is also a trustee of the Sir John Soane's Museum.

Notable building projects include: Cable & Wireless College, Coventry (RFAC/Sunday Times Building of the Year Award 1994); Garden Quadrangle, St John's College, Oxford (Independent on Sunday Building of the Year Award 1994); Bowra Building, Wadham College, Oxford; Burrell's Fields. Trinity College, Cambridge (RIBA Regional Award 1997, Civic Trust Award 1997, and Brick Award, Supreme Winner 1996), and the Ruskin Library, Lancaster University (Independent on Sunday Building of the Year Award 1996; RFAC/BSkyB Building of the Year, Universities Winner 1998; and Millennium Products status awarded by the Design Council 1999); the Wellcome Wing at the Science Museum (Celebrating Construction Achievement, Regional Award for Greater London 2000); and Southwark Station, Jubilee Line Extension (Millennium Building of the Year Award, RFAC Trust/BSkyB 2000). Current masterplanning projects include the expansion of Cambridge University into West Cambridge and the Phoenix Initiative, a regeneration project for Coventry.

Other current projects include Building 1 in Paternoster Square adjacent to St Paul's Cathedral and the redevelopment/refurbishment of the BBC at Portland Place. Exhibition design includes Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites at Tate Britain, spring 2000 and Surrealism - Desire Unbound shown at Tate Modern, end 2001.

New Projects

Significant development proposals are now emerging or proceeding for:

- The Podium and Cattle Market site
- The Recreation Ground
- Manvers Street
- Southgate
- Bath Quays North and South
- Bath Western Riverside
- Smaller sites such as Milsom Place and Sawclose

As the Future for Bath Vision develops over the next twenty years, the plans will continue to take into account the views of everyone with an interest in the future of the city.

The Future for the Somer Valley

Midsomer Norton, Radstock and the surrounding communities

The Somer Valley Partnership adopted its Community Plan: A Brighter Future, in 2005 with an ambition to create a thriving and vibrant area which has a sense of well-being and identity.

Its future strategic vision aims to revitalise the economy of the Midsomer Norton, Radstock and the surrounding villages, known as the Somer Valley area.

The vision addresses the key economic challenges facing the area due to the decline in traditional manufacturing employment and the need to diversify and expand the local economy.

It is the start of a long-term programme which seeks to deal with the following issues:

- A strong sense of place – improve the town centres and ensure their functions are complementary
- Decline and change – diversify and expand the economy for the area
- Opportunities – increase the aspirations and skills of the workforce and ensure development opportunities are realised
- Challenges – provide a role for Midsomer Norton and Radstock as the focus of a wider economic area

Where dependent on the planning system, these objectives can be considered and implemented through the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).

Community Strategy

The Somer Valley area covers the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock and the Bath and North East Somerset parishes of Camerton, Farrington Gurney, High Littleton, Paulton, Peasedown St John, Shoscombe and Timsbury.

The Future for the Somer Valley proposals derive from the area's Community Plan: A Brighter Future, which was produced in 2005 and updated in 2007.

The Vision seeks to develop and take forward the economic and business-related objectives of the Community Plan in order to address the conclusion that 'a successful economy is the bedrock on which our ambitions for the area will be realised'.

A strong sense of place

Both Radstock and Midsomer Norton were originally market and rural service centres that became mining towns in the North Somerset Coalfield.

Radstock has since Roman times been the focus for communication links. At the beginning of the 19th century the Somerset Coal Canal passed through the town and subsequently the Somerset and Dorset and GWR railway companies operated through Radstock.

Life in the town was dominated by coal mining and the railways for many years giving Radstock its unique character.

Midsomer Norton is a market town dating back to medieval times. Its historic core runs along the River Somer which remains an attractive feature in the High Street. The town has gradually built its role as the main retail centre for the area.

Decline and change

Since the decline in coal mining – the North Somerset Coalfield finally closed in 1973 – there was a steady expansion of new manufacturing and related service industries in the Somer Valley. Industry in the area is now dominated by printing and packaging and the haulage and transport industry.

The recent closure of the Polestar and Alcan printing works, two of the major employers in the area, demonstrates how vulnerable the local economy is to global restructuring and its dependency on a few large employers.

Over the same period the Somer Valley has seen an increase in residential development driven by the area's location outside the Bristol-Bath Green Belt, relatively good access to employment markets and the increasing unaffordability of housing in Bath.

Challenges

- Local housing expansion has led to an increase in out-commuting and an economic imbalance.
- The town centres of Radstock and Midsomer

Norton suffer from poor-quality public realm and dilapidated buildings, and are facing increasing competition from surrounding market towns in Somerset and Wiltshire

- The local economy is at the beginning of a period of restructuring as global economic factors come to bear on the printing and packaging sector
- The area's peripheral location and relative isolation will make it more difficult to attract new economic investment
- There are poor transport links between Midsomer Norton and Radstock and the cities of Bath and Bristol.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are low in parts of the area and the workforce may lack the skills required by new businesses

Opportunities

- The Bath and North East Somerset Business Plan produced by Ernst and Young highlights the economic potential of the wider Somer Valley area
- The Somer Valley Partnership is developing consensus and partnership working across the wider geographical area
- The emergence of a new framework of regional and local planning policies linked to Local Area Agreements which can put a renewed focus on addressing the needs of the area
- Sub-regional initiatives on transport and rural issues which can assist with the development of Parish Plans, to articulate local needs, and the improvement of rural public transport links and services to Bath and Bristol
- The emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) provides the opportunity to review and pursue some of these aspirations through the new planning policy framework

Taken together the above provide opportunities to influence and lead change and deliver the potential of the area to be an important part of the wider Bath and North East Somerset economy.

Economy and skills

Economy

With nearly 30% of jobs in manufacturing, limited office-based service-sector employment and a decline in local farming, the economy in the Somer Valley area faces some serious challenges which need to be addressed.

The local economy is vulnerable to global economic change and the area is facing a period of economic restructuring. To counter this and move towards a modern local economy the need for proactive promotion of the area, the targeting of new economic activity, the realisation of opportunities to bring forward new development sites and enhancing the levels of business support in the area become increasingly important.

Skills

In parallel with the development of new employment opportunities local skills levels should also be addressed.

The area has a higher proportion of residents with less than NVQ Level 2 qualifications and 'poor' literacy and numeracy skills, which could prevent people benefiting from new employment opportunities in the area and may act a disincentive to potential investors.

Action is required to ensure that there is a joint approach with education partners and the Learning and Skills Council to addressing employment skills needs, utilising the strengths of Norton Radstock College and building on the specialisms and enterprise activities of the area's secondary schools.

Town centres

The 'Brighter Futures' Community Plan recognises the importance of the two towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock as focal points for the area and emphasises their role in providing services for the surrounding villages and rural communities.

The Community Plan sets out a strategic vision for the town centres:

- To develop Midsomer Norton, Radstock and village centres as distinctive, complementary, prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe-centres for the benefit of residents, shoppers, visitors, tourists and the business community capitalising on the area's key strengths of strong community, attractive environment and good location.

It also establishes overall objectives in relation to the future roles of the two town centres:

- To develop Midsomer Norton's role as the market town for the area by consolidating and enhancing the retail offer, the range of available leisure and

community facilities and transport links and the creation of new employment opportunities.

- To develop and enhance Radstock's role as a local service and employment centre and focal point for the community, by reinforcing and enhancing retail provision and community facilities, expansion of tourism and small business enterprise, and providing for more people to live in the centre, particularly through the opportunities presented by the regeneration of the vacant railway and other land.

The Future of the Somer Valley proposals look in more detail at the issues facing the town centres and key actions that can be taken to take forward the objectives of the Community Plan.

Midsomer Norton

Midsomer Norton town centre has more than 120 retail units, free public car parks, banking, library and leisure facilities that complement the town's retail offer. It caters for the majority of the local service needs in the Somer Valley area and attracts frequent shoppers from its catchment population.

The town centre has a limited range of shops and is facing increasing competition from nearby towns such as Frome and Wells.

Recently Argos, Halfords and Sainsbury's have opened stores in the town, helping to improve the overall retail quality, but opportunities to attract new occupiers are limited.

The town has a linear shopping area which is very elongated and lacks a central focus. The River Somer is potentially an attractive feature in the High Street but currently acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement and the streamside has a fragmented retail frontage.

Other employment space within the town centre is limited. The Hollies is the only modern purpose-built office accommodation and there is little vacant office accommodation available in the town. There is scope for reinforcing the town centre's employment role which will help to increase pedestrian footfall and expenditure.

Midsomer Norton has the potential to build on its assets. The town centre has a number of attractive stone buildings and these together with the River

Somer flowing through the middle of the High Street provide a potentially attractive streetscape.

However some buildings detract from the town centre environment and there may be scope for selective redevelopment and/or refurbishment to improve the overall urban environment and appeal of the town centre, support the expansion of retailing in the town and provide a new 'heart' for the High Street.

Radstock

The centre of Radstock has been uniquely shaped by its industrial heritage and local topography. The closure of the coalfields and the withdrawal of the railways removed the main historic focus for the town.

Radstock is a very small shopping centre dominated by the Radco superstore. The centre acts mainly as a local/neighbourhood shopping facility for local residents within Radstock although the Radco store has a wider catchment area for food, grocery and comparison shopping.

The overall function of the town centre is complemented by a small number of specialist independent comparison shops attracting customers looking for specific goods and by the Mining Museum, which attracts leisure visitors.

There is little other commercial space within the town centre which houses less than 10% of the area's stock of office floorspace.

The dominance of the road network contributes towards the lack of a cohesive town centre. Shops and facilities are spread out in small clusters and frontages, weakening Radstock's retailing and service function.

Providing a new focus and a more homogeneous central area for Radstock is the key to building its role as a local service and employment centre.

The redundant railway land running into the centre is a unique regeneration opportunity which can bring forward new retail and employment floor space as well as housing, and the creation of the Miners' Memorial Garden on Waterloo Road has started the process of public realm enhancement.

The Future for Keynsham

The Future for Keynsham is one part of the Future of Bath and North East Somerset proposals, which will be one of the key inputs into the preparation of the Spatial Vision for the district to be laid out in the Core Strategy.

The work will influence policy options considered in the preparation of the Core Strategy. In addition, some of the specific proposals for development and regeneration described in the Visions may be carried forward as part of the Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

A number of elements of the proposals will not be implemented through the planning system and will need to be taken forward via other means, for example by the management and maintenance of the public realm, cultural activities and encouraging the voluntary sector.

The Future for Keynsham proposes to bring a positive direction for the long-term future of the town, which will assure Keynsham's role as independent, sustainable and a great place to live and work.

Crucially, it is about developing confidence in the town's future – in encouraging investment and promoting a sense of well-being in the community.

The focus is not just on development, but also on the community and the way that everyone can work together to promote a better quality of life.

Keynsham occupies a strategic location between Bath and Bristol. It is a proud and independent town.

Keynsham was historically important in Roman and Saxon times, a busy market town in the Victorian and Edwardian periods and the site of the influential chocolate manufacturers Fry's, in the 1920s. The town could be said to have been 'coasting' since the 1970s. Meanwhile physical development outside the town, especially in Bristol, has changed the environment within which Keynsham operates.

These proposals aim to help Keynsham catch up economically and improve and enhance its built environment.

A number of opportunities and challenges now face Keynsham. These cannot be ignored. If there is no change within the next twenty years the town's recovery will suffer further. In fact, there is now a great opportunity to:

- Enhance the town with physical development
- Improve the economy through development
- Make Keynsham ready for the future
- Help Keynsham to capitalise on its location
- Help Keynsham to remain proud and independent

Keynsham's identity

The town of Keynsham has a strong sense of independence which reflects its ancient roots. Its historical and geographical context has had a strong influence on the forming of ideas for its future development over the next twenty years.

History

Keynsham's position, close to the confluence of the rivers Chew and Avon, has made it attractive to settlers from early times and the Romans constructed several villas in the area.

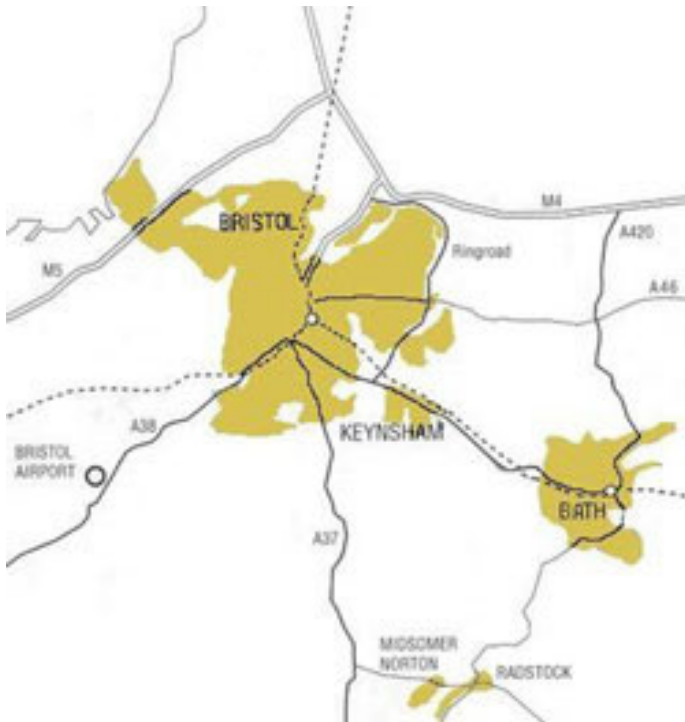
There was a Saxon church in the town and a large and important abbey which was plundered after the 16th-century Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII.

Keynsham was a centre for milling, and had fulling, corn, brass and steel mills. The coming of the railway led to an increase in house-building and gave impetus to the quarrying industry. It was one of the first towns in the country to have electric street lighting.

Fry's built a chocolate factory on the edge of the town in the 1920s, which is now Cadbury Trebor Bassett and has, over the years, been a major source of local employment.

After the Second World War, Keynsham became a dormitory town for Bristol and latterly, Bath, with a building boom transforming the area. The town hall, library and clock tower were all built in the 1960s. The whole of the High Street is now a Conservation Area.

Geography



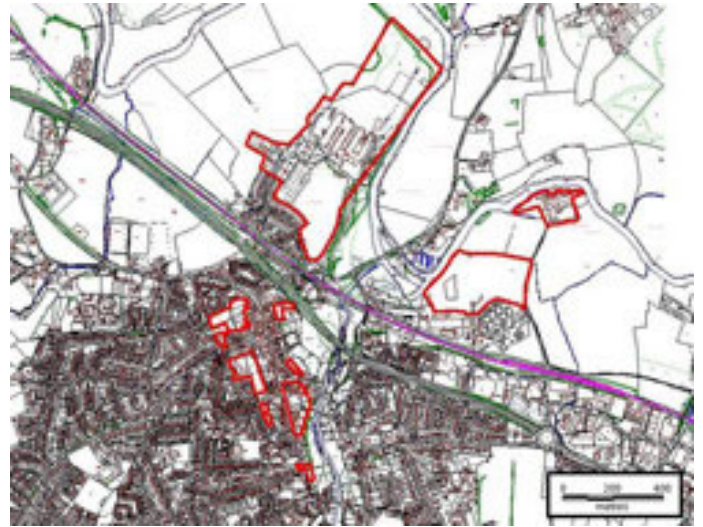
A map showing Keynsham's strategic location between Bath and Bristol

Keynsham is situated where the rivers Chew and Avon meet and has good road and rail links to Bristol and Bath, the south coast and beyond. It is about 20 minutes drive to Bristol International Airport with its transatlantic links.

Its rural setting is protected by Green Belt which separates the town from Bristol in one direction and Salford in the other.

The town is uniquely positioned to strengthen itself as an independent community and there are several potential development and redevelopment sites within its boundaries.

Drivers behind the vision



A plan outlining in red the areas of Keynsham that have been identified as having potential for development or redevelopment

- Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy – increased need for delivery of housing in the district and need for further employment opportunities
- Local Plan for Bath & North East Somerset – potential for new homes and associated employment in South-West Keynsham by 2011
- Local Area Agreement
- Development of low-carbon economy may affect travel/commuting patterns, balance of work/housing
- Keynsham needs to establish its role within the sub-region
- Strong community desire to retain town's own identity against outside pressures
- Possible development sites include St John's Court, part of the Cadbury's site and Broadmead Lane
- Bath & North East Somerset Council office accommodation strategy and the importance to the town of a fully utilised Riverside site
- Aspirations for further education and expansion of Norton Radstock College
- Increasing retail competition from superstores in Bristol
- Tiredness and anonymity of town centre, with a need to bring redevelopment forward and enhance the public realm within the central area
- Housing issues: older stock, affordability

- Potential schemes to utilise/enhance river setting
- Growth of potential within population/residents: energy and creativity needs to be harnessed, volunteering opportunities expanded, strong arts and sports representation built upon
- Renewal of the town's health facilities
- Implementation of review of primary and secondary schools: new St Keyna School, closure of Temple and Keynsham Primaries

The way forward

The challenges facing Keynsham will influence its future direction as well as ensuring its historic values are retained. The town will be somewhere that people aspire to live and work in. It will have all the advantages of good connections to its neighbouring cities and an attractive rural setting in which to evolve a vibrant new future.

Priorities for the town's future strengths can be broadly identified as:

- Keynsham as home
- Keynsham as a learning community
- Keynsham as a 21st-century market town
- Keynsham as a working town
- The next steps

Keynsham as home

- Keynsham will be a great place to live in, a great place in which to bring up children
- There will be a stronger feeling of belonging and strengthened community spirit with integration of new developments
- There will be excellent facilities for family support, such as the Hazelwood Family Centre
- There will be excellent facilities for elderly people, such as the new care village at Hawthorns
- Residential growth: some new housing is inevitable but the Green Belt between Keynsham and Bristol should be inviolate
- new development should be integrated into the life of the town
- new building should help to bring revitalisation of the town as a whole
- Keynsham should build upon its existing strengths so that people can enjoy sports, arts and leisure more fully
- The town's green setting will be protected, with footpaths radiating out into the surrounding countryside and links to national cycle routes
- The town centre public spaces should complement

- the riverside, with potential to develop a marina, riverside restaurants and water transport
- Some of the poor quality 1960/70s architecture should go, replaced by good, modern design which will enhance the town centre environment and stand the test of time
- A modern health park will improve local access to quality healthcare

Keynsham as a learning community

- The town will provide a comprehensive range of opportunities so that everyone can learn to their full potential
- Affordable, accessible nursery provision
- Excellent schools
- Improved opportunities for young people over sixteen within Keynsham, specifically to improve access to basic skills training, to address the needs of 45% of the town's working population who have less than NVQ Level 2 qualification, and target support to areas of greatest need (eg South Keynsham where the figure is 52%)
- Children will grow up with an awareness of the town's history, with Keynsham's world renowned historic artefacts on display

Keynsham as a 21st-century market town

Keynsham grew as a focus for the rural area around it as people came into town to the weekly livestock market, to shop, to meet up and exchange news and gossip. We need a new concept of a market town, to include:

- The town as a retail centre with an established identity achieved through private/public sector co-operation
- Better quality public spaces, attracting an anchor foodstore, retaining local needs shops and expanding specialist retailing
- The town as an information centre, a one-stop shop for service users, with a top-of-the-range library and meeting places
- A place to spend leisure time with more places to eat out, better sports and arts facilities
- The role of the town centre sites should be clarified within an agreed town centre development framework, with development briefs for individual sites brought forward in a phased sequence

Keynsham as a working town

- Employment growth achieved by expanding and upgrading sites including Cadbury's and the Riverside site
- Traffic and transport
- Examine the capacity of the spine roads
- Resolve the issue of the South Bristol Ring Road and avoid erosion of the Green Belt between Keynsham, Bristol and Bath
- Improve public transport interchange
- Improve the bus service between Keynsham and Bath (frequency and affordability)
- The rail service should be enhanced, with better links from the rail station throughout the town
- It should be easier to choose to walk, cycle and use public transport
- Traffic in the town centre should be examined to ensure that the town centre is a safe and pleasant place for pedestrians

The next steps

- Community engagement strategy
- Spatial Strategy/Development Framework - identifying development priorities for key sites, Development Briefs for individual sites
- Transport Study
- Agree a planning framework
- Development Agreements with developers
- Housing demand assessment
- Council resources
- Revitalised Keynsham needs a 'theme' or marketing brand or image (via signs, marketing literature, etc)