

CABINET 14 MARCH 2012

BATH PRESERVATION TRUST SPEAKING NOTES

14. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROTOCOL

Bath Preservation Trust welcomes the proposed consultation and would like to emphasise the importance of the third element of the recommendation – to keep the protocol for neighbourhood planning under review so that opportunities to link this process with other community engagement are fully considered.

Chapter 4 of the document highlights that Bath, with no local council or parish structure, is in a different place from the rest of B&NES and is effectively on the back foot in relation to creation of neighbourhood forums. We note that it appears to be the intention of the Government that neighbourhood plans might be less restrictive to development than the Local Authority's own policies. However in Bath, restrictive policies frequently assist the Council in fulfilling its obligation to protect Bath's status as the only complete city in the UK designated as a World Heritage Site. The Council will therefore need to ensure that the purposes of any approved neighbourhood forum or forums for the City of Bath genuinely reflect national policy in relation to the historic environment as well as the need to promote the environmental and social wellbeing of the area as well as its economic development.

We are aware of the limited resources in the Planning Policy Department and would urge that priority be given to completion of the Core Strategy and encouraging meaningful community engagement with key supporting policies including the Placemaking Plans and World Heritage Management SPDs as a way of trialling mechanisms for neighbourhood planning in Bath.