

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING	Council	
MEETING	12 th November 2015	
TITLE:	Consultation on proposals for a Park & Ride east of Bath	
WARD:	Bathavon North	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 A new park and ride is part of a package of improvement works in and around the City, identified in the 'Getting Around Bath' transport strategy, which was approved by Council 14th November 2014.
- 1.2 The Cabinet, at its meeting on 8th July, agreed to undertake a public consultation on the options to identify a preferred location for a new Park & Ride east of Bath.
- 1.3 This report outlines the issues raised to date through the consultation process and the wider issues surrounding proposals for a Park and Ride facility to the east of Bath

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council:

- 2.1 notes the report; and
- 2.2 makes a recommendation on whether to proceed with plans for an east of Bath Park & Ride.

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, which is now fully expended.
- 3.2 There is a provisionally approved budget for 2016/17 of £4.7m for delivery of the project, with a further £5m highlighted as a result of additional costs anticipated around land acquisition and sites access challenges within the emerging capital for the budget setting process, these budgets are funded by corporate borrowing. An element of the provisionally approved £4.7m will be required to fund the continuation of the project, including the business case

development and implementation; both elements of this will be taken through the Council's usual approval process

3.3 There is a revenue reversion risk in the case that a capital project does not go ahead.

3.4 The cost of this project will need to be reviewed once a preferred site is selected and any changes approved as part of the Council's budget process.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

4.1 Statutory considerations regarding highways, sustainability and planning have been taken into account in preparing this report. There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals for a Park and Ride however there is a general duty under the common law for a public authority to act fairly. The basic requirements are first that the consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage. Second, that the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response. Third that adequate time must be given for consideration and response, and, finally, fourth, that the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

5 THE REPORT

Background

5.1 Park and Rides have been a key element of national as well a local transport policy for over 20 years. Central Government during this period has given significant emphasis to developing Park & Ride sites. Two Government funded studies - the Bristol/Bath to South Coast Study (2004) and the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (2006) - both recommended the continued development of Park & Ride around and to the east of Bath. The importance of Park and Ride facilities has recently been emphasised in the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs publication 'Draft Plans to Improve Air Quality in the UK September 2015. The advice emphasises the use of Park & Rides to help reduce air pollution.

5.2 These earlier studies supported the development of the Bath Transportation Package which aimed to provide a significant boost to Park & Ride capacity around the City of Bath including a new site to the east. This strategy was incorporated into and supported by the Joint Local Transport Plan developed with the West of England Authorities. In addition to the expansion of Bath's three existing Park & Ride sites, this resulted in permission being granted in 2009 for a 1,400 space Park and Ride to the east of Bath (Site F on the public consultation plan). This permission was not implemented. The JLTP will be reviewed next year and is likely to continue the policy support for Park & Rides within the West of England, particularly in the light of expected economic and housing growth.

5.3 The 'Getting Around Bath' Transport Strategy is the most recently adopted policy by the Council that supports a new Park & Ride east of the city. This was adopted by the Council in November 2014. It sets out a range of policies and initiatives to manage transport within the city particularly in the light of the planned growth within the Enterprise Area and the wider Core Strategy. 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 essential in helping those from further afield get into and out of the city.

- 5.4 The Council's Core Strategy identifies future development requirements within the District. The current 5 year housing land supply horizon is the end of 2019/20, by which point the plan requires that 6500 units are built since 2011/12. The gap to be delivered in the next 5 years is 5172 which incorporates a 20% buffer. The current housing trajectory for 2015 to 2020 shows that Bath has a vital role in providing this supply. Some 2,812 dwellings are forecast to be built in Bath during the next five years, representing 65% of the housing that needs to be built across the District. The Core Strategy also recognises the need for a transport system that supports this growth and identifies the need for the *'Creation of one or more Park & Ride sites on the eastern side of the city to reduce commuter traffic'*.
- 5.5 The Council's Economic Strategy (September 2014) and the West of England Strategic Economic Plan have clear objectives to deliver 'indigenous business growth and inward investment through the provision of appropriate business space in the right locations'. The Core Strategy and Economic Strategy identify a need to provide a net increase of 40,000m² of commercial space in Bath to enable employment levels to grow and generate approximately 12,700 jobs (gross) and over 7,700 net additional jobs. This growth will be focussed within the Bath Western Riverside Enterprise Area the main regeneration project within the City. The Economic Strategy states that *'there will be a need to further expand Park and Ride facilities, including provision east of Bath, to address coach parking provision and to improve connectivity between Park and Ride sites and the city centre.'* It also identifies the need to address congestion along the A36 and A4 routes.
- 5.6 The above summarises the policy background in relation to the Park and Ride proposal, which has resulted in the progression of options for its potential delivery. It is these options that have been subject to recent consultation. This report outlines the key issues and outcomes of that consultation process.

The Need for a Park and Ride Facility to the East of Bath

- 5.7 The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a duty on the Council to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the road network in order to avoid, eliminate or reduce road congestion. The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy outlines how the Council intends to do this through various interventions. A recent National Highways and Transport Network survey for B&NES (2015 undertaken by Ipsos Mori) identified that traffic levels and congestion remain a key concern and that the Council are well below the National average in relation to this indicator. B&NES only scored 29% satisfaction rate against a national average of 45%.
- 5.8 As stated above the policy direction for Park and Ride facilities has been clearly established to help address the traffic congestion levels experienced

within the City of Bath. The Council has implemented three of the four key sites for a park and ride facility on the edge of Bath. The introduction of the three sites at Newbridge, Lansdown and Odd Down form part of an integrated long term policy. Their success has enabled those without ready access to public transport to travel into and out of the city quickly and efficiently and to remove a large number of commuting and visitor traffic off the highway network.

5.9 These facilities have been introduced with complementary measures, such as bus priority measures, to ensure that traffic has been reduced along key corridors within the City and to keep the City Centre moving which enables it to remain economically prosperous. The introduction of the Park and Rides has enabled the Council to address other key issues and demands such as the introduction of resident parking zones where requested; bus and cycle lanes; the potential introduction of low emission zones and the identification and development of key development sites to ensure the continued economic viability and vitality of the City.

5.10 Appendix 1 shows the travel to work journey origins, there are estimated to be about 4,000 people who commute from the east by car each day. By providing a more attractive, cost-effective and sustainable mode of transport to enter the city, it would predominantly be these travellers who would be expected to use the new Park & Ride facility to the east of Bath, in addition to visitors to the city.

5.11 The above interventions are supported by a recent detailed transport modelling exercise undertaken by CH2MHill (November 2014) that looked at the likely levels of traffic to be generated by the proposed levels of development within the City. The conclusion of this analysis is that:

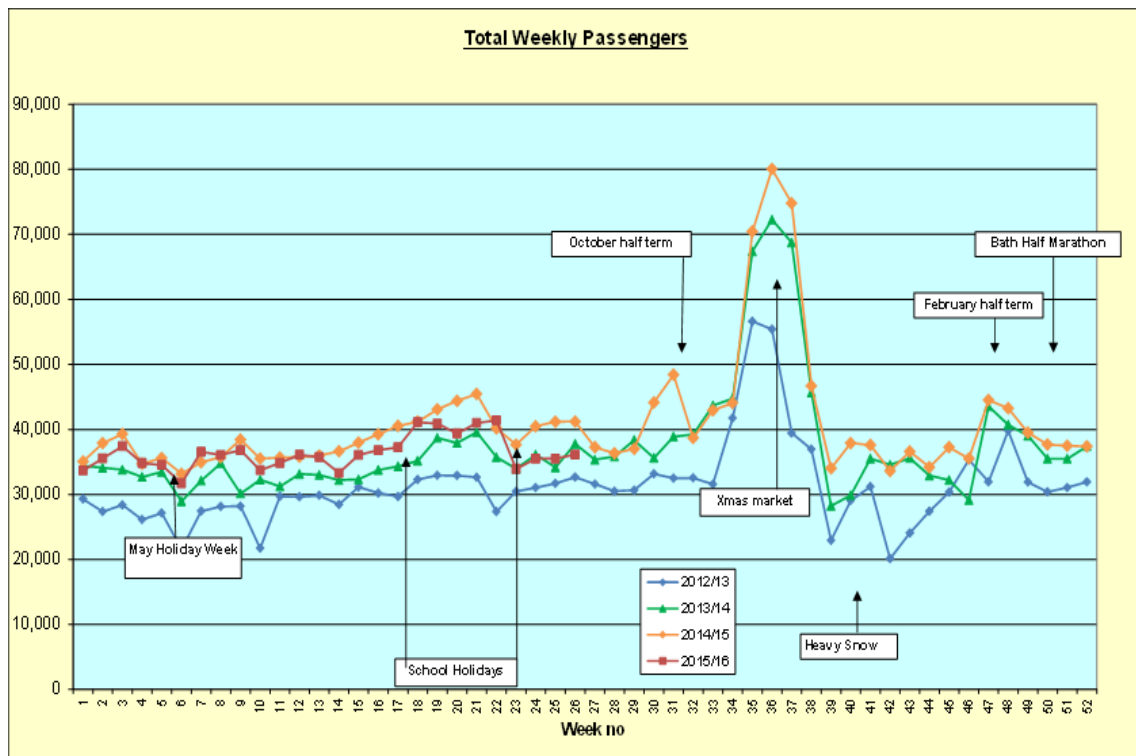
'the potential reductions to existing traffic achievable on the A4 London Road and Bathwick Street with this proposed facility in place gives positive decongestion benefits to this part of the network. This is because the existing traffic reduction effect is likely to outweigh any increased traffic impact on this corridor due to the EA developments.'

5.12 It also states that a series of improvements will be necessary, including changes to parking, improved walking and cycling routes, particularly linked to improved rail services to support the continued economic growth within the city. All of these will be complemented by a Park & Ride to the east and additional capacity at existing sites. These measures will help manage car trips into the historic core of the City centre. The additional capacity to the three existing Park and Rides has already been implemented.

Benefits of Park & Ride

5.13 Bath's existing three Park & Rides carry approximately 1 million passengers each year. Each parking space in the Park & Rides is used, on average, by 1.4 vehicles each day. It can be assumed that there would be a similar usage of an East of Bath Park & Ride. The chart below provides an analysis of the usage over a full year. It is therefore estimated that a 1,400 space Park & Ride facility would be used by some 2,000 cars each day, equivalent to 4,000 daily car journeys into and out of the City of Bath. This

need has been based on a number of studies that have identified a figure between 1,200 to 1,600 spaces. There has been a slight decrease in patronage this year mainly because of the reduction in the number of concessionary pass users due to Government changes on eligibility.



5.14 This will have an immediate benefit to traffic on the East of the city as identified in paragraph 5.11 in the CH2M Hill report. However, as with any transport management scheme that reduces traffic it is important to recognise that over time traffic levels might increase as users recognise that there is less congestion on these routes. The Council will therefore monitor traffic levels and measures can be introduced to prevent these benefits from being taken up by suppressed demand. In the longer term the removal of through traffic by other measures is the Council's ultimate aim which will complement the park and ride provision.

5.15 The benefits of the new Park & Ride therefore include:

- The further reduction of car journeys into and out of Bath as the park and ride will be used by car drivers who would otherwise continue on their journeys into the city by car. This modal shift is of immediate benefit to the city.
- It will enable the Council to meet its statutory duty by ensuring that the highway infrastructure operates effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all users.
- The P&R will also improve access from the east into the city by providing an attractive and efficient alternative for shoppers and visitors to access the attractions of the city.

- The Royal United Hospital has recognised the benefits that a Park & Ride will bring by improving access to the hospital facilities and the potential to introduce a shuttle bus service
- It will ensure that the economic sustainability of the City is maintained and grows, in line with the Council's Core and Economic Strategies, thus providing crucial housing and jobs within the District.
- It will address air quality issues as the number of car journeys into the City is reduced. This will be further enhanced through other complementary measures such as low emission zones and the provision of an alternative route outside the city.
- Experience from other historic cities continues to support Park & Ride as appropriate and important measures to deal with traffic growth. This is evidenced by the recent expansion of the York provision and new proposed provision in Oxford

6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6.1 The consultation on the Park and Ride showed that 49% support a Park and Ride facility whilst 51% did not support the proposal. The majority of those against the provision of a park and ride facility were from Bathavon North.

6.2 Three sites were selected for the September/October 2015 public consultation. These were:

- Site A: east of A4/A46 Junction
- Site B: west of Mill Lane
- Site F: east of Mill Lane

In terms of those that indicated a preference for a Park and Ride facility, 31% identified site A as their preferred location, 54% chose site B and 15% site F.

6.3 The shortlisted sites chosen for consultation were based on a review of all possible sites prepared by the Council's consultants Halcrow in 2013. These sites were selected because they were:

- Well located for main roads to capture drivers entering the City from the East.
- Near to the city to reduce travel time from the Park & Ride.
- Near to the city to reduce running costs.
- Large enough to support the expected demand.

6.4 The consultation was initially launched with the publication of Council Connect Magazine, delivered to every property in the District in the week of 8th September and closed on 18th October 2015. Three public exhibitions were held, one in Bathampton on Saturday 19th September, one in the Guildhall on Tuesday 22nd September and finally in Batheaston on 29th September 2015. These exhibitions were well attended with some 439 people attending the events.

6.5 The main issues raised throughout the consultation period have been presented on the Council web page. In summary the main issues raised relate to need; benefit, impact and potential alternatives.

7 RATIONALE

7.1 Given the large number of responses to the consultation it was felt appropriate to give Council the opportunity to discuss the issues arising and the views expressed at that meeting will help the Cabinet to make its final decision.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The Council has previously considered whether or not to proceed with a Park and Ride facility to the east of Bath as key policy documents have been prepared and approved, as outlined in the background section of this report. The key policy documents recognise the importance of this infrastructure to support the projected development need as contained within the Core Strategy.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director Place have had an opportunity to comment on this report and have cleared it for publication.

9.2 Public consultations on Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy and East of Bath Park & Ride site options.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

Contact person	<i>Peter Dawson 01225 395181</i>
Background papers	<i>1. Bath Enterprise Area/ Slash Transport Strategy S-Paramics Modelling. CH2MHill November 2014</i> <i>2. Site Options High Level Review Halcrow May 2013</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Appendix 1 Travel to Work Journey Origins 2011 Census

