



Planning & Development News

January 2023

News this Month

- **Updated Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance imminent**
- **Inspector Publishes Final Report in Response to Local Plan Partial Update** - see 1.1
- **Residents encouraged to have their say in the development of the new Local Plan for Bath** and BPT to attend consultation event - see 1.2
- **Have Your Say on the B&NES Budget 2023-2024** - see 1.3
- **Residents encouraged to engage in 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' consultations** - see 1.4
- **B&NES Council Launches Clean Air Zone Public Consultation for HGVs** - see 1.5
- **Unnamed Bath Quays South Bridge Opened to Pedestrians and Cyclists** - see 1.6
- **B&NES Council Trials Rentable Bike Hangars in Three City Locations** - see 1.7
- **Bathscape Walks encourage Weekly Wellbeing** - see 1.8
- **BPT's Open Letter Concerning Bath Western Riverside in the Press** - see 2.1
- **Revised Plans for Sulis Down Under Scrutiny** - see 2.2
- **Revised Development Proposals Come Forward for Regency Laundry Site on Lower Bristol Road** - see 2.3
- **BPT Responds to Refurbishment Proposals at Debenhams Store, Southgate** - see 2.4
- **Historic England Refreshes Energy Saving Guidance for Older Buildings** - see 3.7

1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

1.1 Local Plan Partial Update: The planning inspector examining the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU), has found it sound and legally compliant subject to some changes, known as main modifications, being incorporated. [His Final Report has recently been published on the council's website.](#) The adoption of the LPPU is due to be discussed at a Special Council meeting to be held on 19 January 2023.

As part of LPPU amendments, Cllr Tim Ball has also been asked to approve three supplementary planning documents (SPDs) [being put forward as Single Member Decisions.](#) The draft Planning Obligations SPD Update; Sustainable Construction Checklist

SPD Update; and Transport and Development SPD were all consulted on earlier this year and minor amendments have been made. These may be adopted by 11th January 2023.

1.2 Local Plan 2022-2042: BPT's submitted consultation response is [now available on our website](#). As part of ongoing works on the upcoming Local Plan, [the council will be holding a series of local engagement workshops across B&NES throughout January and February](#) to help inform the development of Bath & North East Somerset Council's Local Plan. Community representatives will join other key stakeholders to discuss the key issues and opportunities in their area. Residents are encouraged to contact their community representatives with any relevant local information or issues.

1.3 B&NES Budget 2023-2024 Public Consultation: Residents are being invited to have their say on B&NES Council's draft financial plans for next year. These set out the changes the council is proposing to balance its budget for 2023-2024. It is proposed to meet the budget gap of £5.4m by increasing council tax by 4.99% in line with government limitations. An additional income of £512,000 is anticipated from Heritage Services as visitor numbers and associated profits return to pre-pandemic levels. It is also proposed to save £40,000 by restructuring the World Heritage service, moving into Planning department and use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

[The public consultation closes 20th January; all documents are available here.](#)

1.4 Liveable Neighbourhoods: Three new schemes designed to improve residential neighbourhoods were launched in November 2022 as 6-month trials under B&NES Council's community-led Liveable Neighbourhoods programme. **Public consultations are open for feedback until 17th May:**

- [Church Street, Widcombe](#)
- [Queen Charlton](#)
- [Southlands](#)

1.5 Clean Air Zone Public Consultation: After a year of having a Class C Clean Air Zone (CAZ) in place across the city centre, B&NES Council is now offering further opportunity to consult on proposed additional charges for Class N3 Euro 6 diesel HGVs entering the Zone (£50/day). This change aims to protect and conserve road infrastructure, including the Grade II* listed Cleveland Bridge and the wider Bath World Heritage Site's historic architecture and natural setting, as well as contributing towards improvements in air quality.

[The public consultation closes 7th February; all documents are available here.](#)

1.6 Bath Quays South Bridge: The new bridge for cyclists and pedestrians, linking Green Park Road with the new Bath Quays and Newark Works office developments, has opened two years after it was installed. [The council aims to announce the final name for the bridge in Spring 2023.](#) The bridge opening formed part of a site visit by cabinet leaders over Christmas to have a look round Bath Quays, the council's flagship redevelopment project, ahead of work being completed next year.

1.7 New Bike Hangars Installed in Bath: New bike hangars were installed in three residential areas in Bath on 19th December as part of a two-year £30,000 trial to provide

secure, on-street cycle parking facilities for residents. The hangars will provide lockable and secure storage (costing £42 per year per space to rent) for 24 bikes for residents living in Great Stanhope Street, New King Street and Sydney Buildings, who don't have access to private cycle parking, such as a shed or garage. The hangars will be installed, maintained and operated by [Falco](#), on behalf of B&NES Council.

1.8 Bathscape: Bathscape is running a series of Weekly Wellbeing Walks led by volunteer guides with the aim of encouraging people to remain active and improve their health during the colder months.

[The timetable of walks is available on the Bathscape website.](#)

1.9 City Centre Security Improvements - Road Closures Update: [A temporary traffic regulation order notice \(TTRO\) has been published for temporary closure of York Street and Terrace Walk in order for the work to begin in the first week of January.](#) The TTRO will be in place for eight months, although it is anticipated that the works will be concluded well in advance of this deadline. Pedestrian access will be maintained throughout.

1.10 Cleveland Pools: Pending update in January 2023 regarding potential opening dates for the cold water swimming season. The Cleveland Pools Trust is pressing ahead with the [next round of fundraising for the pontoon](#) which will house the ground source heat pump to allow for warm water swimming and offer river access - phase two works will begin next year.

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 Bath Western Riverside: Application [22/03224/EFUL](#) for the development of 616 residential dwellings on the former Gasworks site south of the river, as part of the next phase of the Western Riverside development:

BPT has published an open letter response expressing our major concerns with impact of proposals on the World Heritage Site. [Read BPT's open letter here.](#)

[Read BPT's full objection response here.](#)

[Read Bath Newseum's coverage of BPT's open letter here.](#)

[Read Somerset Live's coverage of BPT's open letter here.](#)

2.2 Sulis Down: Revised drawings have been submitted under application [22/02169/EOUT](#) for Phases 3 & 4 of the Sulis Down development. These include revised plans for allotments on Derrymans Field, from which elements such as on-site parking and seating have been removed, as well as allusions to potential zones of further allotment development to accompany the expansion of the main development site. A revised Comprehensive Masterplan has also been submitted, although there are continued concerns about the apparent lack of detail and general piecemeal approach to the site. Further points to consider are the potential impact of a number of paths/'crossing points' to the north and potential resulting harm on the Wansdyke SAM; [a Setting Assessment has](#)

[now been submitted](#), as well as the overall impact of infrastructure lighting, light spill and sky glow on the WHS landscape, SAM, dark skies and nature.

[Members of the public can consult on revised plans until 4th February here.](#)

2.3 Regency Laundry: Application [22/04431/FUL](#) was submitted with revised proposals for the redevelopment of the vacant Regency Laundry site. Application [20/03166/FUL](#) for the development of a mixed-use scheme incorporating co-living accommodation was refused on grounds of loss of the existing industrial floorspace. Current proposals are therefore for the development of a four storey B8 self-storage facility.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT submitted an objection response on the grounds that the proposed height, scale, massing, and depth of the building would result in overdevelopment of the site and would fail to respond to local townscape character. The unbroken, monolithic four-storey height of the building would be out of keeping with its two-three storey context. We also highlighted strong concerns with the impact of overshadowing on the adjoining terrace along Lorne Road. BPT took the opportunity to highlight the largely residential character and grain of the area and encouraged consideration of a mixed-use scheme for the site that could include affordable/key worker housing.

[Read our full response here.](#)

2.4 Debenhams, Southgate: Application [22/04328/FUL](#) has been submitted for the refurbishment and reuse of the currently vacant Debenhams building, originally constructed as a purpose-built department store as part of the wider Southgate 'quarter'. BPT were originally invited to comment at pre-app stage with the input of AP&P Committee. In response to our comments, amendments had been made to the submitted scheme including the removal of the second floor cornice and replacement with a much slimmer profile stringcourse, and the inclusion of the Manvers Street elevation and colonnade as part of overall proposals. A number of the second-floor windows were retained as smaller openings on the corners to allow these to 'express' themselves better.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT submitted a comment response highlighting continued concerns with the intersection of the enlarged second floor windows with the stringcourse. The enlargement of the windows would also be at odds with the Georgian architectural principles (eg. order of proportion) that the building was originally intended to follow. Annotated drawings were included to indicate how the window size could be reduced and realigned to sit more comfortably with the stringcourse, which would then form part of the window sill.

[Read our full response here.](#)

2.5 30 Park Avenue: Application [22/04394/FUL](#) was submitted for decarbonisation works to a residential end-of-terrace dwelling within the conservation area and World Heritage Site. Works included the addition of a rear single storey extension, the cladding of the rear and side elevations in a lime/hemp insulating render, and the addition of PV panels to the roof, as well as a number of internal alterations to improve natural ventilation and heating, and adjust the internal plan form to meet current demands.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT submitted a comment response highlighting general support in principle for the implementation of energy retrofit measures, but expressing some concerns with the use of an external render. We considered that the render would have a limited impact in longer-range views, where this is of an appropriate colour and finish, but there was limited evidence of this being a suitable intervention within this context to address highlighted issues with damp and poor heat retention.

[Read our full response here.](#)

2.6 56 St James's Park: Application [22/04608/FUL](#) proposed the demolition of a 20th century detached flat-roofed dwelling and the development of two Georgian-style townhouses. Development would aim to continue the terraced line of the Grade II Northampton Buildings, where former no.22 had been severely damaged by bombing and later demolished.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT submitted a comment response. We accepted the principle of the redevelopment of this site and a historic precedent for dual frontage development that would relate to both Northampton Street and St James's Park. However, we had some comments regarding the proposed design and the compromise between re-creating an original Georgian townhouse and use of overtly contemporary detailing, such as at roof level. We felt that the turning point between Northampton Street and St James's Park could be better expressed, and there may be opportunity for a more contemporary approach along the north façade. We had concerns regarding the lack of adequate outdoor amenity space provided.

[Read our full response here.](#)

3. National News

3.1 England's Affordable Housing Scheme 32,000 Homes Short of Target: [A £21bn government programme to build more affordable housing in England is missing its target by 32,000 homes with big shortfalls in rural areas.](#) It has been suggested that the programme may fall even further behind due to failing to account for risks including inflated construction costs. The shortfall also includes an under provision of a total of 32,000 social houses from 2016.

[Read Home England's 2021-2022 affordable housing statistics here.](#)

3.2 'Rebound Effect' Cancels Out Home Insulation's Impact on Gas Use: Conservatories and house extensions could be helping to wipe out the reductions in gas use secured by insulating homes, [according to a study into the long-term effect of loft and cavity wall insulation in England and Wales.](#) It was found that insulation only provides a short-term fall in energy consumption when considered alongside the building of house extensions, which use extra energy. For households with conservatories, any gains in energy efficiency disappeared after the first year.

3.3 CPRE Publishes its 2022 Report on UK Brownfield Sites: The scale of the accommodation that could be built emerged after the [countryside charity CPRE analysed 344 brownfield land registers](#), which identify urban sites that have previously been built

on, which are available for housing. The amount of land available covered 27,342 hectares (67,563 acres) in 2022, 6% more than in 2021. It has the capacity to provide 1.2m homes at a time of nationwide housing crisis. Planning permission has only been granted for 45% of the land, while 550,000 permitted homes are awaiting development. In the south-west, where evidence suggests local people cannot afford to rent or buy, in a crisis worsened by a rise in second-home owners, there is capacity to build 71,000 homes on brownfield sites, 56% of which have planning permission.

3.4 Publication of the English Housing Survey 2022: [DLUHC has published its latest issue of the English Housing Survey](#), which provides national statistics for the type and quality of rented/privately owned housing stock across England. In 2021, 14% or 3.4 million occupied dwellings failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. This has reduced from the 2019 figure of 17% or 4.1 million non-decent occupied homes. However, between 2019-2022, the private rented sector remains the highest provider of non-decent homes, with a consistent level of 23% of occupied homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard. These figures, when considered against [soaring rents that have been found to be unaffordable when compared against average wages](#), indicate a lower standard of living and energy efficiency in the private rental market that have consequences for renters including poor health and wellbeing and higher energy bills. [Generation Rent have continued to call for a renters reform bill to raise the minimum standards that renters can expect from their homes.](#)

3.5 Right to Roam Calls for Public Access to UK's Private Parks and Gardens: On 11th December, the campaign group Right to Roam staged an occupation of Cadogan Square in central London to highlight the extreme disparities in land ownership of our urban green spaces that prevail across Britain. The green credentials of UK cities are often publicly inaccessible; whilst half of London is classed as green or blue space, only 18% of that is publicly accessible and 21% of London households have no garden space at all. The group has called for public access to private parks and green spaces, which they say should serve as a shared asset for all the UK's city residents.

[Read the full press release here.](#)

3.6 Passivehouse Social Housing in Norwich Demonstrates Possible Solution to Rising Costs of Living: The pioneering social housing scheme at Goldsmith Street, Norwich was originally one of the UK's largest social housing estate built to Passivhaus standards when it was completed in 2018. The Passivehouse standard is modelled off a German approach to constructing super low-energy new build homes that use high levels of insulation and ventilation to minimise the need for additional heating. Residents at Goldsmith Street have reported that they have not needed to put the heating on, despite extreme low temperatures that have currently been experienced this winter, and are able to save money on heating costs. The average internal temperature of the residential flats is given at 22C. The Passivhaus Trust estimates that while on average annual energy bills are capped at £2,500, in a Passivhaus home average annual bills are £947 - more than 62% cheaper.

[Read the full press release here.](#)

3.7 Historic England Refreshes Energy Saving Guidance for Older Buildings: [New web pages have been published by Historic England to provide further information and](#)

[assistance to historic homeowners](#). The new pages re-present previously published guidance notes in a more legible and accessible format, following feedback from owners and occupiers.