

Statement: CS11.01

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 11 – Revision to the Local Development Scheme and Application of Adopted Local Plan Policy

Statement submitted by: Councillor Anthony Negus

The document 'A statement about planning in Bristol' (that on page 4 notes that it has already been approved at cabinet), appears to be a light statement of intent to fill the void left by the demise of the Joint Spatial Plan and with it the Bristol Local Plan documents.

It contains statements that, no matter how often they are said, remain dubious and unhelpful as they represent factional views and undisclosed interests. The Urban Living section refers again to the document of that name which states the Administration's poorly-informed preference, supported by the mayor, for tower blocks. People who understand these matters and have won awards for good urban design recognise and have proved that there are ways of integrating with and indeed strengthening communities in high-density living, not in isolating tower blocks but in ways that work with design, scale and form. Many guidance notes have been written on this to show how to avoid the damage created by civic and political megalomania of the past. Apart from being an architect I represent the most densely populated ward in Bristol – by a country mile – with not a tower block within its bounds and very few buildings over 4 storeys. This policy is misguided and should be graciously withdrawn, unless there are other reasons for its retention that need to be explained.

Only since I brought a successful motion to Full Council has the unhelpful issues of student accommodation in the city been acknowledged. By arrangement with the Universities, principally UoB, new areas to accommodate increasing numbers of students are to be created within existing communities throughout much of the city. This document has a fair description where this is to be achieved from new Purpose-built Student Accommodation (PBSAs) but so often present permanent family homes will be lost to short-term lets where students cannot be expected to settle in to their neighbourhoods and so are 'alongside' rather than 'within'.

This can be mitigated by avoiding concentrations that erode original communities and after a long fight a Supplementary Planning Document for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO SPD) has finally been prepared setting out criteria and formulae to prevent local hot-spots. The councillor group supporting this was told that all student accommodation would be taken into account in these calculations but part-way through the consultation process the PBSAs were taken out of this reckoning. The balloon crafted to carry away all our concerns will not fly with this fundamental panel missing - lobbied away by vested interests?

I have no problem with a statement from BCC that tries to lay down a marker for future plans within WECA. But it has to be informed, carry consensus and reflect open, honest and unprejudiced approaches to major issues facing the whole of our city. Without this, division and social deprivation is created, not minimised.