

STATEMENT B7 – Steffie Broer

I'm the founder of Bright Green Futures and we build eco self-build housing communities. As such I consider myself an expert on purpose-led housing that benefits communities and the planet. We know Lawrence Weston well because we are currently building the Water Lilies Project also in Lawrence Weston. This project received unanimous support at planning committee and will be first zero carbon housing community with its own micro-grid and is 100% self and custom build.

I decided to found Bright Green Futures after building a house in the Yard community in St. Werburghs. Living in this community changed my life and that of my children and all I wanted to do after that is to enable others to do the same.

For the Yard the urban design team decided to allow the unusual designs because the project was backed by the local community. This has been a huge success story, and the Sustainable Cities Team of the Council always showcases it as the sustainable housing flagship project of Bristol. This project was true placemaking and changed the whole area.

Based on this experience I very much see the value in empowering the local residents to decide and approve what happens in their local communities, and to design their communities as they like them. They know better than anyone else what is needed locally and I very much welcome and see the successes resulting from the planning department staff working in mutual support with local grassroots projects like the Astry Close project, and being openminded about the design ideas of the local people.

The Astry Close project is unique in the way it is giving one of the most deprived communities and residents in Bristol a voice, the very people who hardly ever feel heard. It is empowering, it is bringing employment and wealth redistribution to Lawrence Weston, it is supporting to the poorest people in the city, and it provides affordable housing too. I find this impressive and inspiring!

The local community organisation: Ambition Lawrence Weston who is behind this project, is highly respected locally and highly acclaimed nationally. I have not seen another community organisation which is so proactive and successful at making a difference locally. I know Mark Pepper who leads it well and have full confidence that what ever he puts his hands on and his name behind, will be a great success.

I have never come to a committee meeting to speak in support of a planning application, apart from the ones we do ourselves. But I felt moved here to speak with you, to urge you to approve this project and let them get on with it without further ado.