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The Society's statement in response to Application No. 15/06069/F – to develop Bristol Arena at the former Diesel Depot Bath Road

December 2015

Bristol Civic Society strongly supports the scheme.

### **Access to the site**

The Society remains concerned about pedestrian access to the Arena, which will include those making the whole journey on foot, and those walking from bus stops or parked cars. The transport assessment pays due attention to journeys by other transport modes, but could do more for journeys on foot.

The 'People Flow Assessment' that accompanies the planning application describes four points of access.

1. The Feeder Road bridge – the vehicle access is satisfactory.
2. Bath Road - Temple Meads approach – because this access is only 1-metre-wide, it can only be considered as an auxiliary pedestrian access.
3. Bath Road – Three Lamps approach – describe. in the People Flow Assessment' as a 'proposed access' – 4 metres wide.
4. St. Philip's Marsh (a new bridge) 4 metres wide - described in the People Flow Assessment' as a 'future access'.

### **Bath Road – Three Lamps approach**

Because the People Flow Assessment' describes the Bath Road, Three Lamps approach as a 'proposed access', the Society would like to be reassured that when the Arena opens this major pedestrian access, will be complete. The single Bath Road Temple Meads approach would cause crowd conflict and seriously inconvenience the patrons who choose not to use the Feeder Road Bridge. A Bath Road, Three Lamps entrance would enable patrons from the south of the city to avoid the Bath road between Temple Gate and the Three Lamps junction which is an area, hostile to pedestrians. The lack of alternative access is sufficiently

serious to warrant a planning condition that the Bath Road Three Lamps access must be complete before the public use of the Arena begins.

### **Bath Road - Temple Meads approach**

Whilst the Society is pleased to see that the applicant proposes to widen the pavement of the A4 Road going south towards the Three Lamps junction, the Society suggests that improvements are also needed for those coming on foot from the north and west. It is not reasonable to assume that all patrons will use the Temple Greenway board walk route to/from Temple Meads. Not everyone approaching from the north on foot will come from Temple Meads. Others will approach on foot or on bikes along York Road and Mead Street from the west, and then cross the Bath Road via the two-step pelican crossing at the south end of Bath Bridge, joining the same pavement as those coming from the north. The pedestrian experience for those approaching the Arena from this direction will be awful in terms of 'pedestrian amenity', one of the potential issues identified in 7.3 of the Environmental Statement, alongside pedestrian delay and accident safety. The developer should fund a wider pavement, where possible, along the pedestrian route north along the A4 Bath Road towards Temple Meads. The Temple Gate proposals which were consulted on in 2015, will make highway changes north of the junction of Bath Road and Cattle Market Road, but those changes will not improve the pedestrian experience.

### **Accident safety**

It concerns that Society that there will be times before or after a concert when the pavement along the Bath Road, north and south of the Arena, will be so crowded that there will be a high risk of people stepping into the path of the heavily-trafficked Bath Road. The 1-metre wide access to the Arena site for those coming from that direction will filter crowds exiting a concert, but will increase the risk of a large crowd assembling before a concert. The effect of the filter will be to build up a crowd on the pavement.

### **St. Philip's Marsh bridge**

The Society would like to see a planning condition to require the applicant to bring forward a reserved matters planning application for the St. Philip's Marsh bridge before an agreed date.

### **Other access arrangements**

The Society is pleased to note that the applicant proposes to support Residents' Parking Schemes to withdraw free on-street parking near the Arena on performance days, the designation of Victoria Road as the coach pick-up point and proposed improvements to the surrounding roads.

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## **The Society's statement in response to Application no. 15/06070/P – outline application to develop the arena island at the former Diesel Depot Bath Road (the Island)**

The Society regards the development of the Arena as part of the overall scheme to redevelop the whole of the recently extended Enterprise Zone. Although there is an

attractive argument to suggest that the development of the land of the former diesel depot left over after the construction of the Arena could be left to decide when the Arena is open, there are compelling market reasons to assign uses to that land, now. The Council should be in a position to market the remainder of the former diesel depot site with a planning framework. A successful scheme to develop the remainder of the Island may evolve and suggest the form of development of the former Post Office parcel sorting office and so on outward to the wider Enterprise Zone. The Society suggests that the planning framework should set out two objectives; (i) the uses and conditions that would apply to buildings and (ii) the conditions that would apply to the spaces between the buildings.

### **Planning framework for future buildings**

**Use** - It is almost inevitable that the eventual developer will seek to promote its own scheme, which will depend upon the market advice that it receives at the time of development. The Council's promotional planning permission should be as flexible as possible. If possible the permission could state that while the use of the built development should be mixed, the Council will accept either commercial or residential led development.

**Height and mass** - This site is in the centre of the city and can therefore support large buildings. The surrounding buildings should be lower than the height of the Arena to which they should be sub-servient. Views of the Temple Meads Station tower may be another height constraint. The planning guidance should also state that the buildings should be of different heights to encourage gradation of the built mass.

### **Design**

The permission should emphasise the requirements of BCS21 to encourage high quality design and materials. The Council has policies to encourage the production of sustainable heat and power. The Island may also be a suitable location for a local heat and power generation centre.

### **Planning framework for future public space**

The public realm on the island must be considered in the wider landscape of the whole of the Enterprise Zone of which it forms an important element. Improving connectivity within the Zone must be the priority. The Society notes that the planning application omits the pedestrian bridge to link the Arena to the Station, which appeared in an earlier iteration of the scheme. The Society infers that the current problems over Network Rail's capital spending plans have compromised its ability to commit to the cost of the construction of a new underpass from Cattle Market Road to a new North Entrance. The construction of a new pedestrian/cycling bridge over the Avon to link the Island to Cattle Market Road and the wider Enterprise Zone must be included in a planning consent. Whilst the layout of pedestrian and cycling routes within the Island will be determined by the Arena's access requirements, the permission should require new surfaces and street furniture to be of high quality. The area around Temple Back East and the Friary should be the exemplar. Any planning permission should also require pocket park(s) to green the heavily trafficked area and contribute to a sense of place.