

B&NES Cabinet 12th Nov 2014 – Statement on Bath Transport Strategy

By Robin Kerr, Chairman of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

Good afternoon. I am Chairman of the Federation of Bath Residents' Associations, whose 33 members together represent some 5000 residents.

Traffic congestion and air pollution have consistently been our members' top concerns. Residents are especially worried about the high levels of pollution in the city, which are seriously harmful to health - as well as unlawful. You will have read in the report that traffic levels have reduced somewhat since 2008 but this is not true of pollution, which has remained at the same high level for at least ten years. Bath is a great place to live but is blighted by traffic, and has been for too long. In a World Heritage Site, this is disgraceful.

I should like to touch briefly on some important parts of the strategy:

- We support its vision of reducing intrusion of vehicles into the city, especially in the historic core. We should like to see a largely traffic-free city centre. However, as the strategy recognises, traffic also impacts on key arterial routes and this must be tackled too.
- FOBRA strongly supports the development of a Park and Ride (or Rail) to the east of Bath. 77% of respondents to the consultation agreed with this. However, none of the P&Rs is actually fulfilling its potential. They should operate until late, 7 days a week, with secure overnight parking. That would enable their use by evening visitors and those staying overnight.
- Through traffic, especially HGVs over 7.5 tonnes, must be removed from the city. An A36-A46 link road is essential, since it's clear from the recent Government decision about 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 respondents supported it, so the Council has a clear mandate.

- We support more pedestrian access, more cycling, better public transport and improved freight delivery arrangements; but these will have a limited impact if motorists remain able to drive into Bath and park at will. Therefore we strongly support proposals to reduce visitor parking in the centre as the P&Rs are expanded, and to develop a traffic management plan.
- There is a fundamental connection between land use and traffic. An integrated plan for the A36 south of the river is required to support the Enterprise Area development. The Community Infrastructure Levy should be earmarked for this.
- We welcome a Low Emission Zone to improve air quality. This should cover the entire Central Area, not just round the bus station proposed so far, and should include the Great Pulteney Street/Henrietta Park area.
- Coaches are major contributors to traffic congestion in Bath, and should not be brought into the centre. A waiting area for them at the P&Rs would be sensible if there is sufficient capacity, as we see no need for this to be in the centre.

Thank you. FoBRA wishes you well in your discussions and commits to support you in rapid implementation of this long-awaited and vital Strategy.

Robin Kerr, Chairman

7th Nov 14