

<p><b>City of Bath World Heritage Site Advisory Board</b></p>	 <p>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</p> <p>City of Bath inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987</p>
<p><b>Potential changes emerging from the mid-term monitoring of the City of Bath WHS Management Plan 2016-2022</b></p>	<p><b>Report to Advisory Board 27 November 2018</b></p>
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report sets out, for discussion, the main points arising from the mid-term review of performance against the actions in the Bath WHS Management Plan 2016-2022. It also recommends alterations to the plan actions.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The 2016-2022 Management Plan was endorsed by B&NES Council in November 2016 and subsequently sent to UNESCO. It contained 47 actions and the following five priorities:

- Managing Development
- Transport
- Public Realm
- Interpretation and Education
- Environmental resilience

- 2.2 The Action Plan was always viewed as a 'stand-alone' element of the Plan which could be updated and amended if necessary, although with previous plans this has not happened.

## **3 HEADLINE PERFORMANCE**

- 3.1 The Monitoring Table shows a good level of achievement for this stage. 42 % of actions have been achieved, 47 % are underway and 11% are yet to be achieved or lacking progress.
- 3.2 The world has inevitably moved on in two years. When written in early 2016, a number of major issues including a proposed eastern Park and Ride site, rail electrification and a potential cable-car were in the headlines. All of these potential pressures have abated.

- 3.3 Some performance has been excellent. The basic duties have been covered well. Our planning policy base is in place and up to date. The Advisory Board has been strengthened. Awareness of World Heritage is high, aided by an extensive series of talks by the Chairman, new signage, a new website, active social media and emerging new branding. Bold steps have been proposed with regard to tackling air quality, the number of high grade buildings at risk remains very low and significant sums of funding have been levered in for conservation projects. Accessibility to our major historic attractions has been significantly increased.
- 3.4 Some areas remain challenging. Tourism pressure has grown and difficulties have been seen through issues such as coaches travelling through historic areas and from unregulated accommodation. This is happening at a time when we do not have a comprehensive 'Tourism Plan' (Action 41) and key management posts within the Destination Management Organisation are not all filled. It has also been difficult to progress ambitions to influence formal education programmes and to co-ordinate research.
- 3.5 Some issues were not foreseen by the plan. An example is the loss of local authority staff posts, with the recent departure of highly experienced officers in Landscape Architecture and Archaeology posts.

#### **4 RECOMMENDED CHANGES**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Action Plan is changed. As mentioned above, some actions are superseded but there are also several which require re-focussing or re-wording to ensure they are addressing their intended targets. It is envisaged that the Action Table of the Plan can be changed and taken through a single member decision of B&NES Council in early 2019 to ensure the plan retains sufficient weight in the planning system.
- 4.2 It is not recommended that the priorities in the main body of the plan are altered. If this were to happen, it would be likely to trigger a requirement for full public consultation which would involve significant work. If this were not the case, then it would be tempting to change the priority of 'Environmental Resilience' for Sustainable Tourism. Environmental Resilience here refers primarily to flooding, and there is only one action relating to this, which is being addressed. It could also be said to relate to air quality, but this is addressed under the heading of transport. As outlined above, sustainable tourism is arguably a more pressing current priority for the Board, but this can be addressed through specific actions.
- 4.3 Although Action 45 advocates producing biennial monitoring reports, it is recommended that the changes proposed to the Action Plan are deemed to constitute a mid-term review. They are likely to be endorsed in 2019, half-way

through the plan period. It is considered better to make changes to the Plan once, at a mid-way point, rather than a series of changes.

## **5 DETAILED CHANGES PROPOSED**

- 5.1 Action 1 seeks to re-establish a design review panel, which has been achieved. The use of the panel is however not automatic or mandatory and applicants may choose not to use it, not least because of the expense involved. It is suggested that the wording should be changed to encourage the use of the design panel, where appropriate.
- 5.2 Action 2. The Placemaking Plan has been adopted so it is recommended to remove references to this adoption from the action. The Building Heights Strategy relies on evidence that is now several years out of date and the document is in need of refreshing. Adopting it as a SPD is still a valid aspiration, but this is unlikely to happen without it being updated. The recommendation is to change the wording to 'Seek to ensure that the Building Heights Strategy is refreshed and subsequently adopted as a SPD'.
- 5.3 Action 4. Specific reference is made to the rail electrification project and the Pulteney Weir Radial Gate. There is no indication that either project will come forward within the lifetime of this plan and it is suggested that these references are removed. A general reference to 'any other major project which impacts upon the OUV' should be added.
- 5.4 Action 7. The actions referred to here have now been completed. B&NES Senior Engineer (Accessibility and Cycling) considers that inclusion of this action within the Plan has been useful but suggests it is widened to walking, as most schemes cover walking and cycling. The question is whether to retain this action, as without specific proposals it becomes more of an objective.
- 5.5 Action 20. This action was widened to refer to the 'Bath cultural offer' during consultation on the draft plan. It is now ambiguous and potentially covers museum or arts activities which may not have a direct connection to the OUV of the site. There is also no clear monitoring indicator for this. It is suggested this action needs either re-wording or removing.
- 5.6 Action 22. The wording of this action specifically refers to inclusion of material within the educational curriculum. This is largely beyond the control of the Advisory Board and it does not recognise the educational offer made by, for example, the proposed new Education Centre at the Roman Baths. It is suggested that this is re-worded to remove reference to the curriculum.
- 5.7 Action 27. The local 'Buildings at Risk' register is a key monitoring indicator for the WHS. However the updating and review of the register happens in a piecemeal fashion as and when resources allow. This reduces its effectiveness as a reliable monitoring indicator and is vulnerable to reduction

in resource provision. An action to encourage regular review should be considered.

- 5.8 Action 29. Conservation Area appraisals and the list of Locally Important Buildings are clearly separate projects and should be split into individual actions.
- 5.9 Action 32. This action seeks to engage with national/regional government to prevent excessive new housing numbers being allocated within the Site. However, this is primarily the role of the local plan and engagement with this is already covered in Action 3. Given this overlap, and that the Advisory Board has little influence over the housing allocation figures, it is recommended that this action is removed.
- 5.10 Action 38. This action was focussed on producing an index of research because of the potential of a funding opportunity which now no longer looks achievable. It is suggested that this action is re-worded to encourage research activities, in a similar way to Action 30 does for craft skills.
- 5.11 Action 42. This action refers only to coach parking and thus does not cover the wider harm potentially caused by coaches. It is suggested that the action be re-worded.
- 5.12 Action 47. This action refers only to training and thus does not fully capture the considerable amount of awareness raising achieved by the range of talks to community groups undertaken by the Chairman. It is suggested that a separate action is introduced which says 'provide talks and presentations, as opportunities arise, to ensure awareness of World Heritage remains at a high level'.