

Churchill and Langford Residents Action Group Jan Murray, Co-Chair

You have all received an open letter from CALRAG (attached).

1. CALRAG is a team of some 40 professionals across a broad demographic. We aim to ensure that housing solutions for this area are sustainable and satisfy JSP policies.
2. We draw to your attention the lack of appropriate consultation on the JSP between November 17 and January 18.
3. Your freesheet (8th Nov) referred to the JSP Consultation period starting on November 22nd 2017. A 'drop-in' event was held in Churchill on the first day which turned out to be on the Local Plan, the forms for which assumed the JSP had been adopted.
4. On the same day, 'confidential' letters were received by residents asking them to negotiate with Cushman Wakefield about selling their properties to make way for the proposed new town. The JSP had not been adopted. Everyone felt it was a done deal.
5. Whilst gathering facts we noted the following report to the Executive 14th November 2017 ***"No local consultation events will be held in relation to the JSP..."***.
6. Comments from Scrutiny Panel councillors on 7th Feb:
"We have a real issue because as a council we have not had a real opportunity to comment or scrutinise. To not have looked at more sustainable options for growth is a dereliction". "The plan is a waste of time. We have got it wrong". "I think that we all totally disagree with it".
7. I have never known such universal intense anger Mr Chairman. People feel that they are being dictated to and completely ignored. We want to resolve this.
8. We ARE NOT NIMBY. We already have significant development despite the HUGE drainage issues due to the immense Mendip Hills Aquifer – maybe Whitehall doesn't understand this.
9. **So, the problems are:**
 - 9.1. No appropriate JSP consultation in November.
 - 9.2. A plan that doesn't include alternatives.
 - 9.3. A proposal for a 'Garden village' (New Town) that
 - 9.3.1. has no local support as demonstrated by the petitions (paper and online) and your Scrutiny panel.
 - 9.3.2. Is unsustainable and undeliverable according to independent professional reports from Atkins, BNP Paribas and Highways England who even suggested the Churchill site be revisited in favour of sustainable alternatives.
 - 9.3.3. Needs £millions to create a road - not needed by Bristol Airport (clear written statement) which will be far more costly due to flooding issues.
 - 9.3.4. Will destroy views from the Mendip Hills AONB - the biggest single environmental asset in North Somerset. Under the CROW Act, councils have a duty to protect the views **from** it.
 - 9.3.5. You have a local electorate who are angry enough to divert their substantial Tory party donations to our CALRAG company to pay for a barrister to represent us at the Public Examination. None of us want this so we suggest the following as nothing is yet set in stone.

10. The Solutions are:

- 10.1. We work **with** you to turn a disadvantage into an advantage.
- 10.2. Share our positive, innovative, practical ideas.
- 10.3. Put North Somerset on the map as a forward-thinking Local Authority.
- 10.4. You want a 50% decrease in carbon emissions – look at alternatives to allowing urban sprawl to leapfrog over the Green Belt, destroying the countryside and producing 5-6,000 extra commuter cars in Churchill New Town alone. Good solutions are there.

Can we all take a big deep breath and work together to find them?