

Statement to B&NES Cabinet 12 September 2012 by BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Item 13 MOD sites

I am Alan Langton and speak as a Trustee of the Bath Preservation Trust.

The Trust is very pleased to see that several the points made in our consultation response and earlier statement have been taken into account in the redrafts, notably the clear exclusion of the Kingswood/Royal High playing fields from current proposals for the Ensleigh site and the greater emphasis placed on the World Heritage Site and Landscape constraints. Cabinet may recall that I addressed you on these points at your meeting at Radstock and both personally and on behalf of the Trust now thank you for responding positively. At that meeting I also urged the inclusion of student accommodation at Foxhill and I thought then that the point was accepted by Cllr Ball. I apologise if this was not the case but in any event the Trust is sorry to see that as yet there no such specific mention for that site. Self contained clusters of student accommodation of course count towards the authority's overall housing supply figure.

Returning to Ensleigh, we are however concerned that the unchanged housing number of 350 dwellings is over-ambitious, especially as you have now included the necessary addition of small scale retail. With the assistance of Bath University, we have undertaken some detailed massing and density analysis¹ on the previous concept statement, which we have circulated to Cabinet members and ward councillors. This shows that a low rise but high density development (which is both sustainable good practice and necessary to meet the height constraints imposed by the landscape), with the infrastructure requirements referred to in the concept statement, should result in dwelling numbers of nearer 309, or fewer if the Granville Road site is built out at lower density.

It is essential that the housing potential of the site is not overstated or else the sites will be over-valued at sale resulting in a loss of quality and amenity when developed.

We therefore request that the Concept statement for Ensleigh be altered to put a requirement of approximately 309 homes and refer to the need for these to be low rise, but relatively high density, in order for a realistic value to be placed on the land at sale.

¹ Bath Preservation Trust: MOD Ensleigh Additional Concept Statement Response