



Statement to cabinet on weds 9th September

Alison Millar

I'm having a strong sense of deja vu. Yet again residents to the east of Bath are being bullied by the Council and told they are being given a real input into the decision on the park and ride - when in reality there is none.

What a ridiculous consultation. Only three sites each within 500 yards of each other. All with major flaws. All ruining Bathampton Meadows.

People are very cynical about politicians and now I know why. Four months ago, a Tory cabinet member absolutely promised me that there would be no car park on the Meadows. Today we are being offered a choice of three, all on the Meadows.

The survey is well hidden on the Council's website. No posters were available for us to exhibit locally and to inform the very many elderly people in my locality who don't have computers that they need to attend one of only two consultation dates if there is any hope of stopping this Council obliterating the meadows with concrete for good.

I went to Batheaston Parish Council last night and they are **incandescent** with rage. They are trying to form a view in order to represent the interests of residents there. With no information as to access to the sites, capacity - or anything useful - and a month

to do it in. The clerk rang a very senior officer to be told the place to find information is the Chronicle website!! It beggars belief. This council is opening itself up to yet another JR on this subject. SO much for speed in getting this plan completed.

And what of the alternative plan for a relief road and Bathampton Parkway station? Locals were delighted to know that it involved a hidden car park with up to 3000 cars and the possibility, long term, of commuting into Bath and Bristol by train. People still ask me if that is going ahead. First Great Western have asked that and so has a business enterprise interested in building the car park

So why are we being denied the chance to get people's views on that as a fourth option? I keep hearing the word cost - but the council was never to have funded it all as private enterprise would have been involved. If Stonehenge is being granted a tunnel to fix its problems, why can't our very own World Heritage City be granted a more suitable and less intrusive solution?

So much has been bleated on about this being a real consultation with the Council having no preferred option. Well I'm afraid it appears to be just the opposite - and smacks of the new administration being fixed on literally ticking boxes and getting that car park anywhere, just to say it has been built, and quickly.

As for the conservative plans for a bridge from the bottom of Bathford Hill across to the A36 which they are being very cagey about – would not a tunnelled link be so much more in keeping with the local area?

This is a golden opportunity to fix the problem of transport to the east and for good. Instead, if this administration gets its way we will end up with a cheap sticking plaster solution which is not future proofed, which will divide Bath and most importantly which will not provide the transport solution we desperately need. Let the people of Bath have their views on a fourth site which is driven by sustainable considerations and make this a proper consultation.