

Statement to Scrutiny Panel- 5th January.

I am Ian Herve. I represent the Abbey Ward Flood Group which consists of the Chairmen of Pulteney Estates Resident's Association, The Abbey Resident's Association and Henrietta Park RA along with our elected councillors and myself.

Throughout this Draft Placemaking Plan there are many contradictory statements and much wishful thinking where flood risk in Bath is concerned.

The limited time available today will not be enough to address them all so I will limit this to one specific example. The Recreation Ground.

In the Bath subsection of this Plan, paragraph 122 states that the Recreation Ground "Functions as an important storage area during flood events".

Look at the reference diagram 5 and you will see the area referred to.

All well and good you might say except for one missing piece of information. The flood risk maps for that area. These can be viewed on the B&NES website in the 2013 Black and Veatch Technical Note for the Bath Quays Project.

This shows the actual flooded areas for various Annual Probability return risk events. The Rec does indeed flood at a low risk event of a 1:25 year flow but so do the neighbouring properties. As the water rises the neat line drawn on the B&NES map does not define the flooded area.

This effectively means that it is now council policy to designate the basement flats of Johnstone Street, Great Pulteney Street, the houses in Pulteney Mews, those along Pulteney Road to the south of the railway bridge, Broadway and the Dolemeads and of course, Widcombe School as "important flood storage".

I cannot believe that this is what you intend but it may be that this is now the established policy of your council, as it will be if this document is ratified as it stands.

If this is so then I believe the residents concerned should have knowledge of this.

In 2012 The Environment Agency produced the Bristol Avon Catchment Flood Management Plan.

This, on Page 13, states “The current level of flood risk in Bath is considered unacceptable” and a 2014 update by the EA put the current number of properties at risk as 914. An oddly precise number given that there are discrepancies in the counting such as the care and nursing homes in St. John’s Road, which contain over 100 residents but are counted as only three dwellings.

These are in the same flood risk zone as the Rec.

The Environment Agency predicts that this risk will increase by 10% by 2040.

This Placemaking Plan predicts that by 2020 “winter precipitation could increase by up 18% and be more intense”.

We urge you all to consider our recent lucky escape. Had storm Desmond tracked a few miles to the south, Bath would not have had a Christmas market, or indeed a Christmas. We would have been engaged in an emergency rescue process and would be mopping up still.

Paragraph 21 states that the “Council will encourage and support residents throughout Bath”

We would argue that a key element of that support has to be a more thorough recognition of the flooding risks and concrete and funded proposals for protecting the whole city, not merely sites planned for development.