

Statement to 22.7.20 B&NES Cabinet

Thank you chair.

I speak as a business strategy, policy & sustainability professional, and also as a citizen living a fifteen minute walk from the lower end of the Entry Hill golf course. Although I am well aware of the site's under utilised potential and am passionate about finding a more desirable and feasible future use, as yet I have no particular view as to what that might be.

My heart sank on first reading the agenda papers for this item, for it seemed that the Council has already decided the best use for the site and best way of procuring it, and that in so doing it hasn't learned from the costly environmental decision-making mistakes of the previous administration – lack of strategic contextual awareness, flawed stakeholder consultation and option evaluation processes, and pre-framing of politically and value sensitive decisions – to name but a few.

So, what could the Cabinet do to counter such perceptions (and perhaps would have done were they not dealing with a pandemic)?

1. Note the biases in the consultation process and deficiencies in the option evaluation methodology leading to the report authors' unwarranted inference of the Family Cycle Centre/Mountain Bike Park being the preferred option);
2. Recognising the complexities and uncertainties involved, align the Council's objectives and priorities for use of the site with those of its 2019-23 Corporate Strategy, as updated today in the light of crisis Covid19 response and amplified in tomorrow's declaration of a B&NES Nature Emergency;
3. Rather than design the procurement process around a particular preferred use, choose one most likely to generate desired longterm economic, social and environmental outcomes. For example, rather than the DBFO route suggested in the report, why not consider selecting a preferred partner or partners with whom to develop the site holistically thereby allowing bidders to bring their skill, judgement, creativity to bear in finding
 - uses for the site advancing the Council's vision and strategic priorities;
 - engaging and involving community stakeholders; and critically,
 - in attracting new sources of funding.

Rather than settle for a swift, utilitarian and 'good-enough' solution for the Entry Hill site, I urge you to seize this pivotal moment in our locality's journey towards a thriving greener future, and the opportunity the site's unique topography and relationship with the World Heritage City of Bath presents, to co-create something visionary, invigorating and inspiring and thereby proof the future of our esteemed landscape city.

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