



Development & Planning News

October 2022

News this Month

- B&NES Council Launches Public Consultation for **Local Plan Partial Update** - see 1.1
- Update on the **Fashion Museum** and the **Milsom Quarter Masterplan** - see 1.2
- BPT Responds to Public Consultation on **Street Tree Planting** - see 1.3
- BPT Hosts Retrofitting Event at Climate & Biodiversity Festival 2022 - see 1.4
- Planning Application Submitted for Redevelopment of **Gasworks Site at Western Riverside** - see 2.1
- Proposed Demolition of **Waterworks Cottage** Given Go-Ahead - see 2.2
- BPT Support of Proposals for Off-Grid Family Home on Site of Former Folly Inn Brewery and Pleasure Ground - see 2.3
- Proposals for Five Dwellings on **Former Avondale Garage Site, Batheaston** - see 2.4
- Government Launches Consultation on the **Decent Homes Standard** - see 3.3

1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

1.1 Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU): B&NES Council has launched a public consultation, seeking feedback on the proposed modifications to the LPPU. The draft LPPU has been through public engagement and consultation and has been examined by a planning inspector. The inspector's initial feedback on the draft LPPU was positive and his recommended changes, known as main modifications, are now subject to public consultation. It is only the further changes to the draft LPPU that the public have an opportunity to comment on. Following the consultation, all the comments will be considered by the inspector and, if he finds the draft LPPU sound, his final report and the LPPU (including the modifications) will be considered for adoption by the Council. BPT is considering if any of the modifications require further submissions.

[The consultation is open until 2nd November; all documents are available here.](#)

More significantly, B&NES Council has also launched a public consultation 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 15th November; all documents are available here.](#)

1.2 Milsom Quarter Masterplan: It has been officially confirmed by B&NES Council in a press release that the Fashion Museum will be relocated to the Old Post Office, with a new Fashion Collection Archive in Locksbrook. The aim is for the Museum and Fashion

Collection Archive to open in three to eight years' time, dependent on fundraising. B&NES Council has submitted a £20 million bid to the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, to help complete the £37 million project. The council has already received a £2.4 million grant from the West of England Combined Authority, which will contribute towards the regeneration of the Milsom Quarter, including the opening of the new Fashion Museum.

[The Fashion Museum press release is available here.](#)

[The WECA funding press release is available here.](#)

1.3 Public Consultation on B&NES Street Trees: B&NES Council launched a public consultation on a programme of street tree planting throughout the district, as part of its wider commitment to increase tree cover and plant 100,000 trees within the district by May 2023, in collaboration with partners and communities.

[You can read BPT's full consultation response here.](#)

1.4 Climate & Biodiversity Festival 2022: BPT supported the B&NES Council festival in September and ran social media campaigns along with this and the Great Big Green Week and Sustainable September. The Planning & Campaigning Team provided expert advice at the Home Energy Hub on 28th September as part of the Climate and Biodiversity Festival. We hosted a stand, offering expert advice on energy efficiency upgrades and retrofit, alongside other professional representatives from B&NES Council, CSE, and Bath & West Community Energy. We also arranged a demonstration by BP Joinery on the installation of draught proofing a traditional sash window which was attended by around 25 people who also had the opportunity to ask questions about forms of window draughtproofing and slim profile double glazing. BPT has produced a new printed leaflet on quick wins for energy saving for distribution at events.

1.5 Cleveland Bridge: On 4th October, Cleveland Bridge reopened to two-way traffic, under an 18-tonne weight limit. Traffic signals and local traffic management have been removed from Cleveland Bridge, which now has a weight monitoring system in place. ANPR cameras have also been installed to capture the details of any vehicles in breach of the weight limit. If monitoring shows there are no issues the bridge could technically and safely open to normal traffic loads of 44 tonnes. A passive support system could be designed to provide longer term surety. Masonry works, which couldn't be completed while scaffolding was in place, will continue underneath the bridge for a number of weeks and the contractor's works compound will be scaled back.

1.6 Cleveland Pools: The ticketed reopening of the Pools for Heritage Open Day on 1st October marked the completion of the 18-year project to save the Grade II* Pools with the help of a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) £6.1 million grant. The Pools are to be open through the autumn with a cold-water swimming offer, and are then due to reopen in 2023 with water heating provided by a water source heat pump in the River Avon.

1.7 Bath and North East Somerset Council reaffirms opposition to fracking in area and region: Councillor Tim Ball has re-affirmed the council's opposition to fracking within the council's area - and also those of neighbouring authorities. This follows on from a 2018 motion agreed by B&NES Council which identified the potential impact of fracking and its

capacity to affect the water flows for Bath's precious hot springs, and associated risk to the World Heritage Site.

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

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 The Gasworks, Western Riverside: Application [22/03224/EFUL](#) has been submitted 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.

With the input of AP&P Committee, BPT continues to emphasise our generally supportive position on the redevelopment and regeneration of a major brownfield site within the city, and the provision of much-needed housing.

However, following in-depth consideration of current proposals, BPT maintains serious concerns with the design approach across the site:

- We are resistant to the piecemeal approach across the Western Riverside masterplan site. There continues to be a lack of detail about how the proposed design, public realm, and infrastructure would link up with existing and forthcoming areas of development across the wider site.
- There are significant concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the height, massing, and scale of development on local townscape and wider landscape views in the World Heritage Site.
- The dominant use of buff brick across significant elevations would be at odds with local distinctiveness and townscape character.
- We continue to push for a policy-compliant provision of truly affordable housing.

BPT's full response is forthcoming, to be published on the [planning portal](#) and our website.

2.2 Waterworks Cottage, Fairfield Park: *Demolition Notice [22/03249/DEM](#) for the proposed demolition of a 19th century cottage historically associated with the former Charlcombe Water Works, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA) of local heritage interest.* **UPDATE** - A decision has been made on the latest Demolition Notice, with the case officer concluding that "prior approval [is] NOT required" for the cottage's demolition. Where a building is unlisted and located outside of a conservation area, demolition does not require planning permission so long as the works would meet the requirements of [Permitted Development](#). Two previous Demolition Notices were refused on grounds of "insufficient detail". The works are anticipated to take place between May and September "to avoid toad migration and hibernation periods".

2.3 Site Of Former Folly Inn Brewery And Pleasure Ground: Application [22/03025/FUL](#) proposed the development of a self-build eco home on a parcel of woodland adjacent to the Kennet & Avon Canal. The development would further consider aspects of

sustainability including the generation of off-grid energy and the use of low embodied carbon building materials (eg. hempcrete).

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT welcomed the opportunity for the development of an off-grid eco home within Bath, with potential to form an exemplary case study for other similar new builds elsewhere in the district. We considered that the impact on wider landscape views would be suitably mitigated by retention of tree coverage along the site boundaries and concluded that the number of demonstrated benefits would outweigh potential harm.

[You can read BPT's full response here.](#)

2.4 Avondale Garage, Batheaston: Application [22/03145/FUL](#) was submitted for the development of five new dwellings on the site of the former (now defunct) Avondale Garage in Batheaston. The development would be made up of three terraced dwellings in a 'Georgian' style along the high street, screening two detached contemporary dwellings to the north.

With input from AP&P Committee, BPT considered that the principle of the development of a brownfield site to provide much-needed housing is acceptable. However, we opposed the development on grounds of the proposed design which fails to demonstrably draw from or reference local distinctiveness and townscape character. We had strong concerns regarding the overdominance of hardstanding/car parking on the site in contrast with insufficient outdoor amenity space.

Batheaston Parish Council opposed the application on grounds of infringement of the privacy of neighbouring dwellings.

[You can read BPT's full response here.](#)

2.5 Widcombe Crescent: Application [22/02773/LBA](#) for a series of refurbishment works, including the installation of solar slates within the inner roof valley, the cleaning and painting of the vaults, and the reinstatement of an external lightwell staircase between the pavement and lower ground floor level. The stairs would also include a "platform lift". **UPDATE** - The platform lift has now been omitted from the scheme following comments from BPT, Historic England, and the conservation officer.

3. National News

3.1 Applications Open for New Investment Zones: From 2nd 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."

Authorities in the following areas would be eligible, although "key planning policies to ensure developments are well designed, maintain national policy on the green belt,

protect our heritage and address flood risk, highway and other public safety matters along with building regulations will continue to apply”:

- A national park.
- An area of outstanding natural beauty.
- A site of special scientific interest, or equivalent designation.
- The buffer zone of a world heritage site.
- Designated green belt.

[The full government Growth Plan is available here.](#)

3.2 Public Consultation on Social Rent Cap: A consultation has been launched to invite views from social housing tenants and landlords on a proposed rent cap to understand how best to support households with the cost of living. Under the proposals, a cap on social housing rent increases would be put in place for the coming financial year, with options at 3%, 5% and 7% being considered. The anticipated 2023 increase may be up to 11% in line with recent Bank of England forecasts.

The consultation is open until 12th October; [see all consultation documents here.](#)

3.3 A Decent Homes Standard in the Private Rented Sector: In June, the government published *A fairer private rented sector* - a landmark white paper for the private rented sector - which sets out the government’s commitment to introduce a legally binding Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector for the first time.

Rental housing standards are currently set by The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, and assessed by local authorities using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in 2001 to set a minimum quality standard for homes in the social rented sector, but is not currently applicable to the private rental market.

The government has launched a public consultation to determine whether the Decent Homes Standard should be applicable to private rentals; the consultation is open until 14th October. [All consultation documents are available here.](#)