

Late response received after consultation deadline

From: J Hughes [mailto:]
Sent: 04 April 2016 12:10
To: LDF NCC
Cc: FOVE
Subject: RE: Consultation on the Nottingham City Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies - Publication

Dear Dawn Alvey

I have really struggled to get a response in to you and ask for sufficient grace to allow my concerns to be heard and noted in the Local Plan Consultation.

There is more I would like to discuss as I fear I have not responded adequately? It has been a hard task to know what to put and I am sorry I have not been able to respond regarding other area's of concern and interest, such as the provision (restoration and reopening) of public toilets along the Embankment.

Talk of Cafe's and new Pavilions are of concern when mobile Cafe's as seen in Hyde Park in London for example would be preferable and the Heritage Pavilion near Felton Road should be developed or any new pavilion built on its footprint. As you can see I am struggling to know what will be of interest to you.

The first attached document - Local Plan Response 2016 - is perhaps more readable. The second tries to highlight some the bad decisions and bad practice which has been to the detriment of the historic open space I try to represent.

Yours Sincerely

Jonathan Hughes

Chair of *Friends of Victoria Embankment*
Nottingham

[suggested summary text ...](#)

Comments largely relate to the mainagement and maintainence of Victoria Embankment and recent City Council improvements, transport schemes and flood defences which are not directly related to the Local Plan.

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11.03.2016

Dear Sir / Madam

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I write as Chairman of Friends of Victoria Embankment in response to the Local Plan consultation. May I say that it has been difficult and very time consuming to trawl through the documentation and ask that you may excuse the slight delay in getting this response in to you.

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Victoria Embankment and its surrounds are and have been a great and beautiful asset to the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Nottingham to whom the land has, in the most part been gifted, 1. by the Clifton Family and 2, by Jesse Boot. The City Councilors who in 1901 ensured the completion of the construction of what I describe as an Aesthetic Masterpiece of Victorian Flood Defense Engineering, described it as a 'Great Work', which would be of 'lasting value to the people of Nottingham', and as the 'greatest Riverside Promenade in England'.

Unsympathetic – Victoria Embankment, its surrounds and the Meadows Recreation Ground are an integral part of this City's invaluable Public Open Space Network and yet they are seeing and have seen massive unsympathetic change in recent years. The Breadth, Symmetry and Grandeur of the Carriage Drive have been lost along long stretches of the Embankment. This was influenced by an unviable and ill-placed Wind Turbine which dictated the flood defense alignment even though no on site wind studies had been done, despite bold and misleading claims by the ex MP Mr Simpson. In 2005 the environment Agency Engineers and the City Council had agreed on a preferred route for the Flood Defences, which was described as the most economic and low impact alignment. It was estimated to be half the cost of the high impact nonsensical alignment, which was eventually built for the sake of the failed Ozone Project and for the benefit of those that run the 3 day Riverside Fair who did not want the layout of their rides changed.

The Cities Civic War Memorial now stands on the wet side of the flood defenses. English Heritage, as it was, were promised the Memorial would be protected and yet this promise was broken and a grade II Listed monument left to the potential ravishes of impending predicted significant flood events.

Over 3500 signatures were officially presented to the City Council asking for the flood Defense alignment to return to the one agreed on in 2005 which would have provided what would have been by far the most robust flood defense, half the price and which would have left all the historic Listed structures and public recreation ground alone.

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Yet a private petition of 22 signatories went to the Head of Parks asking for the flood defenses to remain on the Ozone Alignment across valuable recreation grounds and their demands were followed. Is this localism in action? After waiting over 2 years to receive a response to a Freedom of Information Request to see the petition and know who the lead signatory was all I was granted was that 22 people had signed it.

Another great Promenade, Queens Walk, which inspired the design of Victoria Embankment, was recently savaged, loosing half its healthy 150 year old Lime Trees and had its dedicated open space, as shown on the Local Plan of 2005, turned into a double tram-track even when there was an alternative route – following Meadows Way, also shown in the Local Plan of 2005, which could have better served the local businesses.

Now the Embankment and Meadows Recreation Ground face even more change and it is these developments I would like to highlight and challenge showing them to be unwise and detrimental to this beautiful and natural open space, to biodiversity and accessibility to the local community, to whom the Recreation Ground primarily belongs.

After the promise to the local community to restore their Arts & Crafts Pavilion (designed in 1906 by the first City Architect, Frank Lewis) the Head of Parks, whilst being the Applicant & Agent asking to have the 1906 Pavilion demolished and a new pavilion built elsewhere interrupting an established and gloriously aesthetic tree line and placed the new building within an 85ft building line where clearly, according to two historic documents, nothing should be "built or erected". This changed the historic landscape, impacting the openness of the area and means that passers by can look down into the new changing rooms. It also impacted the natural scenic value of the embankment tree line, long views and the wildlife of the area.

DO THESE CHANGES GO AGAINST THE POLICIES SET OUT IN THE COUNCILS OWN BREATHING SPACE DOCUMENT? I would argue, yes it does.

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24390&p=0>

The Head of Parks presented (in what was supposed to be a Public Consultation Meeting) results from an unknown "petition" which had NOT been officially presented to the council and which no one in Consultational Services had heard of or seen. His presentation belittled the efforts of local people who had petitioned the Council to restore the Old Pavilion, and, when we had been told it was not possible, asked for the new pavilion to be built on the site of or next to the old which was the ideal place for it and which gave some continuity to what was a much loved structure and setting. The Victoria Embankment 'Masterplan' had promised a restoration of the 1906 Pavilion but this decision was rejected on behalf of Trent Bridge Cricket and their commercial partners the International Company 'Last Man Stands' who deemed the pavilion obsolete. Was this Localism in action? A just compromise would have been to build the new Pavilion with its Heritage Design where the old one stood. As it was unusual time pressures were put upon the schedule and the West Moreland Slate of the old pavilion, which could have been salvaged and sold for at least £20,000 was crushed. Is such waste in accordance with the Sustainable development Policies of the Council?

Decisions driven by self-interest have damaged the historic environment, endangered Listed structures and reduced public access to their open space. **Undemocratic** means have been used to push through unwise changes and more are to be pushed forward which will greatly reduce the value of and access to this Breathing Space, of such importance to the Citizens of Nottingham.

In my view this Breathing Space faces further unsympathetic development and exploitation by the City Council and their business partners, which go against the Council's stated Policies and undermine the legal covenants, which have preserved this not for profit "Breathing Space", given in perpetuity for the benefit Citizens of Nottingham.

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I am tempted to go further through the multitude of the ill-considered decisions which, I feel, reveal how bad practice, poor judgment and partisan politics, have had negative impacts upon the heritage and identity of this Historic amenity. That would of course be pointless unless the authorities publicly acknowledge any mistakes and dedicate a few spare millions to put right the obvious vandalism done to this historic landscape by the misaligned Meadows Reaches of the Nottingham Left Bank Flood Alleviation Scheme. The latest imposition of the Councils Victoria Embankment Masterplan plus the **Parking Order** the Parks Department are currently seeking to impose on land given to the people of Nottingham by the Clifton Estate, whose descendent recently wrote to us;

"I wish you and your team all the very best with your endeavour to preserve the 'freedom' of the embankment on behalf of the people of the City of Nottingham, as was always intended by the Clifton family." Lady Caroline Bruce Clifton

So in the pipeline are plans to demolish the remaining Pavilion and rebuild a new one on the lower field on land which, according to the Trent River Park Document, doubles as a **Sustainable Urban Drainage System**. No more buildings should be allowed to be built on this lower field West of Wilford Grove, and if another Changing facility is needed it should be built on the current site near Felton Road, next to where the Masterplan seeks to site the Recreation Grounds main Car Park, and which sits on higher ground.

Until 2015 when a new strategy was apparently written the Policy was that no grass football pitches should be lost and any lost to development must be replaced. There was space for six Football Pitches on the Pleasure Ground East of Wilford Grove before the 2012 FAS constructed a secondary embankment through the middle of the public open space on the axial line through the suspension bridge to the unviable wind turbine. No league football has since been played on the fields as the impermeable clay bund throws rainwater off onto the remaining flat land. A Girls Football Competition, The Victoria Cup used to be held here, as did a Football Competition for people with hearing impairments and the land provided a home ground for West Bridgford Colts and Wilford Lions. Sadly there is not one Meadows football team left in existence, which means that after years of neglect the Council can push ahead without serious consultation with interested local people. I set up the Meadows Cricket Team and ran a competition going on to support the team, which has played in the indoor league in Baseford for several years. And yet Trent Bridge Cricket say they are setting up an alternative Meadows Cricket Club without approaching us? Is this Localism in action? The Area 8 Committee on which I sit (without a vote) was misinformed regarding the involvement of private sports companies seeking to establish themselves on what is a playing field belonging to what is described as a deprived community.

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The Breathing Space Strategy 2010 - 2020 still refers to a playing Pitch Assessment of 2009. The most recent Playing Pitch Strategy <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=57154&p=0> was conveniently rewritten in 2015 and seeks to justify the construction of large artificial pitches. The Council seeks to impose one, not in an industrial/business area, but in the middle of our green open breathing space, used casually by many people for all kinds of recreational activity. The artificial pitch would be built upon two of the few remaining GRASS football pitches on the Meadows Recreation Ground west of Wilford Grove. The Artificial pitch would be surrounded by high locked fences and spot lights, further removing **access**, destroying the openness, natural beauty and **diversity** of this landscape. Many birds, such as the house Martins nesting in the Meadows and seasonal and migrating birds use the fields to feed. Bats feed all over the area at night and artificial lighting is well known to affect their behaviour. The Parks Department might get away with building Artificial Pitches on the Forest Recreation Ground but Victoria Embankment is a totally different setting. Also the protective Covenants suggest it is for community use, community sports and not as a privately run sports facility. The description on the Insight Mapping website seems to show the intention of the Council to snatch it away from full accessibility by local people and park users.

I do not have the time or perhaps capability to point out everywhere Council and Government Policy are not being adhered to and trust you will ensure this great parkland is not exploited by investigating and ensuring Policy is adhered to and the Natural Beauty of our green, open, Breathing Space along with its ecosystem is preserved. <http://www.fove.co.uk/Wildlife.html>

I hope this is not too much off point?

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Hughes

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P.S. Other concerns:

That the Toll Bridge Pub Land continues to be allotted for community uses (such as a public house) as stated in Council policy and not private development or business.
That no more Pavilions are built on the fields west of Wilford Grove as these, according to the River Trent Park Document this land and the lower section of the field East of Wilford Grove form part of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System.

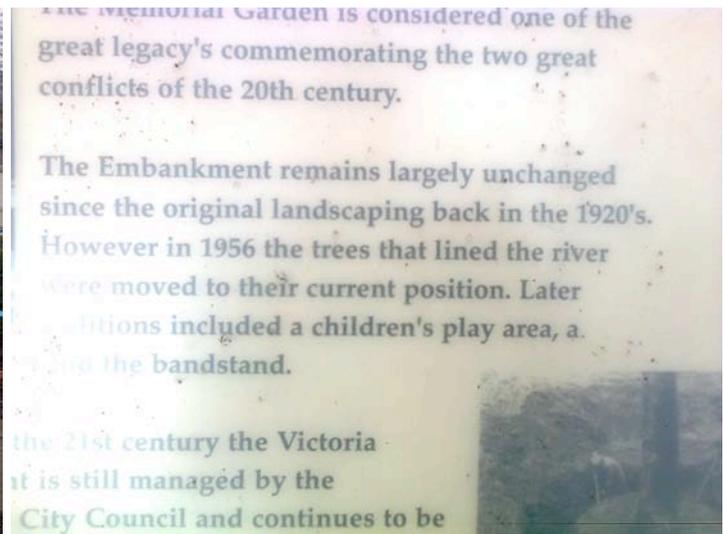
Dear Sir / Madam

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I know this is a few weeks late but I only now have time to sit down and, as best I can, address the local Plan. I confess I have found a response overwhelming and perhaps beyond my capabilities. I thought any response would have to be very technical and precise but all I feel able to do is to share my thoughts and concerns regarding the area in which I live and especially Victoria Embankment as I hold the position of Chair of the Friends of Victoria Embankment.

HISTORY.

In the past few years great damage has been done to Victoria Embankment and its surrounds, and it would seem that Council Policies which the Local Plan 'enshrines' with regards to this Historic Green, Open, Breathing Space have been abandoned.



After the Embankment Public House, where Jesse Boot had his office, has just been given a Grade II Listing can I show you what the information board in front of the Civic War Memorial.

“The Embankment remains largely unchanged since the original landscaping back in the 1920's. However in 1956.....”



This beautiful historic landscape is slowly being destroyed

In the 1950's, with the help of Dutch Flood Defence Engineers a massive and effective flood alleviation scheme took place along the Nottingham reaches of the River Trent. Even so Victoria Embankment and its heritage survived, retained with some very sensitive and considered changes. Not so with the latest Nottingham Left Bank FAS which ploughed through virtually every Grade Listed item along the Embankment and to the loss of Public Recreational amenities.

The latest **One in an Hundred Year Flood Defences** ditched the preferred alignment of 2005, described as the most Economic and Low Impact possible, which the City Council had previously agreed upon, and were delayed and diverted by:

1) A failed Lottery project and its unprofitable WIND TURBINE - for which not on site wind study had been carried out.

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2) A three day fun fair.

Why was the Breathing Space Policy not adhered to and a nonsensical, ill considered, failed and unaffordable Project allowed to over-ride Council policies and so damage such an amazing historic landscape?

CARRIAGE DRIVE

The Breadth, symmetry and grandeur of the Carriage Drive was severely compromised in places by building a flood-wall into the 36ft wide Drive. I cannot imagine any other City allowing such high impacts upon one of their greatest and carefully historic landscaped tree-lined boulevards? There was a far better option open to the Environment Agency for which plans had already been drawn up which involved taking down the existing Flood Defence wall and reusing the stone to clad and cap the new flood wall which would only be some 35cms higher. This was by far the most sustainable common sense approach, reusing the beautiful stone already on site. The capping on the *old wall* has a gentle run off slope whereas the new flood-wall does not, so moss is able to establish on it. The new walls have already had to be scrubbed clean by teams of volunteers.



OLD WALL (Self cleaning)



NEW WALLS (Gathering moss and lichen)



The insensitive developments of the past few years, which lack artistry, along with the privatisation of Public Open Space as promoted by the Councils latest Masterplan for Victoria Embankment and the Meadows Recreation Ground, could be seen as asset stripping and has to stop. Have the Parks Development Team got it wrong? Should they be would up? The Public have been ignored and dismissed and it would seem to us that underhand practices have been employed. This needs investigating.

The local Friends group have been totally ignored and uninformed by the Parks Department. Why?

Public petitions have been ignored. Secret petitions have been honoured. The Area 8 Committee has been misled. The Head of Parks used an unseen improper petition, which was not presented to the Councils Democratic Services Department, to justify his demolition of the Meadows Pavilion and then building of a new Pavilion against, which encroached upon the historic landscape, delightful natural tree lines, and ignored legally established building lines changing the unmatched and irreplaceable and aesthetically pleasing Historic City Landscape.

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These images show the exquisite tee line which should never have been allowed to be encroached upon



The New Meadows Pavilion although 'well built' ignores the clearly defined 85ft building line (<http://www.fove.co.uk/Sale%20Plans.html>), interrupts the beautiful long views of the mature tree line and passer by will be able to see into the changing rooms if the shutters are open. The building added to the misplaced red brick clad flood wall further destroys views across the open fields from the Embankment path and can be seen from the Riverside Promenade lessening the feeling of freedom and escape and closing in on our natural open space. It should have remained in the centre of the field as its designer the First City Architect (who also laid out the field) carefully placed it: See - <http://www.fove.co.uk/Frank%20Lewis.html>

Does not the **Open Space Strategy** resolve to protect the historic environment of Nottingham Parks?



Able-bodied sports people could have walked to the Pavilion placed in the centre of the field as MABER the architects of the new pavilion first designed it to be.. Those with a disability could drive along an established road (hidden by grass) and parked next to the pavilion. Instead a disabled parking bay has been placed in a most awkward and extraordinary position in the middle of a lane of the Carriage Drive.

Were the Parks Department management involved in undemocratic and misleading practices, which negated the wisdom of the previous Local Plan to get the pavilion placed in this new position?

WAR MEMORIAL

English Heritage – now renamed Historic England were promised by the City Council, that the flood defences would protect the Grade II Listed War Memorial Arch. Sadly this promise was broken. Now if the *Jet Stream* had been further north 2 years ago when the Tames was flooded or further south over the Tributaries of the Trent instead of Cumbria we could have seen similar amounts of flooding in Nottingham. As the War Memorial now stands unprotected by the forecasted higher flood levels what damage could be inflicted on the War Memorial? Who sanctioned the Flood Defence Alignment when a more succure and robust defence was available, one with far less expensive HIGH RESIDUAL RISK flood gates?



MEMORIAL GARDENS

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BANDSTAND & ENCLOSURE – The Bandstand and the terracing had been listed some years earlier but the Bandstand Enclosure had become an Grade II Listed Garden of special historic interest before the decision was made to run the flood defences through them. The new 'secondary flood defence embankment', known as a Bund, now encircles the Grade II Listed Bandstand. The impermeable clays throw rain water off in the direction of the Bandstand, which has become a SUMP for run off. The full effects of this were felt during the first Riverside Festival to be help soon after the Defences were completed and many times since. Also the lawn area, ideal for watching the Bands was lost.



Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · August 7, 2012 at 6:30am

The Café and the remaining part of the upper field regularly experience flooding and League Football has never been played on the field, which previously supported 6 grass pitches, since. The Council Pitch Strategy was to replace any pitch lost to 'development'. This was unnecessary development, in fact 'non development', as the bund meandering over the fields was based on an uneconomic Wind Turbine on an

axial line through the Suspension Bridge across the Recreation Ground. Eight Healthy Red Oaks were felled and a host of other mature trees and shrubs all for no reason. What happened to Council policy?

PUBLIC RECREATION GROUND –the loss of Public Open Space and six football pitches. Creating a raised concrete car park in the middle of the Green Space, which encourages cars to park in the middle of the public right of way pushing people to walk on the road.



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Please see these links - <http://www.fove.co.uk/2005.html> - <http://www.fove.co.uk/FAS%20Potted.html> and download this more detailed document showing how the 2005 alignment may have looked: http://www.fove.co.uk/2005_files/2005%20Alignment.pdf 1.zip . Also Before and Aftermath attached to the email.

LATEST MASTERPLAN

The Latest Council **Masterplan** for Victoria Embankment has already gone back on its promises to the community to restore its Pavilion, plans to impact openness and the natural setting of this Parkland and is set to ruin further its natural beauty with its heavy-handed, possibly illegal treatment of this Historic Open Space. Every Council Policy to ensure the protection of such open spaces is being ripped up or rewritten to suit those wanting to exploit this *not for profit* public open space, gifted in perpetuity to the Citizens of Nottingham.

They are planning to put a **large artificial pitch** with high fencing and spot lights in the middle of our natural green space, losing two grass football pitches in the process. Conveniently they rewrote the Playing Pitch Strategy last August 2015 without informing the Friend's Group. This is adversely effect many species of Birds which use the grass area for feeding including Red Wing and House Martins which fly over the grassland feeding throughout the summer.

The pitch will be open and lights will be on late into the evening when the whole area is used by numerous bats for feeding. The impacts of greater use will be detrimental to a natural open space which has enjoyed "dark sky" since it was built in 1901 and for millennia before that when it was simple Meadowland.

Artificial Lights are planned along the Embankment which have enjoyed dark skies and done without lighting for over one hundred years. If this goes ahead the wildlife which finds real refuge in that area will be detrimentally effected. One of the beauties of having this unspoilt area so close to the city is its serenity and peace. The land can be used by many during the day and then return to Rest at night and at other times. Have you ever walked jogged or cycled down the riverside promenade during a full moon? The experience is hard to match. More lighting suggests more development, more exploitation of a precious breathing space vital to the health and wellbeing of the People of Nottingham. The Local Plan must ensure such areas as Victoria Embankment are protected and preserved from development, however much the Parks Development Team need to raise income to preserve their jobs!

I must end here as I must send you the other document today.