

FOBRA MEETING 10TH SEPTEMBER 2026

PLANNING REPORT

LOCAL PLAN

The Council is in the final stages of preparing the new local plan, having had to adjust to the Government's higher housing target for the plan period. The previous stage was the Reset Document (2025) which identified potential areas for expansion to meet the new housing targets. The final draft of the plan is due to be put to the Council in mid- September. It will then be available for public consultation before being submitted to the Secretary of State, following which it will be subjected to Examination in Public.

The public consultation period for the draft local plan, as currently set down, is 14th September to 26th October, giving about six weeks to look at it and prepare a response. As soon as it is published, we will alert member associations. It is likely that there will be a response from FOBRA, and member associations may also wish to respond to aspects of the draft local plan. The consultation dates are dependant on the Council approving the draft report, though it is up against a tight Government deadline to have the plan ready for the public examination before the end of the year.

RUGBY CLUB

The Rugby Club has submitted a new planning application (26/02887/EVAR) the principal purpose of which is to amend the programme for construction to reduce it by 18months. The application identifies the sequence of the works which are due to start in February 2027 and finish by December 2028. The works are specified so as to enable the use of the ground for rugby throughout the construction period.

There will be benefits from having a shorter construction period, in that the period of disruption will be reduced by 18 months. However, this could mean more intensive levels of working which are more disruptive to people living close to the ground. The review of the Environmental Assessment refers, for example, to localised increases in peak construction traffic.

The application also includes revised drawings for the flood mitigation works

The consultation period on this new application for the Rugby Club expires on 19th September, 2026.

REPLACEMENT OF THE PULTENEY GATE

The replacement of the Pulteney Gate, part of the flood defensive works installed in 1972, has been the subject of discussion for some time. It arose in the early stages of the development of the plans for the re-construction of the rugby stadium as continuation of the right of access for the heavy crane needed to remove the Gate will be required through the rugby ground. In fact, Condition 21 of the planning consent for the new stadium requires an unobstructed route through the stadium, and this is shown on one of the approved drawings.

The Environment Agency has long advised that the Pulteney Gate is at the end of its useful life. The Council has been considering options including replacement by a hydro-electric scheme. This will require a full planning application in which one of the many considerations will be ensuring any scheme to remove the Gate (and replace it with the new structure, once decided) does not increase flood risk to upstream properties.

The Council now accepts that it will be some time before it is ready to advance a scheme for the removal of the Pulteney Gate.

APPLICATION FOR THE BATH CHRISTMAS MARKET (26/02250/REG03)

The Council has submitted an application under Regulation 3* of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 for the continuation of the Bath Christmas Market, which to date, has been on a three-year renewable basis.

This is an unusual application, being a hybrid comprising a full application for the Christmas Market in 2026 and an outline for future markets enabling expansion, both physically into areas beyond that currently occupied, and in the number of days the Market might operate. The application seeks consent for the Market to operate in perpetuity during the pre-Christmas period .

FOBRA responded to this application expressing a number concerns arising from the combination of the proposals for the 2026 Christmas Market and the vaguer proposals for it's expansion in the future. The application is due to be considered prior to the FOBRA meeting on 10th September, and the decision will be reported at the meeting.

*Nb. Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 allows a local council to grant planning permission to itself for development on land it owns or intends to develop.

MJ Wrigley

26th August 2026

