

## BATH TRANSPORTATION PACKAGE: PARK & RIDE and BRT

### For the attention of all prospective B&NES Councillors

Bath and North East Somerset community has been led to believe that any substantial change to the Bath Transportation Package (BTP) will disqualify the B&NES funding bid from the Department for Transport (DfT) grant pool or send it to the back of the queue - this is not true.

The DfT has stated that "...not only are we allowing amendments to the scope of schemes where that would improve affordability and value for money, we are positively encouraging it". It is not a matter of B&NES selling assets and contributing more money and asking for less from central Government. Instead, the Government (DfT) wants high value for money as well as significant savings on cost.

In light of this Government directive and the following key considerations, B&NES should rigorously re-evaluate the linked Park and Ride (P&R) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) elements of the BTP.

1. B&NES' own papers show that the Bathampton Meadows P&R would have little or no impact on traffic congestion or traffic related air pollution (NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) along London Road. It, therefore, fails to achieve stated primary objectives. In fact, B&NES' own air quality assessment states that "*the large majority of Bath and the surrounding area is unaffected by the introduction of the proposed Bath Transport Package of which the A4 Eastern Bath Park and Ride is an important element*".
2. B&NES' own papers show that the highest percentage (46%) of demand for the Bathampton Meadows P&R is from the north via the A46 and the planned provision of 1400 spaces falls short of the need for 1800 spaces. However, the site is not capable of extension because it immediately abuts the River Avon flood plain. This P&R is, therefore, in the wrong location and is not sustainable.
3. The Bathampton Meadows P&R would be the largest and most environmentally damaging in Bath - a blot on the Green Belt and Cotswolds AONB landscape setting of the City of Bath World Heritage Site (refer map). This has been recognised in a number of Government and B&NES reports which rejected the site on the grounds of serious adverse environmental impact.
4. Public consultation on the Bathampton Park and Ride was untimely and perfunctory. B&NES' evaluation of the scheme was carried out in secrecy and presented as a "fait accompli". Public consultation later revealed a 78% rejection rate by Bath voters! More than 500 objection letters were submitted. There is also significant, well documented, public opposition to the Newbridge P&R extension and BRT, led by the Newbridge Matters! and Response2Route Groups.
5. Defying logic, the BRT scheme seeks to link an extended Newbridge P&R with the proposed Bathampton Meadows P&R and would, for the majority of its length, *not* be a segregated, 'off road', route (refer map). On the contrary, it would be 'on road' and shared with pedestrians, (motor) cyclists, cars, vans, HGVs, other buses and refuse/recycling vehicles, i.e. -
  - the BRT scheme will not improve the travel times of current bus services, with little hope of keeping to a timetable as BRT buses will have to stop and start at frequent intervals.
  - the unwieldy BRT buses will put additional pressure on traffic flows along London Road and Bath's relatively narrow streets and exacerbate the chaos already being experienced at Dorchester Street.
6. The BRT is intended to be a dedicated route for commuters, shoppers and tourists. However, it has very few stops for local residents (refer map). It is, therefore, extremely likely that, as is already happening, residents would drive to the P&Rs, fill up the spaces and bus in more cheaply than on existing routes, i.e. the P&Rs could fill up early, leaving no room for the people for whom they were intended.
7. Independent economic evaluations, reported in the Bath Chronicle, indicate that the Net Present Value of the BRT and P&R schemes (Newbridge extension and Bathampton Meadows) is *negative*, suggesting the projects should be rejected.

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