

## YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE A SAY IN THE NEW LOCAL PLAN

Whatever we may think of them, there is no arguing with the fact that the B&NES Planners have a difficult job to do. Planning decisions almost by definition are going to please some villagers and disappoint others and in the end as long as the good outweighs the bad, we probably should not complain too much. However, there is one factor above all which causes upset and this is that planning decisions are foisted on us from above and the ability of the local community to have its voice not only heard but acted upon is very limited. True, your Parish Council vigorously engages with the Planning Authority in the determination of Planning Applications. This process takes place within a framework where the ground rules have already been drawn up in a Local Plan in which villages such as Priston have had minimal input.

Well, things might be on the change. The new Local Plan comprises the Core Strategy (which all of you will know about because last year it failed to pass the Inspection process because of a lack of provision for sufficient new housing), and the Placemaking Plan, which will replace the old Local Plan and look in detail at exactly where development might take place and what numbers might be involved. The important point is that, virtually unique among all local authorities in the UK, B&NES are explicitly bringing local communities into the process of Plan construction. We, along with all the other Parishes in B&NES, have been invited to participate in an exercise of 'character assessment' of our village and parish, giving our view on what is important and what we value about them as well as commenting on possible sites for new housing. Our efforts must be inclusive (not just relying on input from the Parish Council) and will follow a format laid down by B&NES in order that there is a degree of consistency about how the various communities have tackled the issues. Our conclusions will be summarised and presented to B&NES who will use the information to take the Placemaking Plan forward to the next stage.

Over the next weeks, you may well see groups of villagers roaming around with clipboards and they will be urgently carrying out the character, landscape and site assessments, because the whole process including processing the reports has to be submitted to B&NES by Christmas. If you would like to be part of these teams, please contact Doug Pattison: (01761 470609 or [all@pristonpattisons.force9.co.uk](mailto:all@pristonpattisons.force9.co.uk)) as soon as possible. There will be other opportunities for you to become involved, for example by commenting via the Priston website and by participating in a Public Meeting to be called in early December.

So, please, join in, and have your say in shaping the future of our village and see the Priston Website for further information.