

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Cabinet	
MEETING	8th July 2015	
		E 2761
TITLE:	Update to the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy and proposals for a Park & Ride east of Bath	
WARD:	Bath Avon North	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council adopted the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy in November 2014. This report provides an update to some of the key issues within the Strategy and how they are being taken forward. A key recommendation of the Strategy included the need to develop a new Park and Ride (P&R) to the east of Bath. This report recommends that a public consultation be undertaken on the options for the delivery of this facility.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet notes the progress being made on the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy, and agrees the additional measures proposed within paragraphs 5.3 to 5.7 to support the delivery of this Strategy.
- 2.2 The Cabinet agree to undertake a public consultation on the options to help identify a preferred location for a new P&R east of Bath.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The Capital programme has £500k approved budget for the development of the P&R to the east of Bath, of which £291k was spent in 2014/15. There is an additional provisionally approved budget for 2016/17 of £4.7m for delivery of the project; these budgets are funded by Corporate borrowing. The cost of the public consultation will be approximately £5k funded from the approved capital budget.
- 3.2 There is a small revenue reversion risk in the case that a capital project does not go ahead.
- 3.3 The approval of the £4.7m will form part of a future formal decision and will consider all financial and non-financial impacts, revenue and capital at that point.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Statutory considerations regarding Sustainability and Planning have been taken into account in preparing this report.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 **Background:** The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy set out a range of policies and initiatives to manage transport within the city. The Strategy also proposed ways to manage the growth in transport which result from the Council's Core Strategy. This report highlights a number of areas where further work is required in taking this strategy forward and provides an update on the work undertaken to date.

5.2 The five key areas where this report expands upon the policies contained within the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy, and which the Cabinet view as priority areas for the years ahead, are set out below:

5.3 Supporting sustainable transport: Investment in sustainable transport initiatives have continued within Bath. In particular the Bath Transport Package is nearing completion and has improved 375 bus stops and 197 new bus shelters. The improvements in Stall Street and Seven Dials aim to make the city more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. The Council will continue to be at the forefront of bidding for Government funding for projects which make cycling and walking safe and attractive transport options, and will continue to work with other West of England authorities and local bus companies on measures to make bus travel as reliable, affordable and attractive as possible.

5.4 Investing in infrastructure: The Council will shortly undertake a public consultation on the options for a preferred location for a new P&R east of Bath, further details of which are set out in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 below. In addition, officers will continue to hold discussions with Wiltshire Council and other partners to investigate the potential of additional projects to address the impact of through traffic from the A46/A36 on Bath.

5.5 Cutting congestion and pollution: The completion of traffic counters at all the off-street car parks and our Park and Ride sites now allows drivers to know, in real time, where they can park. Advice is given through new Variable Message Displays or on the web at www.bathcarparks.co.uk. This will help keep traffic out of the core of the city as it finds its way quickly to the best car park. A review of the timing of bus lanes and their operation is possible to see if any changes would help traffic more easily, for example whether allowing high occupancy vehicles to use bus lanes could be beneficial. In addition, the Council will be open to looking at ways in which traffic flow in the city can be improved, and will continue to investigate innovative measures, such as the creation of a Low Emission Zone, to address air quality management issues within the city.

5.6 Promoting local rail: The Council is committed to supporting improvements to local rail services, including working with neighbouring authorities to promote the MetroWest rail project, supporting the electrification of the Great Western Mainline, and investigating the possibility of reopening nearby stations such as Corsham and Saltford.

5.7 Improving parking provision: Whilst this is an issue not explicitly considered within the Strategy, management of parking provision within the city supports the wider aims of the Strategy. Therefore, in addition to progressing work on an east of Bath Park & Ride, a review of the following parking issues is also being undertaken:

- (1) the extent and consistency of resident's parking zones within central Bath;
 - (2) the charging structure in some locations particularly in relation to evening charges; and
 - (3) the operation of the parking changes in Royal Victoria Park and parking in the vicinity of the RUH.
- 5.8 The actions set out above will be underpinned by increased joint working with partner authorities and neighbouring Councils, in particular those within the West of England and Wiltshire. The review of transport problems east of Bath will have implications for Wiltshire Council. The problems of accessing Bath from the east and the unacceptable impacts of through traffic from the A46/A36 on Bath are well known and understood. Solving these problems will not only benefit residents of Bath but also residents of Wiltshire. The Council is committed to developing a partnership with Wiltshire which will help develop a joint understanding of these problems and how they might be addressed. To put this into effect leading members of both authorities have recently met to begin this partnership and will be meeting with other key national agencies in the near future. In the past the Council has supported proposals to re-open Corsham Station and cross authority working will continue to help implement the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy.

5.9 East of Bath Park and Ride: The Council has a long established policy of developing a new Park and Ride to the east of Bath. This was a key element of the Bath Transport Package, which was adopted by the Council in October 2006. The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy recommended that the need for a P&R to the east should be established in the light of a wider review of parking within the city. This review has now been completed and is discussed below.

5.10 The existing Park and Ride sites run by the Council are very successful and have recently been expanded through the Bath Transportation Package. They are a critical tool with which to effectively manage the City's traffic and continue to be very popular with the public.

5.11 The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy assessed the likely impact on transport of the proposed housing and jobs growth identified in the Council's Core Strategy and in particular within the Enterprise Area. The Strategy proposes that a range of measures should be implemented in a co-ordinated manner to reduce the impact of traffic growth and support the economy of the city. In particular the Strategy identifies specific measures, including maintaining sufficient off-street parking, more walking and cycling routes and infrastructure and better access for those with mobility difficulties. More widely the Strategy demonstrates how a combination of better rail services, both regional and local, and improved bus services will be key to helping those from further afield get into and out of the city.

5.12 Finally, the strategy supported the continued expansion of Park and Ride sites and in particular the creation of a new site to the east of Bath. The Council's consultants CH2MHill have recently completed a detailed transport modelling exercise that looked at the likely levels of traffic to be generated by the Bath Riverside Enterprise Area. The conclusion of this analysis is that an additional Park and Ride site to the east will be critical in managing and reducing the growth in traffic in the future and offers the largest potential for removing car trips into the historic core of the City centre.

5.13 Much work has been undertaken over recent years on those sites which might support a new Park and Ride, including the potential for using improved rail services instead of, or in combination with, a more traditional bus based service. The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy recognised that any rail-based Park and Ride service would take some years to develop and deliver and that an interim bus based site should be brought forward.

5.14 In selecting any site for this new facility a number of factors will have to be considered. For example:

- Capacity;
- Safe access;
- Usage;
- Environmental;
- Distance;
- Number of buses;
- Bus priority;
- Frequency of service;
- Pricing;
- Site cost; and
- Ownership.

5.15 These and other factors will provide guidance on the selection of the preferred or optimum site. Community views will be sought as part of this process with a period of public consultation involving residents, Councillors and Parish Councils particularly to the east of the City.

5.16 Once a preferred site has been selected by Cabinet it will be included in the Placemaking Plan later this year.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 A period of public engagement will help inform the Cabinet and gauge public support for these proposals.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The Cabinet could indicate a preference for a site without further public engagement but this would not be an open or a transparent process.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director Place.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	
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