

Public speaking to Cabinet, 14th September 2011, Deborah Porter.

The report to the Cabinet has not included objections made by Somer Valley Friends of the Earth which relate to social inclusion, customer focus, health and safety and sustainability, all matters you are instructed to consider in the report. These include that:

- there are fewer bus stops proposed than considered necessary at outline
- anticipating the addition of the stop at outline presumes permission, but the divided locations in the outline plan are a transport step backwards
- increased distance between buses and existing shops, doctor's surgery and chemist means decreased access and public transport use
- bus queues will share the pavement with people accessing the adjacent retail/commercial buildings, shops, community areas etc, leading to conflict and disabled access problems;
- dropping off at the bus stops will be impossible if the single parking spaces near them are filled
- the road orders act against the HCA's stated purpose for grant of funds, connectivity between shops and community areas. There are much cheaper ways to achieve this, but the HCA says it is the only road scheme identified. A crossing over The Street would do the job. I suggest that the Agency may be more motivated by the impending handover to it of a financial claw-back agreement by SWRDA than the traffic implications.

The report dismisses objections regarding local plan policies on the grounds that they were considered at outline and that the outline is extant. This has three major faults:

1. The outline consent is a live, but not actionable, consent.
2. The Government stipulates that time extension applications must be treated as new applications for the same developments, taking into account material changes and Government policy introduced since outline; and says Climate Change policy supersedes Local Plan policy. All this should result in a different decision due to increased commuting, changes to the site, lack of evidence for the economic and socio-environmental cases, sustainable build considerations, and the higher importance of the biodiversity resource in a climate change context.
3. Local plan policy was not taken fully into account at outline:
 - Councillors were instructed at outline to weigh up the benefits cited against the remaining ecological harm only - other key disbenefits were not taken into account; indeed, the socio-economic case assumed nil impact on existing traders.
 - The town centre vitality and viability were theoretical, and not backed up by any credible analysis and Town Centre policy T.13, which deals with this, is not listed in the decision notice amongst the policies with which the NRR proposal conformed.
 - The 43 long-term jobs cited by the developers will be more than offset by the inevitable loss of over 60 jobs from the Sorting Office and loss or decline of existing local of businesses.

I challenge any Cabinet member to be able to say what the actual net benefits will be, and how these will actually come about, without reverting to the meaningless developer-speak that the Council has been fed by the regeneration lobby, both internal and external to the Council.

Lastly, the standardised traffic flow analysis just presented to the Town Council has been presented too late in the day and does not correlate with reliable data from April and September 2009 surveys. Turning surveys at crucial locations have not been done and I do not think that it can be trusted. Respected hauliers do not think their lorries will make the turns without causing delays, if at all.

Thankyou. Deborah Porter.

HCA and B&NES policy quotes:

The HCA's stated purpose for grant of funds is *"to support the delivery of a suitable highway infrastructure to improve connectivity between the core shopping area, community amenity areas (including the library, Victoria Hall, Radstock Museum and key car parks) as set out in the proposed Policy SV3."*

Policy T 13, *"Traffic management proposals for the centres of Bath, Keynsham and Norton Radstock will have as their prime aim the further exclusion of through traffic and other unnecessary motorised vehicles from the main shopping streets whilst enhancing vitality and viability. They will also seek to achieve the following objectives:*

- i) environmental improvements for the benefit of pedestrians;*
- ii) improved safety for all road users;*
- iii) maintained or enhanced standards of access for cyclists and the mobility impaired;*
- iv) improvements in the quality and integration of public transport;*
- v) access that adequately meets the servicing needs of commercial, cultural, recreational and residential activities both now and in the future;*
- vi) unimpaired access for the emergency services;*
- vii) the enhancement of air quality;*
- viii) the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas and of City of Bath as a World Heritage Site".*

The needs of all road users will be taken into account in their design and implementation