

**Statement from the Federation of Bath Residents'  
Associations to the B&NES Cabinet meeting, 14 March 2012**

As you know, the Federation represents residents' groups across the city of Bath. My own association is based in the area between Lyncombe Vale and Poets' Corner, in the south of the city, and is involved in various neighbourhood issues. Recent examples include road safety, traffic pollution, the management of Alexandra Park, and planning issues affecting school playing fields.

I have been leading a small subgroup within FoBRA which has taken a close interest in the Government's localism initiatives, and I should like to express our keen appreciation that the Council has been working so closely on these matters with local stakeholders. It is hard to predict precisely where this new legislation will lead. It will be no mean task to ensure that Bath makes the best of improved community opportunities, and yet avoids the very real risk that they might be misused.

For there is such a risk. There may well be promoters of development projects who would seek to influence neighbourhood plans, with the aim that these should allow schemes which might generate short-term benefits, but at the price of great damage to our historic heritage. That heritage, once lost, can never be recovered, and its value is not just a sentimental one. In Britain, tourism is the fifth largest industry; in Bath, it is of immeasurable importance to the long-term sustainability of our local economy. We need to be very much alert to such dangers.

We therefore welcome the proposed consultation on the Council's Protocol. Our initial feelings are that there may be room in some areas for sharpening the proposed procedures so as to avoid costly demands for extra work by the Council, and for tightening the drafting so as to minimise the risk of legal challenge. We shall examine the draft carefully and respond.

Mark O'Sullivan

*representing* Federation of Bath Residents' Associations  
*also member of* Greenway Lane Area Residents' Forum

58 Greenway Lane

Bath BA2 4LL

01225 480970

mark.osullivan@resourcesynergies.co.uk