

I want to tell you why I think this park and ride needs to be knocked on the head once and for all.

At the end of 2013 there were 29 million private cars licensed for use in the UK. That is 37 % more cars than when I moved to Bath 21 years ago. It's no surprise congestion is worse than ever, pollution so often breaks the legal limits, and people who use their car to access Bath get so frustrated.

But will a park and ride really make any noticeable difference to congestion and pollution in Bath when traffic continues to grow each year, and are there better solutions?

There is plenty of well researched evidence that concludes that Park and rides may slightly change the journeys some people make but that overall they result in more car mileage, and damage public transport, forcing yet more people into cars. (Parkhurst, G. and Meek, S. (2014) The effectiveness of park-and-ride as a policy measure for more sustainable mobility.)

If the council is so confident that this scheme will reduce traffic on the London road will they make the evidence of their research public before they make a decision, so they can reassure the CPRE, the National Trust, The Bath Preservation Trust, Jacob Rees Mogg, and many thousands of local residents that it is justified to destroy Bathampton Meadows.

Even if the park and ride was built and there was a temporary reduction in traffic on the London road, it will only be a short time till it is overflowing again as traffic increases year on year. So we will have gained nothing but lost Bathampton Meadows forever to a car park..

What to do? The much talked about link road from the A46 to the A36 might push the problem into someone else's backyard, but as with all new roads it is likely to attract even more traffic into our region.

There is an alternative. If we look to many other comparable cities in Europe they have taken action to control the car rather than be controlled by the car, resulting in those glorious urban environments we enjoy so much on our holidays. We can do the same but it will take vision and courage.

We need a joined up strategy that links all the possible elements. If there are to be park and rides then we must also take action to make it much harder for anyone to drive into or across the city. We can do this with more bus gates, more pedestrianisation and road charging. This will free up road space for more bus lanes and segregated cycle lanes making bus travel and cycling much more attractive than sitting in a car. We can use the income from road charging and parking charges to subsidise rural bus routes and new rail stations at Corsham and Saltford, so more people will choose to travel into Bath by bus and train.

Or if you prefer, we can just continue feeding the voracious appetite of the car, with a continued lack of imagination, and yet more pollution, congestion, and frustration.

Tony Ambrose