

**Statement to the 6.9.16 Planning, Housing and Economic Development  
Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel meeting**

Thank you Chair.

As one who relocated from London for the all round quality of life in Bath and the surrounding countryside, I am pleased that this PDS Panel is taking a keen and continuing interest in managing and making the most of this city's prized World Heritage status. I am also impressed with the Management Plan and the associated consultation document – not least for its insights into the nature of Outstanding Universal Value, and perception of the challenges and opportunities associated with the preservation of the World Heritage site and its setting for future generations.

However I have a few concerns as regards the sections in the update report on today's agenda relating to the revision of the 2016-22 Management plan in light of responses to the summer consultation:

- The line of argument in paragraph 5.6 of the update report portrays the P&R East issue as, and only as, a transport issue. However, whilst P&R East may well have a role to play in delivering some important transport objectives, it is also an environmental and social issue with potential adverse and long lasting effects on such as flood resilience, air quality and community wellbeing.
- Furthermore, the Management Plan's deference of transport matters to the 2014 Bath Transport Strategy does not exempt it from its responsibilities to protect the World Heritage site and setting for future generations. Indeed the Management Plan includes "The green setting of the City in a hollow in the hills" as one of six headline attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, and asserts in its vision statement that there is a "strong presumption against development that would harm the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site itself or its setting".<sup>1</sup>
- Given that all but one of the potential P&R East sites evaluated earlier this year by the LDF Steering Group and from which Cabinet has indicated that a decision will be "made later this year", lie within the World Heritage Site setting, it is unsurprising that around 2/3 of consultation respondents expressed concern about P&R East (albeit the summary in Appendix 1 of the update report is not clear as to why and/or from what perspective). For this is indeed an imminent and major example of "the principal challenge in this plan to deliver a further phase of considerable growth and change whilst sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value for which the site was inscribed".<sup>2</sup> (Hence my questions, ahead of seeing the post consultation revised version of the Management Plan, as to the rationale for amending or deleting the references to P&R East.)

Why am I taking timeout today to draw your attention to such specific nuances of interpretation you might be wondering? Here's why. Although only voted for by 38% of the electorate, the current Council administration has an unusually large working majority, and if it so wishes, is thus well-positioned to implement a narrow party-political agenda regardless of its impact on future generations and wider stakeholder groups. The 2016-22 Management Plan is an important safeguard to prevent this happening.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 6 of the Consultation draft of the 2016-22 Management Plan.

<sup>2</sup> See page 7 of the Consultation draft of the 2016-22 Management Plan.