



## Planning & Development News

August 2023

### News this Month

- B&NES Council Install **New Street Dressings** in ‘Milsom Quarter’ as Part of Summer Public Realm Improvements - see 1.1
- B&NES Council Release New **Principal World Heritage Officer** Job Role - see 1.2
- Sydney Gardens Wins **Green Flag Award 2023** - see 1.5
- BPT Responds to B&NES Proposals for **Gasworks Site, Western Riverside** - see 2.1
- BPT Responds to Proposals for **New Lidl Store** on London Road - see 2.2
- BPT Responds to Proposals for Conversion of **Local Twerton Pub** to Housing - see 2.3
- Planning Committee Votes to Permit Application for Demolition of **Waterworks Cottage** and Erection of Two New Dwellings - see 2.5
- Proposals for Contemporary Redevelopment of **Percy Community Centre** Granted Planning Permission - see 2.6
- Proposals for Refurbishment of **Former Debenhams Store** Granted Planning Permission - see 2.7
- DLUHC Announces **Long-Term Housing Plan & Proposed Changes to Permitted Development**, with Consequences for Built Heritage - see 3.1
- DEFRA Publishes **National Adaption Programme** - see 3.2
- SAVE Campaign Helps Prevent Demolition of ‘**Flagship**’ **Marks & Spencer Building on Oxford Street, London** - see 3.3

### 1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

**1.1 ‘Art on the Street’ Project in Bath City Centre:** Milsom Quarter and Kingsmead Square have been dressed with bespoke artwork to celebrate the city as part of a summer events programme. The project is funded by the WECA Love Our High Streets programme and is part of a wider [High Streets Renewal project](#) for Bath city centre. Further public realm improvements are planned for the summer with pieces of new street furniture being upgraded at New Street and New Bond Street, alongside art work along the corridor between Milsom Street and Broad Street.

Read the full news story [here](#).

**1.2 B&NES Council Release New Principal World Heritage Officer Job Role:** B&NES Council has launched a new post for a Principal World Heritage Officer as part of the reshuffle of the Heritage Services department at B&NES Council. The Principal World Heritage Officer would work as part of the Planning & Conservation Team, as well as cross-service working with other teams such as Heritage Services, Regeneration, Transport, Housing and Sustainability. The Officer would oversee the production of the World Heritage Site Management Plan, in conjunction with the Chair of the World Heritage Site Advisory Board.

See the job description [here](#).

**1.3 Proposals for Community Food Growing in Combe Down Subject to Planning Application:** B&NES Council plans to submit a planning application for extension of the current allotment site at Combe Down into the Paddock, off St Winifred's Drive in Combe Down. Proposals would intend to increase the amount of new space available for community allotments and increase the provision of local food growing, in line with current local policy. The Council have written to local residents, and are currently undertaking initial ecological surveys ahead of the submission of a planning application.

Read the full news story [here](#).

**1.4 Let's Get Buzzing:** B&NES Council has secured £91,000 in WECA funding to support its Let's Get Buzzing scheme to restore nature to 30% of land under B&NES management. The scheme forms part of the Council's broader [Get Bath Buzzing Pollinator Action Plan 2019-2024](#) to improve parks and open spaces management by creating new pollinator habitat.

Find out more about the Let's Get Buzzing scheme [here](#).

**1.5 Green Flag Award for Sydney Gardens:** Sydney Gardens is a winner for the first time in this year's national [Green Flags of Excellence awards](#) which recognise the country's best parks, alongside Haycombe Cemetery, Henrietta Park, Hedgemoor Park, Bloomfield Park, Alexandra Park and Royal Victoria Park which all retain their accolades.

**1.6 Bath Area Forum:** The Bath Area Forum held its first in-person meeting following the pandemic on 18<sup>th</sup> July. The meeting included a presentation from Cllr David Wood, giving an overview of [Cabinet priorities](#) following the May 2023 election, and an update from Stephen George, Planning Officer, on the [Local Plan](#). Further engagement with Parishes and other stakeholders is planned for July and September.

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

**2.1 The Gasworks:** BPT has now submitted its consultation response to application [23/01762/EREG03](#), for a B&NES scheme to deliver up to 351 new dwellings on the eastern portion of the former Gasworks site. BPT has continued to express support for the redevelopment and regeneration of this significant brownfield site within the city. The scheme offers a positive opportunity to deliver high levels of affordable housing and integrate with other, adjoining phases of Western Riverside development, including the St

William Berkeley scheme on the other half of the Gasworks site which is currently pending a planning decision (see application [22/03224/EFUL](#)).

We have raised concerns with the proposed 8-storey height of development on the site, which would have an impact on long-ranging townscape and landscape views across the World Heritage Site, and would be contrary to the Council's on advice on building heights as outlined in the [Bath Building Heights Strategy](#). We have emphasised the importance of maximising the delivery of quality affordable housing across both the B&NES and St William Berkeley schemes, as well as the importance of ensuring a cohesive landscaping and public realm strategy. The proposed design of the buildings will be left to a separate reserved matters application, which BPT will respond to in due course.

Read BPT's consultation response as submitted [here](#).

**2.2 Lidl, London Road:** Application [23/02212/FUL](#) has been submitted for the erection of a 2,283sqm ground (and part-first floor plant area) retail foodstore (Use Class E), with associated car parking, landscaping and pedestrian/vehicular access.

AP&P Committee was unable to support proposals as insufficient information about the proposed degree of landscape visual impact has been submitted to enable a proper assessment of the degree of harm to the World Heritage Site and its landscape setting. We further expressed strong concerns with the anticipated impact of development on traffic congestion along London Road, as well as how a new supermarket would affect the vitality of the local high street in Larkhall. We have questioned how effective the proposed ecological mitigation and enhancement measures would be in close proximity to the new store, and with increased levels of external lighting.

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

**2.3 The Full Moon, Twerton:** Application [23/02094/LBA](#) proposed the change of use of a local public house to a detached residential dwelling (use class C3). The pub was closed since around 2020, and was indicated to have been vacant for the last 18 months since its purchase by the applicant.

AP&P Committee expressed concerns with the loss of a public house, without sufficient justification by demonstrating that its continued commercial use would be unviable. As such, proposals were considered to result in the loss of a community facility without provision of facilities of equivalent or greater benefit to the local community.

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

**2.4 Flat 8, Fitzroy House, 59 Great Pulteney Street:** Application [23/02067/LBA](#) proposed revised plans for the creation of a roof terrace to the rear of a Grade I terraced townhouse. The terrace would be situated on the flat roof of the rear extension 'stack' which is indicated to be a later addition with a 20<sup>th</sup> century roofing finish. The application is a revised resubmission of earlier application [22/02598/LBA](#), which was withdrawn on grounds of loss of historic fabric and the harmful increase in the extension's overall height and scale. The terrace as currently proposed would be of a reduced footprint, set back and screened by vertical planting in front of the glazed balustrade.

AP&P Committee submitted a comment reiterating a general preference for the use of a balustrade treatment in keeping with the extension's elevational treatment (eg. Bath stone ashlar) which would much more effectively address concerns with the visibility of the terrace in wider views, as well as residential privacy. The effect of the proposed greening of the terrace would be dependent on the quality of the proposed planting, and ongoing maintenance to ensure sufficient screening throughout the scheme's lifetime.

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

**2.5 Waterworks Cottage:** Application [23/00895/FUL](#) for the demolition of Waterworks Cottage (the principle of which has already been separately secured) and the development of two contemporary dwellings was brought to the July meeting of the Planning Committee, after councillors voted to postpone a decision in favour of a site visit.

At the meeting, councillors considered the benefits of the scheme, in providing well-designed, contemporary, low-carbon housing. Whilst concerns were raised with the scale and blockiness of the proposed development and resulting impact on the surrounding area, a motion to refuse the development failed. It was considered that positive changes had been made including setback from the road and neighbouring dwellings to the south-east. It was felt that the contemporary nature of the development would be in keeping with other modern houses in the surrounding area.

Councillors voted to delegate to permit the application.

**2.6 Percy Community Centre:** Application [19/03337/FUL](#) for the refurbishment of the Percy Centre, including the construction of a new sports hall and roof terrace, has been granted planning permission. The application has been revised several times, with BPT responding to the design changes first brought forward in June 2022. We supported the reduction in the overall building height where this addressed our original concerns, and we welcomed the opportunity for a lively, contemporary addition to the streetscape where this would be appropriately detailed and finished with reference to its historic setting along New King Street.

The case officer concluded that the revised design of proposals would be modern and contemporary whilst featuring a more traditional approach to the roof form. Whilst the use of timber is not prevalent in this part of the city, the slats will be relatively subtle and help to break up the massing of this gable elevation, adding design interest. In response to concerns regarding the increased building height, the development is considered to establish the form of a "focal civic building which complements the heights of the surrounding buildings."

**2.7 Former Debenhams, Southgate:** Application [22/04328/FUL](#) has been granted planning permission for the refurbishment of the former Debenhams department store, purpose-built as part of the Southgate development, to bring the building back into a mixed use with a commercial ground floor, and offices/labs across the upper floors.

The proposed works to the building, including the creation of a new roof terrace and the enlargement of the second floor windows to maximise natural light and ventilation to the new office space, were considered to propose a number of benefits that would outweigh the identified less than substantial harm to the World Heritage Site, including the

futureproofing of the building, integration of microrenewables, bringing a vacant building back into use, reactivation of the building frontage, and provision of Grade A office space within the city.

### **3. National News**

**3.1 DLUHC Announces Long-Term Housing Plan:** On 24<sup>th</sup> July, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities set out long-term plans for regeneration, inner-city densification and housing delivery across England.

A consultation will be launched on Permitted Development rights, with the intention to address ‘bottlenecking’ of planning applications and decisions. New and amended permitted development rights would make it easier to convert larger department stores, space above shops and office space, as well as supporting farm diversification and development, to allow businesses to extend and more outdoor markets to be held.

Read the full update [here](#).

**3.2 DEFRA Publishes National Adaption Programme:** DEFRA has published its [National Adaptation Programme \(NAP3\)](#), which contains a five-year plan to protect cultural heritage, businesses, and homes from increasing climate risks. Works would include supporting Historic England’s work modelling long-term impacts of climate change on cultural heritage caused by increased temperatures, increased rainfall, sea level rise and extreme weather.

Read the full update [here](#).

**3.3 SAVE Campaign Helps Prevent Demolition of ‘Flagship’ Marks & Spencer Building on Oxford Street, London:** Plans for the demolition of M&S’ 1930s Art Deco store in London, to be replaced with [a 10-storey building designed by Pilbrow & Partners](#), have been rejected by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary. The plans were overturned on grounds of environmental grounds where demolition would generate approximately 40,000 tonnes of embodied carbon, as well as the proposed impact of the new building on the setting of the Grade II façade of Selfridges.

Read the news story [here](#).