

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	10th April 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2544
TITLE:	Bath Transport Strategy	
WARD:	Bath wards	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: none		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 In September last year a conference was held in recognition of the need for a Bath Transport Strategy to support the Core Strategy and the Council's economic development strategy. The report outlines the work to date and the scope and timetable of the work for the strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Cabinet support the need for a Bath Transport Strategy as set out below and that approval is given to fund this work (approximately £140,000) in due course.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In order to complete this work within the next 12 months dedicated funding is required. This will be identified and agreed with Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Resources.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*
- *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live*
- *Building a stronger economy*

5 THE REPORT

5.1 Following the full approval awarded to the Bath Transport Package (BTP) in July 2012 and the emerging core strategy it is timely to review the Council's broader transport strategy for Bath. The focus for too many years has been on obtaining funding for the BTP and meeting detailed requirements of Department for Transport (DfT). It is now appropriate for the Council to review its transport policies for the city and prepare for the

next round of funding that might become available and address some of the issues which have been left on the 'back burner'.

- 5.2 To kick off this work on 18th September 2012 a conference was held to hear what stakeholders' priorities were for a Transport Strategy for Bath. Sir Peter Hendy, Commissioner for Transport for London, gave the key note speech which showed how London had successfully developed its wider planning and economic strategies and demonstrating how London's Transport Strategy identified supporting infrastructure for the delivery of the wider vision.
- 5.3 Sir Peter Hendy's message was that, in order to deliver a successful transport strategy, it was necessary to show how it supports the wider economic and planning strategy for the city. He urged the city to develop an agreed approach to transport with cross party support that had sufficient longevity to survive both election and economic cycles. Finally, while the cost of particular measures should be understood they did not have to be "affordable" in a particular spending environment. Government needed to hear a consistent message of what the Transport Strategy can deliver in order to be credible for funding decisions.
- 5.4 Those who attended are listed in the attached table at Appendix A. Key stakeholders were asked to provide their three priorities. Full transcripts of their individual contributions were recorded and are available.
- 5.5 The priorities given by each of the key stakeholders were:

FOBRA

- Reducing through traffic (HGV ban, use of alternatives eg an A36-A46 link and A420)
- Keeping unavoidable through traffic moving on the designated through route (A36)
- Reducing traffic in the centre (eg Queen Square)

Chamber of Commerce

- P&R on each side of the city
- More and better buses
- Focused development around the railways station – opportunities provided by electrification.

Bath Preservation Trust

- Comprehensive modelling
- Over-arching strategy but not necessarily one 'grand' solution (see Buchanan)
- Incremental strategic change in agreed direction
- Strong leadership

Bath Cycle Campaign

- Listen
- Learn
- Join things up!
- Do!

Public Health:

- Important to increase level of physical activity
- More active life styles have a very positive BCR
- Evidence of these benefits now well established in academic literature

First Bus:

- Need to show DfT we have a clear plan for the future
- Buses are important to local shopping centres
- Information, information, information!

- 5.6 There is overwhelming agreement that the amount of traffic entering the City should be reduced and that more sustainable means of travel should be supported and developed be they walking, cycling, rail or bus services while make sure that those who need to use their cars can access the city easily and efficiently. Reduction in traffic is key to delivery of both the Council's Core Strategy and the economic strategy.
- 5.7 There is a recognised need for a clear and succinct articulation of what the a Transport Strategy should be for Bath. The strategy is key to delivering:
- Economic growth and sustainable development in the Council's Core Strategy.
 - the development of the Key sites owned by the Council
 - Reduced congestion on key routes throughout the City.
 - Improved freight delivery in the City.
 - Enhanced the quality of life and wellbeing of those who live, work and visit the City.
 - Improved air quality
 - Improved transport opportunities for the community.
 - Make a positive contribution to climate change.
 - Support the delivery of key sites in the Bath City of Ideas Enterprise Area.
 - Support the delivery of the Council's Public Realm and Movement Strategy
- 5.8 The Council has a very good record in delivering many elements of transport policy, although there are some outstanding issues that still need to be addressed. The controlled parking zones in the city have been key elements in reducing traffic and supporting the Council's very successful Park and Ride offer. The implementation of the Bath Transport Package will significantly increase the amount of parking spaces available at Park and Ride Sites as well as upgrades to many bus stops, shelters and junctions. The continued investment in local bus facilities through the Greater Bristol Bus Network major scheme and now the Bath Package will support the continued increase in bus patronage. The recently established Bus Expert Improvement Panel will help inform the Council and bus operators on how to maintain this growth.
- 5.9 The proposed improvements to rail services in the new Great Western Franchise and electrification of the main line will support the unprecedented growth in rail use. As the report on the Greater Bristol Metro Project to this Cabinet shows, there is great potential for local rail services to be improved as well.
- 5.10 The recently agreed amendments to our Core Strategy sets the basis for increasing housing and jobs within the City both of which will required new and improved transport measures. Making the links between the Council's Core Strategy and the transport measures required to support it will greatly assist the implementation of both. It is unlikely, given the timetable and resources available for its preparation, that the strategy can provide a significant level of detail regarding individual measures. However the Strategy will establish broad principles which will be followed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and support economic growth particularly in the Enterprise Area. The Council's Vision for Bath is well developed and has been given universal supported through the development of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy. The reduction in private traffic within the historic core of the city is key to its implementation. Not only will this provide air quality improvements but should support the continued growth in bus patronage. There are, however, some elements of a Bath Strategy which have yet to be finalise or solutions identified. Some of these are discussed below.

5.11 The need for a Park and Ride site to the east is a clear priority, air quality remains a serious concern and the intrusive nature of HGVs travelling through the city are issues that need to be addressed.

5.12 **Timetable & Budget:** It is anticipated that the strategy would be subject to public engagement later in the year. An indicative timetable is attached in Appendix B. This timetable will require dedicated resource to complete the work. The resource is needed for the following work to create a team for the duration of the project at a cost of approximately £140,000 to fund for a 12 month period 1 x team leader, 1 x senior engineer, 1 x public transport officer, admin support and the necessary public engagement.

5.13 In the absence of a dedicated resource the work of the strategy will have to follow after other priority work e.g. Core Strategy and Appeal work.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed at the present time. An assessment will be undertaken as part of the development of the Transport Strategy.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The need for a more explicit description of the Council's Transport Strategy for Bath is recognised and was supported at the public conference last year. The work will be guided by the Council's Bath Transport Commission which is chaired by Sir Peter Hendy. The clarity given by the Strategy to much needed transport measures following further public engagement will give confidence to the delivery measures for its implementation.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Cabinet members; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer

10.2 Comments have been made on the report by George Bailey and are attached as Appendix 2 to this report with a response attached at Appendix 3.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Sustainability;

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	