



# BATH RESIDENTS

Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

## **B&NES' DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN : FoBRA STATEMENT TO B&NES' PHEDPD&SP: 5 September 2017**

There are nearly 5,000 members in FoBRA and, as such, we are the largest apolitical organisation in Bath, with a population of 93,000 but no parishes. Instead we have elected councillors yet we were concerned to note that no Bath councillors formed part of the Strategy Group that developed the draft Plan. Had they been, city residents' interests would have been served, but they were not.

To omit residents' opinion from the strategy groups was not simply an oversight, it was discourteous and disrespectful [disingenuous]. As one of the most important stakeholders in Bath, FoBRA should have been a member of the strategy group from the start and, albeit belatedly, we now welcome the invitation to participate in the further formulation of the plan.

We shall submit detailed comments separately but in general we believe that:

- there should be more explicit recognition of the importance for the character of the city of retaining a vibrant residential population in central Bath, as set out in the Placemaking Plan. Residents are mentioned at various points, but not as a critical element in the equation, which they are.
- there should be a proper discussion of what 'sustainable development' means. There are references at various points to negative impacts of tourism, such as the intrusion of coaches in the city centre, increased congestion, the impact on the amenity of the city of increasing hotel bed spaces and the expansion of party houses. There is even recognition of a threat from a negative reaction by residents to tourism. These thoughts are brought together to a degree, but this should be developed fully as a major policy element – when is enough enough? This should be one of the main Action Areas.
- It would be useful if the Bath Transport Strategy and the Public Realm & Movement Strategy were cited as solutions in the SWOT table which records

residents' negative reaction to tourism. A negative reaction is actually a positive contribution to the debate.

- while the plan recognises that Bath has a serious traffic problem which affects visitors and a poor public realm, this should be developed into a call for urgent implementation of the transport strategy and the PRMS.
- Coaches are a major contributor to congestion, pollution and general loss of amenity and the plan refers to a separate coach parking strategy, but this currently seems to be based on the premise that the city should basically accommodate whatever the coach operators want.
- Instead, we should ask tough questions like: do we actually want to encourage coaches that only stay for less than 3 hours, which comprise two-thirds of the total? Do we want them driving twice round The Circus before pushing off to their next destination without their passengers contributing anything to the Bath economy? This is highly pertinent to the issue of the type of destination Bath aspires to be.
- Some good actions are tabled, but the final one must include local residents amongst 'key stakeholders' – after all, do we not own most of the WHS Key Features, and does its appearance not depend largely on residents maintaining their properties at their own cost.

Communication with local residents is essential, but this must be a 2-way process.