

## **Consultation Process**

*As updated July 2018*

The Congresbury Community Report produced in September 2007 highlighted many issues, which are still relevant today [Appendix 2]. Notwithstanding this, a new baseline was created at the start of the consultation process for the Neighbourhood Plan, through the Postcard Survey [Appendix 3] conducted in the first quarter of 2016, which was distributed to all residential and business addresses within the area covered by the plan.

The results of the survey were presented at an open meeting held in March 2016, which was also attended by representatives of neighbouring parishes. The results were then presented at the Annual Parish Meeting where there was further opportunity for discussion and debate.

Six major themes emerged from this exercise and these form the core of the plan, namely:

1. Housing
2. Transport
3. Services
4. Facilities
5. Environment and Heritage
6. Employment

As the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan progressed, focused meetings and workshops were held with key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the issues and potential solutions, which could be developed into policies within the plan.

### **Housing**

A key requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan is that it is consistent with North Somerset's Core Strategy. Meetings were held with officers from North Somerset Council on an ongoing basis to ensure convergence with the core strategy. The number of new houses proposed during the plan period has been set out to meet the needs of the village but also to support North Somerset's Core Strategy and in particular CS 32, which refers to Service Villages. The size of the proposed Strategic gap between Congresbury and Churchill, was revised at the initial draft stage, on the advice of North Somerset Officers, so as to avoid any conflict with proposed developments in Churchill, which are being mooted in the as yet unapproved Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England.

Congresbury Residents Action Group (CRAG) articulates the views of a large number of people within the village and they have been active along with the Parish Council in opposing inappropriate speculative development within the area and the arguments put forward have been noted. In particular, the proposed size, type and location of suitable developments, identified within the plan, has been strongly

informed by the judgments of government inspectors at the planning appeals, which have occurred whilst the plan was in preparation.

### Transport

There is an inexorable increase in the volume of traffic and HGVs in particular, which is passing through village, as evidenced by traffic surveys and North Somerset's traffic projections. This has led to heightened concerns for both pedestrian and motorist safety especially along the Brinsea Rd/High St. and the Smallway junction of the A370 and B3133.

Meetings have been held with members of North Somerset's Highways Department and working groups arranged with the neighbouring parishes of Yatton, Claverham and Churchill in order to seek a common understanding of traffic issues and to develop a consistent approach to addressing them. This has included a joint traffic survey undertaken in 2016 with the Yatton Neighbourhood plan steering group, which repeated a similar exercise conducted by north Council in 2008. As part of this exercise HGVs were monitored passing through the village at the Ship and Castle junction of the B3133 and A370. This produced three key findings:

1. The total number of HGVs passing daily through (6a.m. to 6 p.m.) had increased by 33%
2. The number of extra large vehicle (6 axle articulated) had risen by 250%
3. 30% of the HGVs passing through the village in the 2016 survey were identified as "quarry vehicles" and it is presumed the majority of these start/ journey at the concrete works in Yatton.

This and all other relevant information was given to a transport consultant, who was engaged to analyse the data and propose possible solutions [Appendix 5].

Further meetings were held with North Somerset Council officers following the initial draft of the Neighbourhood Plan to understand the constraints faced by North Somerset in addressing highways issues. As a result a proposed policy for quiet lanes was removed.

### Services

Access to local medical services is a concern listed by many residents. This has been brought into sharp focus by the announcement of plans to amalgamate the current doctor's surgeries in Yatton and Congresbury. The local medical practice has held its own consultation meetings with patients and has recently submitted a planning application for a new surgery to be located between Congresbury and Yatton, which is likely to be decided before the Neighbourhood Plan is published.

### Facilities

This includes, pre-school, library facilities and village hall. All of these were cited as areas of concern, which are being addressed by their own working groups separate from the Neighbourhood Plan steering group. Nevertheless there is ongoing dialogue with all the groups concerned to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is an accurate reflection of resident's views.

A recent referendum was held to determine a Community Right to Build Order for a new village hall. This was based on the same constituency boundary as the Neighbourhood Plan and was passed with a vote of 69% in favour. This overwhelming support is recognised and reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Environment and Heritage

The Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG) is a key stakeholder for this topic and have assisted in drafting this section of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan also covers the Conservation Area, which is seen as a key asset to the village. Workshops have been held with the Congresbury Conservation Group and representatives of residents and also businesses within the conservation area to look at ways of improving the area. Policies to improve signage and parking within Broad St. have followed from these workshops.

Protecting the grade 1 listed village cross from vehicle damage is a major concern. The local archaeology group has investigated the extent of the problem and English Heritage and North Somerset Council Highways Department have been consulted about the use of barriers/bollards to protect the cross.

The Bristol based Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) was consulted at the early draft stage of the plan and provided comments on initial proposals for environmental policies to be included in the plan. Members of the CSE also attended later meetings of the steering group and suggested policies to support the installation of charging points for electric vehicles within the Parish.

### Employment

Several respondents to the post-card survey commented on the lack of local employment opportunities and expressed a strong wish to see more local jobs. 83 businesses within the village and surrounding area were contacted to provide a snapshot of employment opportunities within the area [Appendix 12].

### Sustainability

In analysing the results of the post-card survey, sustainability was not identified as an independent theme. Rather it was seen as an integral part of each major theme to be considered and addressed as part of each theme.

A possible exception, requiring separate mention is sustainable energy. Many residents expressed their desire for the village to support the national ambition of reducing our dependency on non-renewable carbon fuels. The Neighbourhood Plan steering group was represented at workshops held within the village by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and, as previously mentioned, has consulted with them when drafting proposals on this subject.