

Time for effective delivery!

Good evening,

We are facing serious ongoing challenges both as a city and as particular individual neighbourhoods and communities. The challenges are not all the same but some remain serious and need immediate and perhaps more effective action and delivery.

Over the last week at Cabinet, at the most recent Policy Scrutiny Panel and at a recent forum I heard the point alluded to that we need to find additional ways to listen.

What have we all been doing over the last four years, if we have not been listening? What have you all been doing over the last four years if you have not been listening? Most importantly, what were voters doing on May 4th if they were not listening to your various parties' manifesto pledgesand they made their choices, whatever anyone individually might think of those decisions!

Determining the achievements of an Administration, its Council, its Executive should not be a one-off examination every four years but a process of continual assessment. You will always have elements of the electorate who think that you are not consulting enough, not consulting meaningfully or indeed consulting too muchfor there is also such a thing as consultation fatigue!

Let's get moving from the beginning of this Administration and continue throughout its four, or more likely eight year term, with real and effective delivery on the key issues! We know the problems, they are many but unless we have more ACTUAL action we will never get ahead of the curve on any of them.

A few deliberately random examples:

- The regeneration of our main and local high streets: how are we going to correct and manage the importance of retail vs hospitality interests? That balance needs correcting, not least because the answer has MAJOR implications for the impact and costs to the upkeep and sustainability of our public realm! (The success of the Milsom Quarter Project as a 'touchstone' here will be key.)
- The battle against the impact of climate change on our city is now about mitigation not about eradication are we taking that likelihood into account and are we moving fast enough?
- Are we conscious of the dangers of overtourism in our city what are we doing about ensuring we do not become merely a museum-cum-fun-park? Year-round urban tourism is growing faster than any other type of vacations.....Bath is a prime example of that trend, including and particularly the 'Netflix effect'. (What about that tourist tax to re-dress the costs/impact on our public realm?).

The toxic mixture of significant unmanaged tourist/visitor footfall, rat-running and speeding traffic, my own residents association highlighted in a paper to Cabinet members in March 2021.....this ever increasing problem in a significant heritage area like ours CAN be resolved by the sensitive introduction of a meaningful Liveable

Neighbourhood [and in so doing it will validate the case for Liveable Neighbourhoods].

There ARE solutions, we just need to be more aspirational and self-confident to act on them!

As a residents association, we don't expect our Council to do everything for us we undertake some of our own key initiatives. But we also expect to keep your feet 'in the fire' on delivering your commitments as well as what is right for Bath as a whole and we also expect you to keep the Executive's 'feet in the fire' to deliver those same commitments, effectively and within a 'value for money' context.

Malcolm Baldwin.