

Motion Proposed Local Plan changes to support public realm and public art.

Motion By Cllr Bridget Petty

May 2024

The latest news is that the Local Plan is continuing to be revised and will be consulted on again before submission to the planning inspector. In the next 15 years thousands of houses will get built across North Somerset.

A Backwell resident approached me to ask if North Somerset Council would consider planning changes like neighbouring councils Bristol and South Glos to use the planning process to access funding to support public art through section 106 and policy development.

A report in 2022 found that the biggest housebuilders (many who work in North Somerset) made more than £7 billion in profit in the two years of the pandemic. Two who have their sights set on Backwell, 'Persimmon amassed profits of more than £1.76billion.. Taylor Wimpey £994m.' With profits like this, there is no reason to think the developers can't be delivering the affordable housing needs we have and the improvements to services such as sustainable transport and public art. It is not a question of or, they are making millions off land in North Somerset and public art is a small but important way that the local community can be provided some cultural compensation.

Placemaking has been the topic of many conversations over the past five years, and we do need our towns and our villages to take pride in their sense of place. Public Art has many potential benefits such as;

- Encourage high-quality design and environmental standards
- Improve accessibility and legibility
- Enhance public open space and other recreational facilities
- Raise the profile of town and village centres
- Empower local people and communities
- Celebrate heritage, biodiversity, and culture
- Advocating and promoting the benefits of public art

Officers have recently been working on a cultural audit and action plan, so this work can support this.

The Council resolves to:

Add additional text to the Local Plan to recognise the importance and opportunity to have a contribution from developers to support public art and the public realm. This is compatible with the latest NSC Corporate Plan that recognises the importance of good place-making and a sustainable thriving community.

This could feature in policies (and/or where the officers see fit);

- SP4: Placemaking
- LP1: Wolvershill Strategic Site, and
- DP1: High quality design

Reference: [Britain's biggest housebuilders make £7bn of profit in pandemic | This is Money](#)