

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Planning, Housing and Economic Development PDS Panel
MEETING DATE:	Tuesday 6 September 2016
TITLE:	City of Bath World Heritage Site: Update on the draft replacement Management Plan & selected projects
WARD:	Bath and surrounding wards

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

#### List of attachments to this report:

Appendix 1: Summary of frequently raised consultation issues

## 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This is an update report on World Heritage Site (WHS) management in Bath. It concentrates on the current revision of the WHS Management Plan, progress of the 'Great Spas of Europe' project and the Archway project to deliver a World Site Heritage Interpretation Centre.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 This is an information item. The panel are asked to note the report contents.

## 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Approved budgets relating to the emerging draft replacement WHS Management Plan and the Great Spas project are in place and the WHS Interpretation Centre is partially subject to fundraising and grants from external bodies. Costs associated with stakeholder engagement will be managed from within these existing budgets.
- 3.2 With regard to property, the buildings which will house the new learning centre and WH Interpretation Centre are within the Council's ownership. The capital project proposals will be progressed through the usual Council capital approval process.

## 4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 There are no statutory requirements associated with WH inscription but UNESCO, as the body which inscribes and monitors sites, has operational guidelines which sites are expected to abide by. A link to these is provided at the end of this report.

## 5 THE REPORT

### Introduction

5.1 This report follows earlier submissions to this panel in July 2014/September 2015.

### The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan

5.2 As noted in section 4.1 UNESCO guidelines stipulate that all sites should have an up to date management plan in place. UNESCO identifies the most significant places on the planet and then works to ensure that they are well managed. A management plan describes what the site comprises of, explains why it is of global importance, outlines the management systems in place to protect it and contain an action plan of necessary measures. It should be noted that the Plan is a document of the WHS Steering Group, so although the Council is the chief steward of the site this is not a Council document.

5.3 As anticipated in the report of November 2015, the management plan has now undergone full public consultation. The presence of recently launched social media platforms for Bath World Heritage (Twitter and Facebook accounts) were very useful in relaying news of the consultation, although most responses were received via the Council's on-line response system. It is interesting to note that all responses received were electronic or on forms at events, although a postal option was available.

5.4 The response level was good, with 98 responses received. These comprised of responses from 17 organisations, 5 Council departments and 3 Ward Councillors. When added to the list of issues captured during the pre-consultation stakeholder event (April 2015) this gives a total of 232 responses.

5.5 No responses challenged or dis-agreed with the priorities of the draft plan (managing development, transport, public realm, interpretation and education, environmental resilience). In this respect there have been no major alterations to the consultation draft document and this is considered to be in part due to the 'up front' work undertaken at the 2015 stakeholder event.

5.6 Although this is a heritage plan, comments were received on a wide variety of topics. A summary of these is shown at Appendix 1. The most frequently cited topic was transport and the most frequent issue was that of a potential Eastern Park and Ride (P&R) site. 58 of the 98 comments received included concern about a new P&R site. The WHS Management Plan defers to the Getting around Bath Transport Strategy (adopted 2014) to address transport matters, and does not contain site specific proposals itself. Therefore this Plan will not be the key document with regard to decisions over any such facility, but in response to concerns from consultation respondents several references to P&R have been amended or deleted to ensure that the Plan is neutral with regard to this matter.

5.7 The transport action in the plan was also modified to make it clearer. The action relating to flooding was strengthened in response to concerns by resident's associations, and a new action was added to monitor proposals for coach parking, which is currently under review. Wording of an action relating to accessibility and the historic environment was amended to be more inclusive.

5.8 In summary, the 'state of conservation' of the WHS is currently very good. There are very few buildings at risk and all of the key buildings and monuments are in good condition. Where there are challenges such as interpretation and management of the landscape, plans are in place including the Archway Centre and Bathscape project. The challenge therefore is currently how we deliver further growth and improvement without compromising the heritage. The focus has moved more toward maintaining good standards and moving forward with care.

#### The Great Spas of Europe

5.9 As previously reported to this panel, Bath is engaged in a project entitled the 'Great Spas of Europe'. In 2007 the Czech Government approached UNESCO with a proposal to have 3 of their spa towns inscribed on the WH list for the contribution that they had made to European culture. UNESCO welcomed the idea, but asked that the best examples of spas across Europe be identified to demonstrate this cultural contribution. Subsequently a group of leading European spas was formed and Bath sits within that group.

5.10 At the last report Bath's involvement in the project was subject to an evaluation by the UK Government (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)). The evaluation panel decision was received in January 2016, with DCMS confirming that 'the Minister fully supports the continued development of your proposals for the possible inclusion of Bath as a UK component in the series and wishes you every success in doing so'.

5.11 In addition to clearing the above hurdle, a second challenge was to reduce the 16 spas in the project group to a smaller number in line with UNESCO advice. This was undertaken by means of a comparative analysis assessing all candidates against set criteria. This analysis ranked 7 of the 16 spas worthy of progression. Bath was ranked joint first (alongside Karlovy Vary). The Czech Republic Government called a meeting of all state party representatives and reached agreement on a group of 11. This was announced at a subsequent meeting of the mayors in Prague in May 2016. This process worked well, in that the disappointed mayors were told at the meeting that if they had any questions about their failure to make the submission group, these should be addressed to their relevant governments who had agreed the decision. In fact, the rejected parties took the decision well and wished the remaining towns every success.

5.12 The project group now comprises of Bath, Baden-Baden (Germany), Bad Ems (Germany), Bad Kissingen (Germany), Baden bei Wien (Austria), Františkovy Lázně (CZ), Karlovy Vary (CZ), Mariánské Lázně (CZ), Montecatini Terme (I), Spa (Belgium), Vichy (France). The disappointed candidates are Luhacovice (CZ), Wiesbaden (Germany), Bad Homburg (Germany), Bad Ischl (Austria), Bad Pyrmont (Germany). Work will now concentrate on putting together the bid, which will need a draft management plan and governance arrangements to be proposed. With regard to Bath this work will draw heavily on existing arrangements. The formal nomination to UNESCO is programmed for early 2018.

5.13 In terms of the Brexit vote, the official message from DCMS is that this will not impact upon the project, which should proceed as normal.

## The World Heritage Interpretation Centre

- 5.14 As previously reported Heritage Services are progressing a project to deliver a new learning centre within grade II listed Victorian former laundry buildings immediately south of the Roman Great Bath (off York Street and Swallow Street). As part of this 'Archway' project, the current retail unit on York Street (currently a leather chair showroom) will become a World Heritage Interpretation Centre.
- 5.15 A number of important milestones in relation to this project can be confirmed. Planning permission and listed building consent applications were submitted and a decision is due on 2 September 2016. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) round 2 funding submission has also been made, and their SW Committee will make an assessment visit on 6 September. A result of the funding application should be known around the 28<sup>th</sup> of September. 93% of the required match funding for the HLF bid has now been raised.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Council's Strategic Director of Place, Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report.
- 6.2 No further consultation has been undertaken for this information report.

## **7 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendation is not considered necessary in this instance.

<b>Contact person</b>	Tony Crouch, World Heritage Manager. 01225 477584
<b>Background papers</b>	The World Heritage Site Management Plan (2010-2016) and the Steering Group composition can be seen at: <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/worldheritage">www.bathnes.gov.uk/worldheritage</a>  UNESCO Operating Guidelines (2015): <a href="http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/">http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

## APPENDIX 1

### Summary of issues raised through consultation on the draft World Heritage Site Management Plan (May – July 2016)

Recorded below is a summary of the main issues raised in the 98 responses received during public consultation. The number in brackets indicates where there was obvious multiple mention of the same issue.

TRANSPORT	
1.	Bathampton Meadows P&R objection (x 58)
2.	Tackle school run traffic, use school buses (x 9)
3.	Address pollution and air quality (x 8)
4.	Improve rail links (x 7)
5.	Improved rail links (x 7)
6.	Road Space re-allocation (provide cycle lanes) (x 6)
7.	Introduce a congestion charge/zone (x 5)
8.	Better bus services (x 5)
9.	Safer cycling (x 5)
10.	Alternative sites for an Eastern P&R (x 4)
11.	Tackle the HGV problem in the city (x 4)
12.	Build an A36/46 link (x 3)
13.	Coach parking (lack of) (x 2)
14.	Need a proper cycle lane on London Road (x 2)
15.	Build a bypass (x 2)
16.	Improve bus services into the city from outlying villages and towns (x 2)
17.	Affordable public transport (x 2)
18.	Introduce a workplace parking levy as Nottingham have done
19.	Support for engaging with Wiltshire on traffic issues
20.	Reduce traffic and air pollution
21.	Increase bike and pedestrian routes
22.	Cycle and local bus links to the Park and Ride Sites
23.	More cycle parking
24.	Bike hire stations on the outskirts of the city
25.	The impact of cycling is not universally positive
26.	Support for pedestrianisation of the High Street
27.	More traffic calming
28.	Through traffic toll charge
29.	Reduce traffic noise
30.	Concern over closure of boat moorings near Pulteney Weir
31.	Introduce river ferry
32.	Better management of roadworks
33.	Improved footpaths
34.	Use devolution to regain control over buses
35.	Use Electric buses
MANAGING DEVELOPMENT	
36.	Concern over student numbers/housing (x 10)
37.	Protect green spaces (x 6)
38.	Affordable housing needed (x 3)
39.	Avoid poor modern architecture (x 3)
40.	Planning Committee/key decision makers should be better informed/trained (x 2)

41.	Too much development	(x 3)
42.	Prevent urban sprawl	(x 2)
43.	Architectural competitions should be held	
44.	Large monolithic blocks (Riverside) should be avoided	
45.	Gated communities at Bath Riverside form a bad precedent	
46.	Support for building in Georgian style (Green Park)	
47.	Pastiche new buildings should be avoided	
48.	Further work needed on LED street lighting	
49.	Support for dressing the city with flags and banners	
50.	Pressure to build new housing should be addressed	
51.	The skyline should be protected from development	
52.	Proliferation of retail outlets is bad	
53.	Develop brown field sites first	
54.	Building height controls may need to be relaxed	
55.	The protection of the city should take precedence over protection of the setting, where there is conflict.	
56.	Develop the northern slopes and Lansdown before sprawling South	
57.	Perceived conflict between Council as developer and planning authority	
58.	Need for greater planning enforcement	
59.	Concern about development at the Rugby Ground	
60.	New jobs needed	
	<b>PUBLIC REALM</b>	
61.	Lack of attention to the riverside	(x 2)
62.	Apply principles (i.e. quality design) to all parts of the city, not just centre	
63.	Solar Compactor bins are good	
64.	Protect/sustain communities	
65.	Public Realm and Movement Strategy should be funded and implemented	
66.	Potential to create city quarters	
67.	More small parks are needed	
68.	Clean up unsightly spaces	
69.	Improve the ugly weir side	
70.	Pedestrianise Pulteney Bridge	
	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIANCE</b>	
71.	Concern about Flooding	(x 3)
72.	Protect against Fracking	(x 2)
73.	Greater protection of wildlife	
74.	Tackle energy efficiency and carbon emissions	
	<b>CONSERVATION</b>	
75.	Protect what is unique about Bath	(x 6)
76.	Transfer Bathampton Meadows to the National Trust	
	<b>VISITOR MANAGEMENT</b>	
77.	Too many tourists	(x 2)
78.	Visitor tax (support for)	
79.	Tourist needs are placed above locals	
80.	Visitors must not create pollution	
81.	A dedicated tourism marketing organisation is required	
	<b>EDUCATION</b>	
82.	Need for ongoing education in heritage matters	
	<b>OTHER</b>	
83.	Concern over Street drinking, street living, busking, begging and litter	(x 2)
84.	Support for independent shops	(x 2)

85.	Plan for local food production
86.	Tackle anti-social drinking
87.	Plan for population growth
88.	Provide a better local discount to Thermae Bath Spa, built with Bath taxpayers money
89.	More arts and recreational facilities
90.	The refuse collection system should be reviewed
91.	Over provision of souvenir shops