



INITIATIVE FOR BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

INTRODUCTION:

The Initiative is a unique organisation which exists to enable the business community to play a full part in influencing the way Bath and North East Somerset is shaped, managed and developed.

It provides an effective link between the private and public sector to ensure that the interests of commerce are taken into account when key strategic decisions are made.

The Initiative also encourages companies to become responsible corporate citizens, for example by fully engaging with key issues which affect the communities in which they operate.

METHODOLOGY:

We believe it is important to maintain a good working relationship with elected representatives and their officials at both local and national level. Consequently we meet regularly with elected leaders and senior officers of the Bath and North East Somerset Council, the two Universities and a cross section of major businesses.

In addition, as part of the West of England Initiative, we have valuable links with the National Government, MP's, the South West Regional Development Agency, the Government Office for the South West, the West of England Partnership, the Learning and Skills Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the Health Authorities.

These links enable the Initiative to take an effective part in the debate about the future of both the immediate area and of the sub-region, which already has a strategic plan which foresees around 5,000 new jobs and 4,700 new houses each year over the next 20 years. The Initiative will continually monitor the situation to ensure the plan is ambitious enough to meet the needs of business in the future whilst safeguarding the environment which makes this such an attractive place to live, work and do business.





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POLICIES:

We concentrate our efforts on six major policy areas:

Economic Development – We will work to ensure our area remains an attractive place to work, live and do business by encouraging enterprise in all its forms. The redevelopment of Swindon town centre and the extension of Broadmead in Bristol will provide a major challenge to the Bath retail sector. We are active in the development of Southgate and Western Riverside, which will give our generation a chance to put a real mark on the future shape of Bath. We are also working to assist new businesses establish themselves and existing businesses to flourish and develop. The Initiative is also pressing for additional land to be earmarked for industrial and commercial development.

Tourism – We need to attract visitors who make a positive contribution to the economy and to manage their impact on the infrastructure. Tourism is part of the lifeblood of the area and the Initiative was instrumental in creating the public/private partnership of Bath Tourism Plus. We are working to develop closer links with Bath Festivals Trust. Year round festivals and other events area key part of the unique package we can offer.

Transport – We are committed to addressing the problems posed by traffic congestion which have a serious impact on the social and economic potential of the West of England. We have put forward detailed proposals to improve public transport and road infrastructure. We are campaigning for improvements, not only in the local road system, but also the crucial access links to Bristol International Airport, the wider sub-region and eastwards towards the capital.

Housing - The shortage of housing, and in particular affordable homes, in Bath is not only bad news for people who can't find a suitable place to live, it represents a serious threat to our economy, contributes significantly to transport congestion and endangers the quality of the environment. The creation of sufficient affordable housing as part of Western Riverside and other developments is essential.

Education and Skills – Business success rests upon the availability of a skilled workforce, whilst society needs competent citizens who are willing and able to make a personal contribution to the community within which they live. We support activities which improve the standards of the local education system and encourage employers to invest in skills and quality training. The Initiative has been active in support of the proposal to establish the Dyson Engineering Academy.

Quality of Life – We are fortunate to be the beneficiaries of a wonderfully rich cultural heritage which has been long established. However, the challenge for us is to develop a future which builds on the best of the past and incorporates the highest of contemporary quality. We are actively supporting the work to create a Bath brand in which we can all be proud.





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PARTNERSHIPS:

We are convinced that we must maintain our engagement with a wide variety of partners operating across the broadest possible range of activities.

Bath Festival Trust
Bath Spa University
Bath Tourism Plus
Business West
City of Bath College
City of Festivals
Global Compact
South West Regional Development Agency
University of Bath
West of England Partnership

INITIATIVE ACTIVITY:

Members of the Initiative have formal quarterly meetings with B&NES Council leaders, the Chief Executive and other senior officers to discuss matters of mutual interest. There is also regular informal interaction on specific issues.

We hold monthly lunches which include useful briefings on matters of strategic importance.

Our quarterly meetings include a range of presentations and an opportunity to network over drinks and a meal.

We will provide a regular update service via e-mail, particularly aimed at members who have been unable to attend events in person.

