



an independent force for a better Bristol

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### **Land west of Ashton Gate - Phase II - Emerging Proposals**

The Society's response to a planning enquiry to the development of two sites within the ownership of Ashton Gate Limited and Bristol Sport (the Club).

#### **The proposal**

Site 1- Ashton Gate - Phase II - development on land between Ashton Gate Stadium and Winterstoke Road to expand Ashton Gate Stadium to deliver a multi-modal Sports and Convention Centre combined with hotels and new homes and a multi storey car park.

Site 2 – Cumberland Village – Residential development on land bounded by the Metrobus M2 route, Ashton Vale road industrial estates and Long Ashton Park and Ride that will make a significant funding contribution to the capital cost of the development on Site 1.

#### **Summary**

The Society is grateful to Martin Griffiths, the chairman of Ashton Gate Limited for presenting the Club's proposals. Public consultation is effective when it occurs early enough in the planning process to affect the final form of development. The Club's vision is impressive. In principle, the Society supports the proposals.

#### **Site 1- Ashton Gate - Phase II**

##### **Demolition**

There are no buildings on the site that have architectural merit. The scheme offers a more efficient use of the Club's land.

##### **New uses**

The Society strongly supports the new uses that the Club wishes to introduce. In addition to the creation of a centre for sporting excellence, the scheme will be a substantial investment of private money in south Bristol. Expansion would considerably increase local employment opportunities for young people with modest educational attainments. Aspirations include attracting residential conferences business to the stadium. The Society supports the introduction of new homes on the site.

### **Mass height and design**

The Club's presentation PDF contains image of residential development in several tall towers which is not a specific proposal. The Society has serious concerns about the introduction of tall residential towers beside the Winterstoke Road. There is the question of the impact of tall buildings on a highly sensitive landscape. We assume that the Council will require visual justification in relation to the views down the Avon Gorge and of the Suspension Bridge from Winterstoke Road and further up the Bedminster Down ridge.

Living high is not a natural environment for people. For those with money it can be their chosen way, they can afford the higher cost of the construction and maintenance charges. For those on lower incomes living high is often a trap. Research shows that green amenity space around tall buildings is scarcely used by their residents. This type of development intensity always questions the quality of the residential offer. The Society supports the advice given in the recently adopted Urban Living Supplementary Planning Document. We suggest that the residential development should respond to the Stadium. There is enough space to the south of the site to create an interesting high-density-scheme. The development should be subservient to the Stadium. It could include spaces where the residents are protected from the hostile traffic atmosphere of Winterstoke Road. Officially recognised research shows that high density, amplified height produces as much usable space as high rise. Clifton has the highest population density of the city.

Quality of design: The society trusts that as an "owner occupier" client, the proposals will aspire to high visual standards and the renaissance of Winterstoke Road, with Imperial's new offices as the benchmark to better design.

**Public realm** - Provided that the Club can satisfy the Environment Agency's water management requirements, the landscaping of Colliter's Brook will be an important planning gain.

### **Transport :**

**Rail Interchange** - The Society would like to believe that the aspiration of a spur to serve the Stadium could be delivered.

### **Metrobus**

The Society supports the Club's attempts to engage the Council to agree to move the metrobus stop to the site of the former Ashton Gate Station. Moving the Ashton Gate stop from Paxton Drive would generate more passengers on non-match days as well as match days.

### **Multi-storey car park (MSCP)**

The aim of National and local planning policies is to restrain the growth of traffic in cities. Local planning policy discourages new long-stay public parking in the centre of the city. The provision of a new multi-storey car park to provide for match day visitors, hotel visitors and other non-match day use must be seen as part of the Club's overall transport policies.

Access by public transport - To add to the existing First Bus Park and Ride Services and to improve access by rail and Metrobus, the Club seeks an agreement with the Council to run a Park and Ride service from the Long Ashton site. It is free of commuter use at week-ends.

Access by private car – We understand that there are discussions with the Highways Agency to route match day motorway traffic down the Portway and the A369 which in the hierarchy of city's vehicle routes would keep visiting spectators' match day traffic out of the city centre. The Club proposes improvements to the traffic flow in Winterstoke Road, although we have not seen those proposals.

In the Society's opinion the Club has a viable argument to build a new edge-of-city MSCP. On a balance of harm test, the disadvantage of building a new MSCP outweighs the harm caused by match day visiting supporters parking on the local roads. Furthermore, the hotels, which will increase local employment, require visitor parking.

### **Site 2 – Cumberland Village**

The land north of Ashton Vale town green is part of Bristol's Green Belt. Through the Local Plan Review (LPR), the Council proposes to amend the South West Bristol Green Belt. The plan attached to the LPR identifies the site for potential development to meet the city's needs. On the assumption that the Council adopts the LPR and releases the site from the Green Belt the Society supports residential development. We were encouraged by the Club's proposal to invest in the enhancement of the Ashton Vale town green to maximise the green infrastructure benefits and mitigate the impact of development. We welcome the proposal in the LPR to designate a Specially Protected Local Green Space to maintain its undeveloped status and prominence in the landscape for community use.

The Club's presentation PDF contains an illustration of residential development. The image illustrates housing generically. We support the Club's intention to choose a developer who could produce a design for a 'bespoke village'. We offer two suggestions.

**Density** - It may be that the local housing needs survey supports a development of family sized houses with gardens as the illustration shows. However, the Society would also support a denser development that offered a mix of housing types; terraced housing with low-rise apartment blocks.

**Parking** - Despite the adjacent Metrobus terminal, people living at this site will be poorly served by public transport. The developer will want to provide a policy compliant quantity of parking spaces. It would be useful if the development brief contained an instruction to constrict the space that the hard landscape of parking occupies. One way would be to restrict parking to a discrete area.

### **Public realm**

It is too early in the development process to discuss access to the site and its permeability. The continuing discussion caused by Network Rail's wish to close the Ashton Vale Road level crossing could change the local road network.