

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL  
CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION  
CPRE NORTH SOMERSET POSITION STATEMENT  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2011 Hearing Day 2**

Spoken statement on the SW Bristol urban extension

The south west Bristol urban extension is a legacy of the dormitory town development era. The removal of the extension makes this Core Strategy the first planning policy document for North Somerset that reflects the passing of that era.

When dormitory town development came into vogue the rate of house building in the district rose substantially with no matching increase in employment. In those days the consequent high rate of net out-commuting by car was not considered to be a problem. When Local Plans were subsequently introduced the Predict and Provide approach that was built into the process perpetuated the high rates of house building with inadequate employment provision, continuing the rise in net out-commuting by car. Since then national planning policy has changed and requires car dependant commuting to be reduced. However, until this Core Strategy was produced the adherence to household projections was always given precedence in planning policy documents causing the rise of out-commuting from the district to continue unabated.

The majority of those who move into the district's new homes have to work in Bristol because there are insufficient employment opportunities in the district as a result of the dormitory town approach having been locked into the planning policy development process.

During development of the RSS a large dormitory housing provision again resulted from continued use of population projections. However, the sustainability appraisal suggested that, as most of the home owners would work in Bristol, the best place for them, to reduce car dependant commuting, was in a Bristol urban extension. CPRE believes that this aspect of the RSS represented a misinterpretation of the evidence.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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The location of Bristol is a testament to the difficulty of crossing the river. Bristol's name derives from the Anglo Saxon for the place of the bridge. Bristol's castle was built adjacent to the town's strategically important river crossing to guard it. The local radio station often warns commuters of a bridge swing during the rush hour. The proposed urban extension would aggravate the existing rush hour congestion horrendously because all but a few of the jobs are on the other side of the river. It would make the rush hour congestion at the Weston M5 junction look like a child's tea party. If homes are required for Bristol's workers then they should be built on the side of the river where the jobs are.

CPRE members tell us that they work in Bristol and would prefer to live there but they live in North Somerset because they can't afford to buy a house in Bristol. This **local evidence** is reinforced in RSS map 6.1 "House Price to Income Ratio", which shows the ratio to be significantly higher in Bristol than in North Somerset. This is what would be expected from building homes in North Somerset for those who work in Bristol and would prefer to live there. The evidence in the RSS is that there are too many jobs in Bristol for those who live there.

When preparing to move staff to Bristol from the southeast in 1979 my employer laid on a coach tour of the area for those contemplating moving. As a Bristolian I had already decided to move back here and didn't take advantage of the tour. However, I was struck by the fact that, for so many of my colleagues who had been on the tour, the **main attraction** appears to have been the short distance from the centre of town to the green fields to the west at Long Ashton. If the Urban extension were to be built it would double that distance. Such a dilution of a feature that visitors and locals find so attractive would be a great loss to future generations and consequently it is contrary the requirement for sustainable development.

In summary we ask you to accept the core strategy without the urban extension because the extension is a legacy from the dormitory development era, it is contrary to sustainable development and the scale of the development is inappropriate at Ashton due to the difficult river crossing.