

## STATEMENT TO FULL COUNCIL ON 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPT BY MARTIN FARRELL

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- 1 This statement seeks to draw the attention of this Committee to seek to ensure that this Council pays particular attention to the level of scrutiny given to proposals that directly affect the World Heritage sites of Bath, and for members to appreciate the current disconnection between policy makers, project assessment and the decision process.
- 2 Many years can pass between formulation of Policies and the consequential implementation. The lapsed time over which events may enable reflection and re-thinking. In addition members are entitled to and indeed insist that developments are of a quality that respects the World Heritage Site. This Council has legally signed for adherence to the policies documented by The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan 2016- 2022 [current policy]
- 3 Decisions taken at committee rely on officer's reports and the personal interpretations of members. Who, in the case of the planning committee, are prevented by protocols, from having any prior knowledge of what they are to decide on at committee. This protocol can hardly be described as both transparent nor democratic.
- 4 Policy decisions involving the evolution of The Local Plan may gestate from developer lobbying and plan making by the policy unit. In depth investigation is sometimes lacking as to the appropriateness of policies, and the potential of achievable implementation, plus how they might be in conflict with policies in the NPPF, the World Heritage Site Management Plan, and the Placemaking plan itself. Policies can also be compromised by legal constraints rendering them non-compliant.
- 5 The clear and obvious danger is that when proposals come forward, they may be found to be problematic for any number of reasons, putting the planning department into the position when it defends proposals of its own making, that are shown to be systemically defective and lacking in terms of character and design finesse
- 6 The evidence of lack of any meticulous scrutiny is seen in the recent developments in Bath. I have yet to meet anyone who believes that the Western Riverside development in anyway graces the city and makes any positive contribution to its architectural heritage. There are no doubt more, but what is sure is that they lack evidence of creative design befitting to the World Heritage Site, and collectively inch closer to placing Bath on the "at risk register" at UNESCO
- 7 A City of the world importance of Bath deserves an independent Scrutiny Panel of experienced practitioners with the responsibility to advise on projects that have impact on the quality of the built environment with the express intention of ensuring the very best and appropriate solutions are found.
- 8 My plea therefore is that