

Malcolm Baldwin statement:

Future-proofing our tourist economy sector.

(Part 1)

When I spoke at the last full Council meeting, although not my main theme, I alluded to the under-management of our tourist economy.

The main point of my presentation on that day related to Liveable Neighbourhoods and how important it was that such a concept should not merely be about traffic management interventions, essential though those are to some catchment areas such as my own, but be importantly about a wider context.....the improvement of our public realm to the benefit of residents, visitors, businesses and our key local tourist economy in particular.

Today you have the opportunity to scrutinise and support essentially needed changes, long-awaited by some of us, to potentially significantly improve our public realm in terms of the better design and management of our street-scape.

With this long-awaited but hopefully highly welcomed initiative by the current B&NES administration, we should be able to move some way to future-proofing essential aspects of our tourist economy whilst at the same time, correctly implemented, vastly improving our public realm for the benefit of our residents, visitors and local business community.

Let us make a bold assumption: Both residents and tourist/visitors will support a better looking and better managed street-scape for our city and its surrounding areas.

Bath has a beautiful and stunning architectural heritage, our parklands are second to no other city in this country, some of our local museums such as the Holburne continue to inspire and our aspirations for a new fashion museum has the potential to be nationally and world challenging.

The current aesthetics and management of our city's street-scapes are frankly dire and we should be, and some of us often are, embarrassed by their condition and what is allowed to occur on them.

The new strategy for improvement of that street-scape, before you later today, makes a start in potentially dramatically improving the condition of our city for its residents and begins the process of future-proofing the quality of our key tourist economy.

In this context, politically or non-politically, let's not forget it really is the 'E word' that's important. Any strategy for these absolutely vital improvements to our street-scape will only be effective with focused and maintained ENFORCEMENT.

Let's let's not re-invent the wheel and please, please no more external consultants on this one if resource-wise it can be avoided. A template potentially already exists, it's called "Creating the canvas for public life in Bath". (See end of this document).

Finally, it's also essential to get residents and NOT just business organisations involved. A document such as I have alluded to, overlaid and amended with a large amount of local knowledge and common-sense, will get our city to where we all should want it to be as an exemplar for the condition of the public realm for the benefit of our residents and visitors alike.

Malcolm Baldwin.

Circus Area Residents Association.