

**B&NES Council 13 November 2014 – statement on Bath Transport Strategy by P A Rotheram, representing the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations**

Good evening. I'm speaking on behalf of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations, whose members represent some 5000 residents in Bath.

Traffic congestion and air pollution have consistently been our members' top concern. We are especially concerned about the high levels of air pollution in the city, which are seriously harmful to health - as well as unlawful. Traffic levels may have reduced somewhat since 2008 but not pollution, which has remained at the same high level for ten years. Bath is a great place to live but is blighted by traffic. In a World Heritage Site, it's frankly ridiculous.

FOBRA welcomes the Bath Transport Strategy and we urge all parties to give it their support. It's essential to seize this opportunity to begin tackling the issues of congestion and pollution. Because the issue is so important and the implementation timescales so long, it is vital that this has cross-party support.

Let me touch on some elements of the strategy:

We support the vision of reducing the intrusion of vehicles in the city, especially the historic core. We would like to see a largely traffic-free city centre. However as the strategy recognises, traffic also impacts on the key arterial routes and this must be tackled too.

FOBRA supports the development of a Park and Ride (or Rail) to the east of Bath. 77% of respondents to the consultation agreed with this.

Through traffic, especially HGVs, must be removed from the city. An A36-A46 link road is essential, since it is clear from the recent DfT decision on an HGV limit at Bathwick that traffic cannot be barred from Bath in the absence of a new alternative route. We welcome the commitment to work with Wiltshire and the DfT on this. 76% of consultation respondents supported it, so the Council has a clear mandate.

We support more pedestrian access, cycling, better public transport and improved freight delivery. But these will have a limited impact if motorists remain able to drive into central Bath and park at will. So we support the proposals to reduce visitor parking in the centre as the P&R are expanded and to develop a traffic management plan for the city. These are *essential* components of the strategy.

As a community, we need to have the vision, drive and courage to carry this work forward.

Vision, to see how much better Bath could be. We hold this wonderful place in trust and it deserves better.

Drive, because this strategy is just a start and will need to be implemented over a period of years. The Delivery Plan will be crucial.

Courage, because there will be opposition from some quarters to parts of the strategy. But the Council should take heart from the overwhelmingly positive public response to the consultation, with three-quarters of respondents supporting the strategy.

FOBRA urges you to give the strategy your full support.