

STATEMENT A8 – Councillor Mark Wright

I wholeheartedly support the plans to create this exceptional attraction on Millennium Square: the Arc. I believe it will be an exciting addition to Bristol's skyline, managing the rare feat of being simultaneously: striking but also unobtrusive. This unique attraction is "very Bristol". It is a new and cutting-edge engineering solution that Brunel himself would be delighted to see – a worthy addition to the city of his Suspension Bridge.

As Bristol starts to exit the economic and social trauma of Covid, we will need both economic stimulus and cultural inspiration to drag ourselves out of what will inevitably be a deep and painful recession. The Arc provides both, and will help Bristol on the road to recovery. I note the very enthusiastic support of the key nearby tourist businesses, who see the big pull that this will have for visitors to the city.

Clearly the setting of the grade I listed Cathedral will be at the front of many peoples' minds. I understand the concerns some have in this regard. I personally feel that the Eye is sufficiently far away from the Cathedral that it will have minimal impact visually over the Cathedral. I also feel that the impact that it does have is counter-balanced by the exceptional and unique views of the Cathedral that it will offer passengers. Those who have the most interest in the Cathedral will be able to take in truly remarkable new views - previously only possible to those in a helicopter - and I feel that this will enhance understanding and appreciation of the Cathedral.

I do not believe that this installation, which exudes an aura of metallic 'engineering' most akin to the harbour-side cranes of old and those remaining alongside M-Shed, will harm the industrial setting and feel of the listed Engine Shed. Indeed, if this futuristic shiny metal structure were to cause harm to the Engine Shed, then presumably the existing futuristic shiny metal structure right next to the Engine Shed (the sphere planetarium) has been doing likewise for several decades; yet I have never heard anyone suggest that. I believe the Arc will complement the planetarium outside We the Curious, and together they announce Bristol's engineering past history and future potential.

Finally, given the large number of "skyscrapers" that the Council has recently granted permission for across the city centre - that I personally find almost all to be extremely obtrusive, inelegant and generic - I find it hard to believe that serious objection could be brought against the Arc on visual grounds. The Arc will be a welcome distraction from some of the ugly tall buildings currently being built in the city. As I said at the start, it is elegant and graceful, and deserves full support.

Dr Mark Wright
Councillor for Hotwells & Harbourside Ward