

## STATEMENT TO REC TRUSTEES

It is clear that a development route is the way forward for public benefit. It is also clear that it would be unwise to support a preferred option at this time.

You are offered a choice of so-called Option 2 (a rugby-centric proposal) and Option 3 (a community-oriented proposal). To foreclose either option would be a high risk negotiating strategy with the Charity Commission.

You have received much advice, but it is incomplete and deficient in several critical areas:

1. Both options require similar technical and legal responses from the Charity Commission to allow progress. But you have received no guidance on which option might be favoured and have a greater probability of success in terms of public benefit. It is surprising that there is no assessment in the strategy report on the relative public benefit merits of the options nor the potential impact of the 2006 Charities Act which has reinforced the public benefit requirement and is now a priority consideration for the Charity Commission.
2. The economic analysis is almost entirely focused on costs and, in particular minimising the cost to the Council of any future development. There is no real assessment of cost-benefit.
3. There is no objective analysis of funding prospects and sources and all comment is entirely speculative. It is untenable to assume Option 2 can be funded and it is incorrect to assume that Option 2 requires mainly commercial funding. Funding available for Option 2 can be used in Option 3, together with regional development funds which would not be available for Option 2.
4. There is no comment or advice on the planning consent prospects for either option. This is surprising given the extremely sensitive location. And yet there are substantial differences in the planning context between the two options.
5. A viable future for Bath Rugby is essential but very short-term needs should not determine the overall approach to regulatory issues. Bath Rugby requires immediate clarity for next season but all other time-frames are self-imposed rather than coming from external sources.

You should resist time pressures which compromise the longer-term. You are determining the strategic future and direction of the World Heritage Site – and the vision for the city itself. You are faced with a once in a life time opportunity to achieve unique community benefit.

If you get it wrong, the citizens of Bath will be unforgiving.