

FoBRA Planning Report September 7th 2023

A busy summer for planning applications resulted in two papers from the major projects sub group which were circulated to full committee for review/comments prior to submission:

- Objection to development on Lambridge Training Ground London Road
- Comments on Western Riverside phase 2

We expect the Stadium for Bath application by Bath Rugby to be submitted imminently.

B&NES Local Plan development will be progressing with workshops involving different stakeholders across B&NES and FoBRA Chair will attend the City workshop September 11th.

The paper of November 22nd approved at committee regarding the Local plan development has become the guiding principles for our contribution to these workshops.

The major project group revisited this paper (see below) we propose that this text will also be posted on our web site under priorities.

Planning and housing

FoBRA takes an active interest in planning policies that affect the city of Bath, and in planning/listed building applications that have an impact wider than the immediate locality of the development. More local projects and development proposals are left to member resident associations who are encouraged to seek support from the Federation when necessary.

We will test whether proposals:

- *Are in line with adopted council policies (spirit and letter of).*
- *Consider the impact on both the development site and the wider neighbourhood.*
 - *This is particularly relevant to ensure that new schemes consider impacts on both the development site and the wider neighbourhood, developments should enhance rather than detract from existing neighbouring areas within Bath.*
 - *Ensure that individual developments comply with current policy but not just within a site silo. This can be to the detriment of the immediate neighbourhood and create a situation for the pre-existing neighbourhood which is inconsistent with the Council's own adopted policies.*
- *Consider the wider planning and transport impacts within the municipal boundary not only the small city centre core.*
- *Are in line with the World Heritage Management Plan enhancing the City's Outstanding Universal Values (*) not a detriment.*
 - *Ensure outstanding universal value of the World heritage site of Bath (architecture/town planning/landscape/archaeological remains is understood, protected and sustained.*

- *The wider landscape setting lies beyond the site boundary “(2.4) it offers effective protection as a “buffer zone””.*
- *Bath’s existing trees and landscapes are an integral part of the OUV and protection and replanting are critical for both bio diversity but also Bath’s world heritage setting. Protection of the existing tree canopy is preferable.*
- *Key sight lines are established as part of the OUV of Bath city these should be detailed*
- *These key site lines should be reinforced and protected in any emerging tall building strategy*
- *Ensure that pedestrian rights of way are protected and new rights of way created as developments are planned with permeability to integrate new communities into existing neighbourhoods. Building community cohesion.*
- *To ensure the OUV of emerging architecture and development a design code should be established for schemes within the municipal boundary*
- *Extend the city centre boundary to encompass and protect major conglomerations of heritage assets, many of which are cited in the UNESCO inscription*
- *Have effective community engagement and consultation, demonstrating listening and amending of proposals in response. Recognising the statutory consultee deficit that exists in the City of Bath where unlike the rest of Bath & North East Somerset there are no town or parish councils nor Neighbourhood Plans.*

[The UNESCO World Heritage inscription covers the whole of the City of Bath and there is a second inscription as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. See bathworldheritage.org.uk for details]*

Development Management

The Council's Planning Committee has a statutory duty to determine all planning applications on behalf of the Local Authority, although it delegates most applications to officers. FoBRA monitors both national and local policies and specific proposals which may impact on its priority objectives or the interests of its members/residents and provides information and comment when appropriate. FoBRA seeks to positively contribute to key council policies such as the Local Plan and the World Heritage Sites Management Plan.

Housing

Housing is an area of special interest for many of our residents. Whilst recognising the need for more houses in our area, proposals need to balance:

- *Meeting stringent build quality and environmental targets to ensure homes are built to last and enhance the lives of residents and the built environment of the city.*
- *The availability of high quality/tenure blind affordable housing for successful communities.*
- *Supporting students who choose to study in Bath and the need for more housing for locals. Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA's), in particular when not built on University campuses, is seen as particularly controversial.*

- *The short-term rental market to welcome visitors and boost local businesses with the needs of local residents. The growth of Air B&B and party houses has been significant and if out of balance these can have an adverse impact on local neighbourhoods.*
- *Bringing empty properties back into use in the City supporting vibrant neighbourhoods and reflecting changes in the retail environment.*

How will we go about this?

The FoBRA committee meets approximately every two months. A Major Projects Sub-Committee considers and submits a planning report for members to consider. In addition, any significant projects are evaluated and suggested FoBRA comments (if any) are drafted. These are then discussed at the meeting, or digitally if timing dictates, when any necessary action is agreed.

FoBRA: Updated 1 September 2023