

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**EMBARGO: 01.00hrs 21 November 2007**

### **Campaigners urgent call for public to respond to council's future housing plans**

'Have your say before it's too late' – that's the message from The Campaign Against Urban Sprawl (CAUS), which is calling on the public to respond to plans which could put thousands of acres of countryside under threat from new housing developments.

The campaigners say that it is crucial that the public respond to B&NES's Core Strategy Launch document, which is now under public consultation.

The Core Strategy will become the main planning blueprint for B&NES until 2026. It outlines plans to build at least 1,000 new homes on green belt land around the villages of Englishcombe and Newton St Loe, and another 6000 new homes around Whitchurch and between Bristol and Keynsham.

CAUS spokesman Andy Higby said: "The biggest changes to planning policy that we have seen for a generation are now coming into force so it is absolutely crucial that the public understands these plans. The Council has been running this consultation since the end of September but it will have passed under the radar for many people. Yet the decisions made by the planners will produce results that will affect all our lives for many years to come.

"Thousands of acres of countryside could disappear under houses. People need to know more about these plans and why this amount of building has been proposed. Questions need to be asked.

"We understand that housing demand in the South West is being driven by factors such as social change and movement of people from elsewhere in the UK [1] but do we really need this many new houses? We are now seeing dynamic West Country industries such as Dyson and Cadbury's finding their workforces abroad. Where will the jobs for the occupants of these new houses come from? Could more new dwellings be fitted into 'brownfield' land in Bath and other towns and villages? Should the Government be restricting investment buying to leave enough homes for first-time buyers?"

"Once countryside is built on, it's lost forever. New housing will mean new infrastructure and roads, taking yet more land and increasing traffic congestion. By maximising development on 'brownfield' land we can make the most of our existing infrastructure.

"Even the National Trust, which has 3.5 million members, has become so concerned that it is now directing its policy away from preserving stately homes to focus on protecting the countryside from wholesale housing development."

The campaigners said it is crucial that these developments are driven by the needs of local people and not by property developers, who favour building on open fields because it is easier and more profitable than building on 'brownfield' sites.

B&NES's Core Strategy consultation runs until 17th December 2007. The public should write to Planning policy, Planning Services, Trimbridge house, Trim Street, Bath

BA1 4DP or email [planning\\_policy@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk) giving the subject title 'Response to Core Strategy Consultation'.

B&NES's 'Core Strategy Launch Document' can be found on-line at [www.bathnes.gov.uk](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk) by clicking on 'Imagine Bath and North East Somerset in 2026'. For a printed copy, tel: 01225 477548.

For more information on these issues visit [www.nourbansprawl.org](http://www.nourbansprawl.org)

## **ENDS**

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### Notes

[1] Drivers for housing demand:  
social change, such as people living longer and increases in single households, 30%;  
internal migration within the UK, 25%;  
housing demand from the existing population, 25%.