



Bath and North East Somerset Placemaking Plan
Matters and Issues for Examination
ID/3A Rev1

Matter 13 - Bath's Universities

Issue: Whether the approach to Bath's Universities is sound

Ref no. 224

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15 August 2016

- 1.1 We appreciate the tensions between the universities' growth aspirations and the scope for positive planning for that growth in the context of an environmentally constrained city. We hope that by the time of the Examination a statement of Common Ground can be issued between the two Universities and the Council which plans positively for realistic growth but also provides realistic recognition of the responsibilities of the Universities to take account of available accommodation for their students through all their years of study (not just for first-years).
- 1.2 We believe that Bath could usefully adopt a City-Wide Student Housing Strategy which took into account PBSAs and allowed for a City Wide Article 4 direction which would set limits for the density of student populations (including PBSAs) in any one residential area while opening opportunities for development of student populations in those parts of the city (with good public transport potential) that currently do not have a student presence, on the principle that this would encourage mixed communities. This could be modelled on that which pertains in Durham as a result of the Inspector's intervention at their EiP (30th Oct 2014) about their student housing policy. The Inspector in turn references the Manchester model.
- 1.3 We recognise that student number assessment is highly labile and dependent on unknowns such as the outcome of Brexit on overseas student numbers. This being the case surely the best method of planning positively would be for the Universities to take lead responsibility in planning for the housing of their students and planning for growth only in line with the available accommodation, while the Council plans strategically for the residential amenity and positive development of all their residents.
- 1.4 An unintended consequence of the growth of the university sector has been the very significant housing pressures that are created in University towns. This is a common experience in most University towns and it would therefore be helpful for national policy to take a lead in developing a protocol to mitigate against the planning problems created for local authorities.