

FOBRA - Planning & Major Projects report September 2024

B&NES Local Plan 2022-2042

The previously reported fast pace of work by B&NES Planners, which had been aimed at producing a final plan for submission to Public Inquiry in the early part of next year, has been halted by the new government's Revised National Planning Policy Framework, which inter alia effectively doubles the target for house-building to a national figure of 1.5 million new homes over the next 5 years. The new legislation also includes a revision to the standard method for calculating housing need, which is now mandatory. For B&NES, this means an increase in the target rate of house-building from 717 units per annum to 1,466. This will clearly require a review of potential sites within the District and in the whole of the WECA area, in coordination with neighbouring authorities.

The Government has committed additional funding in recognition of the significant resources needed to meet the new deadline of December 2026 for the submission of Local Plans for examination. (How the Inspectorate will cope with this deluge is a mystery.) The Council is now working on the assumption that resources will be adequate to fund the work needed, including further community consultation.

Members may recall that a coordinated response was submitted to the Council's public consultation on the Local Plan, critical of the process for responding. It is hoped that the next stages will be better designed to encourage public understanding and feedback.

Bath Rec – Rugby Stadium Proposals (23/03558/EFUL)

There have been no further developments.

East of Lambridge Training Ground (Lidl) (23/02212/FUL)

FoBRA objected to this proposal. The application has been withdrawn following major objections from the Highways Authority to the impact on the junction.

Sulis Down

An appeal has now been lodged into the refusal of this application and a Public Inquiry will be held in the early part of next year.

Kosy Living

An application for the redevelopment of the site at the bottom of Wells Way, currently occupied by Great Wines and a charity group to be replaced by a 4 storey accommodation block of 77 units and 2 commercial units has been approved by the Council. This application was vehemently opposed by the Widcombe Association and many of our members individually as

well as the Bath Preservation Trust. I and Alex Sherman from the BTP both spoke against the scheme as did our Local Councillor, Deborah Collins (who had to recuse herself and was therefore unable to stay for the discussion). Our other Councillor was on holiday.

I am raising this here due to the wider impact this development could have on the WHS and future decisions. Perhaps FOBRA might wish to challenge the Council to explain how they make these judgements on schemes which will be acknowledged to have an impact on the WHS?

I might also like to seek clarification on the Committee procedures. The decision in this case was made by the casting vote of the Chairman. Had our Councillor not presented her case and had therefore been present for the debate and vote, it is highly likely the application would have been refused. In the circumstances, perhaps the decision could have been deferred.

Jan Shepley 18 September 2024