



## Planning & Development News

November 2022

### News this Month

- B&NES Council Launches Public Consultation for **Local Plan Launch Document** - see 1.1
- **Approach Golf Course** to Reopen Spring 2023 as Traditional & Foot Golf Course with Café - see 1.2
- Lidl GB/Bath Rugby Issue Press Release for **New Lidl Store** on London Road - see 1.3
- **Liveable Neighbourhood** Traffic Pilots Scheduled to Start November 2022 - see 1.4
- Development of an **Ecological Emergency Action Plan** for B&NES - see 1.8
- B&NES Releases Map of **'Warm Spaces'** in Response to Cost of Living Crisis - see 1.10
- Rishi Sunak Reinstates **Fracking Ban** in England - see 3.3
- Historic England Publishes Guidance on **Building Regulations and Historic Buildings** - see 3.4

### 1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

**1.1 Local Plan Launch Document:** B&NES Council has launched a public consultation, seeking feedback on the publication of the Local Plan 2022-2042 Launch Document. The Launch Document sets out the proposed scope of the new Local Plan, including primary ambitions and other important issues, as well as the anticipated timescales involved in preparing the Local Plan.

[The consultation is open until 15<sup>th</sup> November; all documents are available here.](#)

BPT supports the **primary ambitions for the new Local Plan for B&NES**, which prioritise responding the challenges of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies and facilitating the goal of Net Zero carbon by 2030, protecting and enhancing nature, maximising affordable housing and creating economic opportunities.

However, the future sustainability of the World Heritage Site requires central policy aims to include; establishing a transformational approach to protecting and enhancing the historic environment and sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. Although the other 'ambitions' are clearly essential, you could apply them to any city in the UK, whereas what makes Bath different is the fragility of the WHS status.

[You can read our response here.](#)

**1.2 Approach Golf Course:** The Approach open space in Bath will open next spring with a new operator, as an 18-hole pitch and a nine-hole footgolf site, as well as a new café. The community will continue to be able to enjoy the site as a free, green public space that welcomes walkers and dog walkers, supporting everyone to be able to gain the mental and physical benefits of being active outdoors. Biodiversity will be increased by additional planting, with some of the site left as a meadow to attract more insect species.

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

**1.3 Lidl, London Road:** Lidl GB and Bath Rugby (Arena 1865) have exchanged contracts on part of the land owned by the club at Lambridge, Bath, with the intention that Lidl GB will deliver a bespoke new and highly sustainable food store beside Bath RFC's existing training facilities. Before a planning application is submitted to Bath & North East Somerset Council, Lidl will undertake detailed public consultation and residents will be able to view the proposals and comment online through the project website.

[The project overview and press release are available here.](#)

**1.4 Liveable Neighbourhoods:** The next steps for B&NES Council's Liveable Neighbourhoods programme have been announced. Councillor Sarah Warren is being asked to give the go-ahead for the council to trial through-traffic restrictions on three residential streets, including Church Street in Bath, Southlands in Weston, and Queen Charlton Lane near Whitchurch village. The trials would last for six months from 17 November 2022 until 17 May 2023.

[Find out more about the trial measures here.](#)

**1.5 B&NES Issues Guidance on Wood Burners:** As the colder nights draw in, residents who burn wood or other solid fuels at home are being reminded of ways to do this safely and legally. B&NES Council is highlighting that burning at home can emit dangerous pollution both inside and outside. Burning wood also emits more carbon dioxide than oil or gas. The City of Bath is a designated Smoke Control Area, which means it's illegal to burn smoky fuels such as wood and coal in an open fireplace or in a non-approved wood burning or multi-fuel stove.

[See B&NES guidance here.](#)

[BPT released a similar statement regarding the sustainability of wood burners on our Instagram.](#)

**1.6 B&NES Council Housing:** Progress on the provision of new council homes in Bath and North East Somerset has been set out to councillors. The panel heard that in the ten years up to March 2022 the council delivered 1,848 affordable homes, largely through Section 106 agreements negotiated with developers. A further 750 affordable housing units have planning consent and are in the process of being delivered or awaiting build-out.

[The full figures are available in the B&NES press release.](#)

**1.7 Council's Net Zero Commitment Update to Councillors:** Work to install solar panels and energy reducing measures, such as air source heat pumps and LED lighting, that help decarbonise council buildings has been set out to the Climate Emergency & Sustainability

PDS Panel which met on Monday (October 10). The panel was told there is an indicative area target of 300MW renewable energy required as a key contribution to achieving net zero by 2030. Domestic and business solar PV installed capacity across the whole of B&NES has doubled since a Climate Emergency was declared in 2019 and the rate of growth has significantly accelerated in 2021 and 2022.

[The full figures are available in the B&NES press release.](#)

**1.8 Development of an Ecological Emergency Action Plan for B&NES:** Following the council's declaration of an ecological emergency in July 2020, various programmes and campaigns that help boost biodiversity have been put in place. How the production of an Ecological Emergency Action Plan will build on this work and focus efforts to tackle the ecological emergency has been set out to the Climate Emergency & Sustainability PDS Panel, which met on Monday (October 24). The panel was told that a new Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure team has been established to support the council in its response to the ecological emergency, with the introduction of four Green Infrastructure Programmes that aim to boost biodiversity across the district.

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

**1.9 Cost of Living Crisis Briefing:** B&NES Council is holding two special on-line briefings to discuss the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on residents and businesses and the impacts on council finances. The briefings will be held on Zoom at 6pm on Wednesday 2 November and Thursday 3 November.

You can register for the event [here \(2<sup>nd</sup> November\)](#) or [here \(3<sup>rd</sup> November\)](#).

**1.10 Warm Spaces:** B&NES Council is collating a network of Warm Spaces across the district to help establish an online map of places that can help households struggling to meet the costs of energy to heat their homes. The 'Warm Welcome' package will see council libraries offer information and signposting to other organisations to meet need. Changes to seating and the development of 'Hublets' - tablets for use in the library to access all council services - will ensure libraries are 'Warm Welcome'-ready.

[Businesses can register as Warm Spaces here.](#)

[The map/directory can be accessed here.](#)

**1.10 100 Years of Housing in Bath:** A free exhibition of artwork inspired by Bath's archives will go on show at The Guildhall, Bath on Monday 24 October from 11am to 3pm. The exhibition will showcase work produced by two local community groups - Get Creative and Genesis Trust - including architectural drawings, protest signs, collages, poetry, clay models and more. There will also be a display of housing records held by Bath Record Office and a collage activity on the theme of housing. The event forms part of [Bath Museum Week](#).

[Find out more here.](#)

## **2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments**

**2.1 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. **UPDATE** - BPT's full objection response is now available via the planning portal and our website. Work is due to start on an accompanying press release.

[See BPT's submitted objection response here.](#)

**2.2 46 Sydney Buildings:** Application [22/03705/LBA](#) was submitted for the proposed demolition of the existing side 'stack' extension at 46 Sydney Buildings, to be replaced with a new, larger side extension. A number of previous applications had been refused (see [21/00966/LBA](#) & [20/00889/LBA](#)) on grounds of "unacceptable and unjustifiable significant harm with only private benefits". A later appeal was also dismissed in June 2022.

BPT had previously commented in response to the scheme. The principle of a new side extension was not opposed, but we maintained that "any such extension should be complementary and recessive in its design and use of materials, with suitable justification provided regarding any possible loss of historic fabric or aesthetics." With input from AP&P Committee, we therefore reiterated our previous position but had some additional comments about the proposed use of hexagonal slate cladding. We felt a more standard slate pattern would be in keeping with the existing roof treatment.

[You can see BPT's submitted response here.](#)

**2.3 Orchard House and Prospect House, Prospect Road:** Similar applications for the application of external timber cladding and installation of roof-mounted PV panels were submitted for Orchard House ([22/03743/FUL](#)) and Prospect House ([22/03621/FUL](#)) on Prospect Road, south of the Grade II terrace at Macaulay Buildings. BPT raised these applications on the following points: a) the principle of timber cladding within Bath, and b) the potential for PV installation where this may be visible within landscape views of the World Heritage Site.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT concluded that the principle of timber cladding within this semi-rural area would be acceptable. The potential 'impact' of PV panels on the setting of the World Heritage Site was considered against the public benefits of the generation of 'green' energy and contributions towards the Council's net zero objectives (pending further details about the proposed panel design). There were concerns regarding the proposed extent of glazing on the dormer-style front extension at Orchard House.

[You can see BPT's response to Orchard House here.](#)

[You can see BPT's response to Prospect House here.](#)

**2.4 Larkhall Football Club, Charlcombe:** Application [22/03483/FUL](#) proposes the replacement of the existing grass pitch with a modern synthetic playing surface for football to be played throughout the year. This follows a refused CLEU application for the "use of main 'stadium' pitch for football training and league matches", which also included the proposed replacement of the pitch with an artificial alternative.

BPT has highlighted potential concerns regarding increased lighting and vehicle use on the site, and the appearance of the pitch in wider landscape views, which require further elaboration as part of the application. We also highlighted the environmental risks associated with artificial turf and microplastics run-off.

[You can see BPT's submitted response here.](#)

**2.5 5G Monopole, Wellsway:** Resubmitted application [22/03717/TEL](#) is for a monopole of a reduced 15m height, following on from a reduced scheme for an 18m 5G monopole within the residential area of Wellsway. BPT welcomed the reduction in height but maintained previous concerns with the height of the proposal within a relatively low-rise residential area. We reiterated the need for a city-wide operator masterplan regarding proposed sites of new monopoles.

[You can see BPT's submitted response here.](#)

### **3. National News**

**3.1 Decent Homes Standards Consultation:** BPT's response to the Decent Homes Standard public consultation is [now available on our website.](#)

**3.2 Applications Open for New Investment Zones:** From 2<sup>nd</sup> October, [local authorities have been invited to apply to host a new Investment Zone.](#) The government is encouraging councils to take full advantage of its offer of lower taxes and streamlined planning rules for specific sites to boost commercial and residential investment and development. Local authorities would be empowered to deliver planning that is right for their area, "while maintaining high environmental outcomes and keeping national Green Belt protections in place." No mention of World Heritage Sites however.

Based on data collated by Guy Shrubsole and Tony Whitehead, "77 sites (& counting) have been proposed by 35 councils to become deregulated Investment Zones - including huge greenfield housing developments & several ports." It has been confirmed through a Freedom of Information request that the West of England Combined Authority has submitted an Expression of Interest "for a possible Investment Zone for a range of sites across the region." It is as-yet unconfirmed as to whether B&NES Council has submitted a similar application.

[Guy Shrubsole's data is available here.](#)

**3.3 Rishi Sunak Reinstates Fracking Ban in England:** Following the lifting of the moratorium on fracking in September, it was confirmed on 26<sup>th</sup> September that the ban would remain in place under Rishi Sunak's government.

B&NES Council maintains serious concerns about the potential impact of fracking on Bath's natural hot water springs and the potential impact on the Green Belt, Cotswolds AONB, and the World Heritage Site. The original [2013 resolution](#) continues to be upheld.

[B&NES has recently reiterated its opposition to fracking within the area, as well as in neighbouring authorities.](#)

### **3.4 Historic England Publishes Guidance on Building Regulations and Historic Buildings:**

Historic England has published guidance for historic building owners and residents on complying with building regulations in England. This sets out the requirement to meet building regulations in the case of existing buildings, as well as buildings that may be exempt from regulations (eg. ancient monuments). Whilst listed buildings are not exempt from the need to meet building regulations, “the special needs of historic buildings are recognised in some of the building regulations’ approved documents.”

[See Historic England’s guidance here.](#)

**3.5 Historic England Commemorates Centenary of BBC:** To celebrate the centenary of the BBC, Historic England has released a new interactive map of 100 UK buildings and places “that have defined the BBC”.

[You can explore the map here.](#)

**3.6 Case Study: Energy-Sharing Scheme on Penderi Estate, Swansea:** The Penderi Energy Project is a scheme to retrofit 644 homes with solar PV and battery storage technology. The homes are owned and managed by Pobl Group, Wales’ largest provider of affordable housing, who have partnered with net zero energy technology and service supplier, Sero, and lead contractor and installation specialists, Everwarm. Once completed, the scheme will be the largest of its kind in the UK. Solar installations have been completed on 100 homes so far.

[Find out more about the project here.](#)