



Joint Local Access Forum (JLAF)

for Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire

Draft Minutes of meeting, Thursday, 6th March 2025

Date: Thursday, 6th March 2025

Time: 2:00pm

Venue: Community Space, Market Walk, Keynsham, BS29 1FS

Present: JLAF Members: Kathy Thomas (Chair of the JLAF) (KT), John Darvill (JD), Peter Bird (PB), Charlie Moore (CM), Rennie Dickins (RD), Andrew Gough (AG), Ann Fay (AF), Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall (SS-M).

Also in attendance: George Clutten – Radstock Town Council (GC), Charlie Steel - Bristol City Council (CS), Lindsay Saunders – South Glos Council (LS), Graeme Stark – Bath & North East Somerset Council and Secretary to the JLAF (GS).

		Action
A	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
A1	Introductions KT welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
A2	Apologies Donald MacIntyre (DM), Ken Mill (KM), Jef Rowland (KM), Michael Bell (MB) and Katie Davis have given their apologies.	
A3	Declarations of interest None.	
A4	Minutes of the last meeting held on 7th November 2024 The draft minutes from the November 2024 meeting have been circulated to all JLAF members. The amended minutes were approved unanimously as a true and correct record.	
B	<u>MAIN BUSINESS</u>	
B1	Local Plans <u>Bristol</u> <i>"The new local plan will set out how Bristol will develop up to 2040. It will help deliver the new homes and jobs we need and safeguard the environment we value. On 31 October 2023, Full Council agreed that the Local Plan publication version (November 2023) should be published for representations to be made and then submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The Local plan publication version (November 2023) is now undergoing independent examination following its submission to the Secretary of State on 25 April 2024. The Secretary of State has</i>	

appointed three Inspectors to carry out the examination. Robert Young has been appointed as Programme Officer to organise and administer the examination. The hearing opened on 25 February 2025 at the M Shed in Bristol BS1 4RN and is currently scheduled to run until 4th April before reconvening again on 15 April 2025 and concluding by 25 April 2025."

Bath & North East Somerset

"As a result of changes to national Planning policy, we are resetting our Local Plan, which works within, and supplements, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The central parts of the proposed national changes are:

- a revised house-building target, which aims to tackle the country's huge housing crisis*
- measures aiming to stimulate economic growth*

There is an explainer video on YouTube, to understand more about the relationship between national Planning policy and our Local Plan. Our Reset Document updates you on why we need to reset the Local Plan and what this means. It outlines some broad approaches to accommodating new housing, employment development and supporting infrastructure across the District."

South Gloucestershire

"We welcome the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the government which will now allow us to move forward swiftly to consult on our updated new Local Plan. Our Regulation 19 – Local Plan has now been sent to Cabinet. You can view the Cabinet Dispatch version of the plan and supporting appendices online. The Regulation 19 Local Plan was presented to Cabinet on 3 February and full Council on 12 February, ahead of progressing to consultation before 12 March 2025 in accordance with arrangements set out in the NPPF 2024. We are looking forward to ending the uncertainty for residents about how we will be able to work within the confines of the new NPPF, to deliver the new homes and infrastructure that South Gloucestershire needs, according to a plan that all our communities have had a say in creating."

JD stated that B&NES Council are inviting comment on their Local Plan reset documents. SS-M explained that each authority currently have separate Local Plans and whether an overarching Plan is to be brought forward will depend on the outcome of the WECA Mayoral elections in May. KT stated that the previous Transport Plans still exist irrespective of the state of the Local Plans. JD felt that transport infrastructure should be a key determinant of where houses are built. SS-M highlighted the problem of doubling the housing targets and the impact on that infrastructure.

Bristol City Council Local Plan review webpages:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-regulations/planning-policy-and-guidance/local-plan/local-plan-review>

Bath & North East Somerset Council Local Plan reset webpages:

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/local-plan-reset-feb-2025>

South Gloucestershire Council Local Plan webpages:

<https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/new-local-plan/>

B2	Abandonment of 2026/31 Cut Off DEFRA have announced that they are abandoning the 2026 Cut Off (later pushed back to 2031) to extinguish pre-1947 PROWs. GS and LS stated that they didn't have significant backlog of applications and they are processed in chronological order of receipt. CS stated that BCC have about 14 applications, the oldest from 2006 will be going to committee for a decision shortly. KT stated that The Ramblers have identified 100s of potential routes but are looking to prioritise which routes to make applications for. AF asked whether the legislative provisions which were intended to counterbalance the cut-off were still being pursued; GS stated that appear to currently be on hold and that DEFRA don't currently have anyone in place to progress the matter.	
B3	Permissive Access DM has given his apologies but asked for it to be highlighted that the Government have reversed their decision in respect of permissive access under the new Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.	
B4	Green Spaces and Community Transfers GC is the clerk for Radstock Town Council (RTC). Radstock is a small town with plenty of assets to maintain but a relatively small budget (c.£300k per annum). RTC try to deliver projects for the local residents but what is right for one area isn't necessary right to another area. There's always benefits and concerns with community transfers. RTC was previous part of a larger Council with Westfield and Midsomer Norton but when they split the Council was effectively bankrupt. Tom Huyton Park is a relatively large park and would take significant resources (c.£30k per annum) to maintain so works were done in phases. RTC wanted to put in a Changing Places accessible toilet and B&NES Council helped get the necessary funding. RTC don't have the expertise to do everything so they've concentrated on what they can delivery. There is CIL/s106 funding earmarked for further phases. RTC have taken the decision to purchase Trinity Hub which currently houses the community library. The library would have closed if they didn't take it on but the building needs considerable works. Haydon Batch is a 20-acre former-coal mining tip; the area is highly biodiverse, but it has lots of issues such as culverts that need maintaining. Little work was done in the first three years after it was purchased but they're now moving the project forward which will require c.£60k in funding. It's important to assess whether a particular council is the right body, with the right funding and expertise, to take a project forward. It's also important to engage and collaborate with the local community and other stakeholders as they often require a large amount of volunteer hours. If, as suggested, they should take on three parks they wouldn't have been able to deliver other projects that the public value, so it's important to prioritise.	
C	<u>ITEMS TO REPORT / FOR INFORMATION</u>	
C1	News from the PROW Teams The three Authorities updates can be found in the background papers. RD asked if volunteers are still part of PROW maintenance; LS confirmed they are still a very important element and they're running well. AG asked about the Coast Path and if there was a deadline for completion; LS wasn't aware of any statutory deadlines.	

D	<u>OTHER BUSINESS</u>	
D1	Any other business PB asked who is responsible for maintaining rights of way. GS stated that the highway authority is responsible for the surface including any upgrowth from that surface and the owner of adjacent land is responsible for vegetation rooted on that land that is then encroaching onto the right of way.	
E	<u>FUTURE JLAF MEETING</u>	
	The next JLAF meeting is scheduled for 2pm on 3 rd July 2025.	
	Close 15.55	