



April 2008

# Forward Plan 2008

## Introduction

This Forward Plan responds to the clear steer received from members during the autumn of 2007. It sets priorities which are relevant both to the context of planning, transport, development and environmental issues facing Bristol and its surrounding area and organisational issues within the Society. It details the main new work for 2008 plus key pieces of work running over from 2007. As ever, implementation of the Forward Plan will be dependent on members' capacity to spare their time and expertise, neither of which can be predicted with certainty in a voluntary organisation. There are many other ongoing areas to which members of the society contribute a lot of hard work which are not mentioned in this programme.

## Members' priorities

Key points arising from the results of the questionnaire circulated to members last year were that members wanted BCS to:

- concentrate mainly on campaigning
- give more focus to social/educational events
- recognise the importance of two issues in particular: transport and traffic
- improving the quality of new development

- promote and publicise itself better.

## Context of Forward Plan

### External factors in the city and region.

Since the 2007 Forward Plan was written, the Examination in Public has taken place into the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy and the Panel's report has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. However, our concerns remain broadly the same, namely:

- meeting anticipated population and household growth by expanding urban areas into the green belt
- weak policies which would neither radically reduce the need for journeys nor significantly shift travel from private to public transport, particularly rail and which include provision for developing the South Bristol Ring Road
- expansion of Bristol International Airport without adequate environmental safeguards.

Within the city:

- the city council continues its phased process towards completing the Core Strategy

Document of the city council's Bristol Development Plan Framework

- the city council has published a revised approach to community involvement to which the society must respond
- development pressure remains intense with increasing concerns about the design quality of new development
- congestion and the environmental impacts of transport in the city remain a major concern.

## Internally

The society must:

- continue to keep members informed and involved
- encourage new members to join
- work within its resources
- keep the organisation up to date and effective.

## Priorities for 2008

### New campaigns

#### 1. South Bristol/North Somerset Initiative

Although the society will be pressing for a balanced regeneration programme in Bristol, it is clear from developing policies at regional level and in both Bristol and North Somerset that South Bristol/North

[www.bristolcivicsociety.cjb.net](http://www.bristolcivicsociety.cjb.net)

Somerset will be an area undergoing major changes in the coming years. In order to address our concerns and to influence policies and developments, the society will reach out to local interest groups in order to define more precisely our campaigning objectives. Appropriate campaigns can then be developed.

## 2. Transport

The BCS will be working jointly with FOSBR members to work up a rail and light rail policy for the Integrated Transport Authority to adopt once it is created. Members of the group are involved in promoting a bid for an ultra light rail service to compete against the current Bus Rapid Transit proposal for the Ashton Vale to the City Centre route and continuing to Temple Meads and Cabot Circus.

Our first priority under the new ITA regime for the bus system will be a smartcard system and a team of parking attendants whose prime function will be to deal with bus priority parking enforcement. This would be followed by lobbying for the ITA to use the Quality Contract provisions of the Local Transport Bill to bring in a bus franchising system for the Greater Bristol Region.

### Campaigning for higher design quality

The society has been particularly dismayed at the changes that have been made to agreed master plans before proposals are

implemented. As part of its drive to press for a higher quality of building design and the public realm around buildings, the society will:

- propose to the council a new policy for the control of major developments, using hard evidence from past examples where there has been a shift from agreed master plans/proposals to inferior implementation
- engage with the council to ensure optimum application of the principles set out in their March 2007 *Council's approach to Planning Enforcement*, using evidence set out in their annual performance report.

### Campaigns to be continued

As well as the new work identified above the society will continue, among other things, to:

- engage with the city council as it moves through the stages of preparing the Local Development Framework
- seek a high standard of design in the redevelopment of the site centred on St Mary-le-Port
- work with others to press for the refurbishment of Ashton Court
- work with the Transport Alliance to promote the Transport Manifesto
- continue to press for improving standards of community involvement in the preparation of planning policies and the consideration of development proposals.

### Internal initiatives

Members have stated that they wish to see the society promote and publicise itself better. This is important in terms of raising the society's profile as a body of opinion and to encourage new members. To this end, the society will:

- seek a person to undertake liaison with the media
- complete the update of its website and seek a website editor
- publicise its programme of talks, discussions and social events.

### Working with and learning from others

The society has gained strength and friends from working with other groups with similar interests. It will continue to reach out to other groups and in the coming year will:

- develop its working relationship with the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network
- make contact with other civic societies and amenity groups.

### Contact us if you would like to help

If you would like to join the teams or help individually with any of the projects set out in this Forward Plan, please contact the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman.