

Planning Report for FoBRA Committee Meeting 4 December 2018

Proposal to demolish Bath College's Ralph Allen Building (Milk/Avon Streets) and application to erect a new 198-bedroom hotel by Dominvs Group((18/03742/FUL)

It is disappointing to report that the Dominvs Group's re-application to build a 198-bedroom hotel on the old Bath College Site in Milk Street was accepted by the DMC on 24 October 2018. The Chairman of Bath Independent Guest House Association's objection on behalf of FoBRA, BIGHA, Bath Area Self Catering Association (BASCA) and Bath's Hotel General Managers fell on deaf ears despite the compelling arguments that had been submitted beforehand and were presented eloquently at the meeting, notwithstanding the efforts in particular of Councillors Becker and Crossley, the latter rightly stressing the need for an Economic Impact Assessment.

Christmas Market 2018

Visit Bath (VB) has been granted permission to expand the Christmas Market 2018 into Milsom Street (24 chalets); this will take place from 22 November to 9 December (18 days) with an additional 9 days to set up and to dismantle the stalls. Similar to 2017, VB plan to host a residents' evening on the first evening of the market. There will be a total of 168 chalets, a marked reduction from 2017, plus a number of mobile catering units.

Development of Bath Cricket Club's (BCC) car park to build PBSA (17/04388/FUL)

As members will recall, this planning application was approved by the DMC. The call-in by the Bath Preservation Trust was unsuccessful so they have applied for a Judicial Review, for which FoBRA has honoured its pledge and donated £200.

Chivers House, Windsor Bridge Road (18/03797/FUL)

Members will recall that planning application 18/00770/FUL to build a 199-room PBSA was withdrawn in May 2018, and it was reported at the last meeting that the developers had instead submitted a new application to develop 95 dwellings in two separate buildings on the site instead, but without any provision for affordable housing, contrary to B&NES's Core Strategy CP9. The developers stated that a viability assessment would be provided to the Council under separate cover to demonstrate the exceptional costs of developing the site makes it unviable to provide any affordable housing. As expected, the developers (Pegasus) have recently submitted a robust response to the objections by both statutory and third-party consultees. DMC decision pending.

B&NES's Proposals to Levy Fees for Listed Buildings Applications.

While welcoming the Council's bid for new powers to invest in local services and generally supporting the thrust of its proposals, FoBRA objected strongly in writing to the Leader of The Council to B&NES's proposals to levy fees for listed building applications. We argued that the principle behind the non-charging of fees for listed building applications was well established and was in recognition of the withdrawal of normal rights to alter one's private property. We reminded Cllr Warren that the owners of the 5,000 listed buildings in Bath's World Heritage Site are mostly residents and stressed that many of these listed buildings continue in their original function providing homes for people leading modern lives within the historic buildings for which the site was inscribed. It is residents who perform an unremunerated public service as custodians of this heritage and conservation, and the current system correctly incentivised local planning authorities to make the process easy for them, for example by publishing policies and information to help people to get their applications right first time and by not charging for this. We further advised him that the Council should not fall into the trap of thinking that Bath's Listed Buildings are owned only by the rich who can well afford the fee: many are divided into small flats, owned by people

of limited means. We of course appreciated that B&NES has to devote time and resources to process these applications, but pointed out that 800-900 of these represented less than 10% of all planning applications. We also suggested that there could be a case made for central government to provide some financial support to Local Authorities which have a significant number of Listed Buildings and properties in Conservation Areas and therefore an additional burden on their planning resources and urged B&NES not to pursue this unwelcome proposal.

That all said and done we think our lobbying, helped as ever by the Bath Preservation Trust, has been successful and the proposal withdrawn.

Local Plan 2016-2036: Options Document

B&NES is encouraging residents *"to take part in the latest stage in the creation of a new Local Plan for the district, which, once adopted will form the basis for determining planning applications until 2036. A range of options for the new planning framework are being laid out covering local planning matters from the provision of affordable homes and the identification of new housing and employment sites to the development of wind energy, provision of electric vehicle infrastructure and the siting of fast food takeaways. People can take part in a public consultation, which runs from November 12 until January 7 2019 on the options to revise the existing planning policy framework for Bath and North East Somerset. Comments received will then be used to inform the preparation of a draft plan due to be published later in 2019. Some of the options in the proposed Local Plan include:*

- *Creation of a new 'Garden Community' in North Keynsham delivering 1,500 new homes, including affordable homes.*
- *Creation of a new 'Garden Community' to the South East of Whitchurch, to deliver around 2000 new homes, including affordable homes and associated infrastructure.*
- *Introduction of restrictions on new student accommodation, requiring all new developments to be provided on campus.*
- *Relocation of Bath's Household Reuse and Recycling facility to Odd Down.*
- *Construction of a new Link Road connecting the A4175 to the north of Keynsham with the A4 Bath Road to the east of Keynsham to help relieve congestion in the town centre*
- *Construction of a new Link Road connecting the A4/A4174 to the A37 and into South Bristol to help relieve congestion*
- *Expansion of the employment land allocation and broadening the mix of uses, both to enable the delivery of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.*
- *The introduction of new restrictions on the location of fast food takeaways to prevent them from opening near schools and youth facilities.*
- *A review of parking standards and provision for electric vehicles infrastructure*
- *A review of the policy approach for the regeneration of areas of social housing*
- *The proposed Clean Air Zone in Bath and its relationship with Bath Transport Strategy including additional park & ride provision*
- *The council's approach to viability to ensure developers properly address the need for infrastructure in new housing.*

People can have their say online or send in comments. They are also encouraged to go to a series of exhibitions and talk to officers about these and other elements of the Local Plan, as well as other projects including the Joint Local Transport Plan and in Keynsham the town centre improvements project."

FoBRA's Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Transport lead will attend a drop-in session at the Guildhall on 20 November.

19 November 2018