

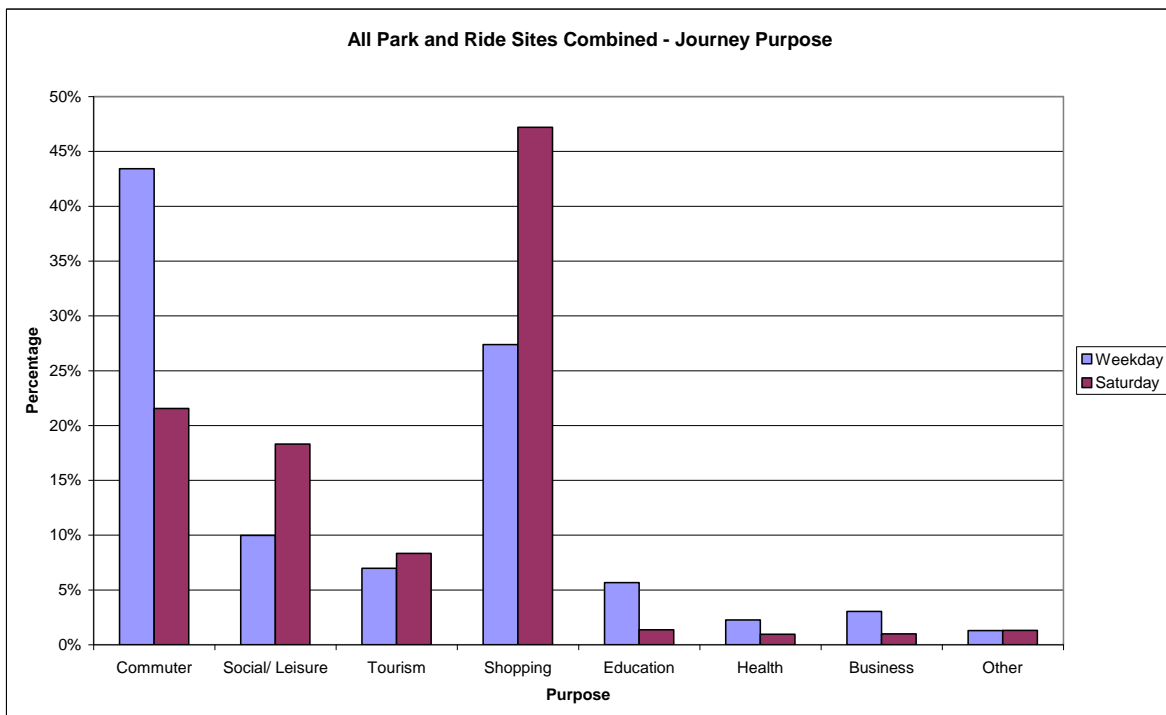
**East Park & Ride**

**Frequently Asked Questions from Council meeting 12 November 15**

**Questions concerning traffic modelling and P&R usage**

**1.1 What proportion of Park & Ride users are commuters, shoppers, day visitors etc?**

All those who use the P&R are considered 'day visitors'. During the week, almost 50% are commuters going to work while at weekends the largest category are shoppers. This is illustrated in the chart below based on surveys undertaken in 2010:



**1.2 What percentage of park and ride users are OAPs with free bus passes?**

The most recent figures we have show that in September 2015 about 29% of P&R users were concessionary passengers

**1.3 The three existing park & ride sites are not used to full capacity. What is being done to fill these sites?**

All three existing sites have been expanded in recent times because they frequently reached capacity. While the sites may not be used to a maximum every day, we must anticipate future demand and at peak times the additional space is essential to absorb demand and reduce traffic going into the centre of Bath. Variable Message Signs have been introduced on the A4, A39 and Lansdown Road to promote use of park & ride sites at busy times. Further VMS signs are also planned for the A36 and A46/A420. In addition usage of the P&R sites will be significantly greater during school holidays and during the run up to Christmas.

**1.4 Why isn't Lansdown park & ride utilised by more traffic from the A46? If more traffic was sent to Lansdown then there would be no need to build an east park & ride.**

Lansdown park & ride is already signposted from the A46. Depending on their end destination, an east park & ride may offer a more convenient bus route for some users coming into Bath via this route. Lansdown is not well placed for other users from the east along the A4 and A363 which would be catered for by an east P&R on one of the three sites subject to public consultation.

**1.5 How has the capacity of the park & ride been calculated?**

Analysis of existing park & ride usage with additional transport modelling was used to determine a desirable capacity. Initial demand forecasts from the recently updated Bath Transport Model indicate that daily demand is in the order of 1,400 vehicles.

**1.6 Have you considered a number of smaller sites rather than one big one?**

Yes, this approach has been considered. Having a number of smaller sites further away would make servicing by bus much more difficult and costly. Increasing bus journey times and/or reducing frequency would make them less attractive to potential park & ride users.

**1.7 How would traffic from the A36 access an East Park & Ride?**

It is not proposed to direct traffic from the A36 to an east park & ride. Traffic from the south of Bath is already advised to use Odd Down Park & Ride. The Council plans to place a VMS on the A36 to provide additional guidance to drivers to direct them to Odd Down P&R.

**1.8 Won't a park & ride encourage greater car use?**

Some research has shown that people who live with easy access to a nearby site may switch from using public transport. Experience has also shown that some car drivers, having used P&R services, have switched to using public transport instead of their car. However, we anticipate that many of the potential users for an East Park & Ride would come from locations where there is not an easy public transport option into Bath. The Park and Ride facilities will provide an accessible and reliable alternative for these motorists to complete their journeys by bus, removing up to an estimated 4000 vehicles from the central Bath road network each day.

**1.9 Won't creating a Park & Ride export one area's problems onto someone else? What measures will be taken to prevent congestion around the Park & Ride site?**

Any site taken forward would be subject to a detailed transport assessment during the planning phase. This would identify any potential issues with increased traffic and recommend mitigating measures such as modified road layouts or phasing of traffic signals to protect villages.

**1.10 How would the success of the Park & Ride be measured?**

The success of a park and ride would be demonstrated through the number of people using it and the ability to reduce traffic in the core of the City and the economic development and stability that this supports.

**1.11 How long would a bus journey take from the Park & Ride site into Bath?**

This would be determined once a final site has been chosen. Existing park and ride bus routes take approximately 10 to 15 minutes depending on site, and we would aim to achieve a similar figure.

## **Questions concerning matters of environment and heritage**

### **2.1 How can a Park & Ride be considered on Green Belt land?**

Under National Planning Policy Framework, a Park and Ride is classed as an appropriate development in the Green Belt providing it meets established conditions.

### **2.2 What environmental assessment has been made of the sites?**

The 2013 Halcrow report into all potential sites made an initial assessment of landscape and biodiversity impacts. These would be considered further during the detailed design stage of any preferred site.

### **2.3 What is the flood risk associated with each of the sites?**

The 2013 Halcrow report into all prospective sites made an initial assessment of flood potential. Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); dated March 2012, covers the approach to be taken when considering development in areas of known flood risk. A further Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy would be undertaken during the detailed design stage to manage issues of flooding. We will develop our proposals with the Environment Agency to make sure there is no increased flood risk. The site would be developed so there is no increased rainwater run-off with permeable surfaces.

### **2.4 What impact would the proposals have on wildlife (including bats, owls and endangered species)?**

We recognise the importance of biodiversity, both to residents and also under our wider sustainability obligations. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 provide statutory protection for birds, bats, dormice, reptiles and other species that could be affected. Surveys undertaken during the detailed design stage will recommend mitigation measures that would minimise impact on the ecology.

### **2.5 What is the impact on air quality from each of the sites? What is the impact on light pollution from each of the sites? What is the impact on noise pollution from each of the sites?**

All three sites included in the consultation have different characteristics and some would have more impact than others. As part of the detailed design and planning process, a comprehensive study of the environmental impact would be carried out as a necessary requirement. This would identify the impact of the above factors and recommend appropriate mitigation measures. 'Dark Skies' compliant lighting, acoustic fencing and landscape planting are all established methods.

### **2.6 How can tree planting be considered as visual mitigation?**

All mitigation would be re-visited during the detailed design stage with the aim to preserve the character and appearance of the landscape as far as practicable. Professionally-designed landscaping would be undertaken on site.

### **2.7 What would be the principle losses and benefits to the community from each of the three sites? Have you considered the impact on listed buildings in the vicinity?**

This would be determined through a future planning process, where the decision maker would judge the costs and benefits and any material impacts.

## **2.8 The impact on the landscape of the Meadows will be irreversible.**

Any site which is taken forward would be subject to appropriate mitigation and any harm would have to be assessed against the benefits of the proposal as with any planning application.

## **2.9 Has recreational use of the proposed sites been considered in the shortlisting process?**

There are no proposals to use sites B&F for 'recreational use'. As site F is owned by the Council, if it were selected, recreational use of the remainder of the site could be developed as part of the proposal. If site A were brought forward replacement rugby playing fields would need to be provided.

## **2.10 How would this affect UNESCO Heritage status?**

Of the three sites selected for public consultation one lies within the WHS while the other 2 are adjacent to the World Heritage Site boundary and are within the setting of this designation. The World Heritage Site Management Plan (2010-2016) includes Transport ('developing a comprehensive response to the City's traffic pressures') as one of its six priorities and the emerging replacement plan (2016-2022) is likely to retain this priority. Following the 2008 UNESCO 'Mission' to Bath, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee requested that 'an integrated Traffic Control Plan' was included in management planning. The response to this is the 'Getting Around Bath' Transport Strategy. The Committee also recommended 'enhanced protection of the surrounding landscape' of the site and the World Heritage Site Setting Study (2013) was developed as a key policy tool in providing this. These documents, together with the Core Strategy and emerging Placemaking Plan, ensure that the policy platform for assessment of proposals with regard to the World Heritage Site is in place.

## **Questions concerning matters of transport strategy**

### **3.1 What other measures are being considered to reduce congestion? How much does the park & ride account for?**

The Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in 2014, documents a combination of measures including walking/cycling, public transport, removal of through traffic, management of coaches and LGVs in addition to an eastern park & ride.

### **3.2 What are the Council's long term plans for car parking in the centre of Bath?**

Managing car parking capacity is a central feature of the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy. The Council will balance the need to provide central-area parking for residents and those who cannot access alternative transport modes with the need to encourage visitors and commuters to use alternative modes of transport to access the city. Expanding long stay capacity on the periphery will enable greater emphasis to be given to walking, cycling and bus services in the historic core and on key corridors.

### **3.3 Has the Council considered a congestion charge or low emission zone for Bath? Has it plans for a high occupancy vehicle lane?**

Plans for a congestion charge are not included in the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy. There are no current proposals for high-occupancy lanes within the city, but this will be kept under review.

### **3.4 What impact is the Enterprise Area going to have on traffic in Bath?**

The EA will be brought forward within the policies of the Adopted Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy and the Placemaking Plan which addresses parking and traffic movement. The November 2014 Hill report highlights that without the transport measures contained with the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy traffic in Bath will continue to worsen in the years ahead.

### **3.5 What evidence is there that an eastern park & ride is needed?**

Journey surveys undertaken show the pattern of traffic heading into Bath. This shows a significant number of vehicles which could potentially use an eastern park & ride. The other park & ride sites in Bath have been extremely successful with over 1 million users every year and it is estimated that an eastern site would be equally successful.

### **3.6 How many cars use London Road? What proportion are through traffic?**

London Road current has around 16,000 car journeys per day. Previous surveys have shown that 20% of cars and white vans constitute through traffic on London Road.

### **3.7 What is going to be done to reduce through traffic?**

The park and ride is an important way to manage traffic in and out of the city. To tackle through traffic, we are working towards a new link road east of the city with our partners in Highways England and Wiltshire Council.

### **3.8 What proportion of vehicles using London Road would be expected to use the park & ride? Will it reduce traffic?**

Depending on the site capacity, on average we would expect around 2,000 cars to use the site each weekday, with very intensive use during school holidays and during the Christmas market. This would take an estimated 4,000 trips a day off the road. We expect most of the vehicles that would use a park and ride would come from current traffic on the London Road.

### **3.9 Won't traffic using the park & ride simply be replaced by cars from other routes?**

When an east park and ride is introduced there will be a reduction in traffic on London Road and we will continue to monitor the impact. If traffic does start to increase we will address it and work with Highways England to introduce measures to prevent the reduction in traffic being replaced by suppressed demand.

### **3.10 What is the Council doing with bus/train operators to improve public transport and make it more economical? Has the Council considered re-opening the railway station at Corsham?**

Bus and train operators are commercial organisations and the Council does not have the ability to materially alter frequency or cost of services.

The Council has recently delivered a major investment in the bus network through the Bath Transportation Package, with significant improvements in shelters and real time information services. Funding from the Department for Transport's Better Bus Areas scheme is enabling the introduction of measures to help bus movements in the London Road corridor. There are also plans to introduce a bus lane on the A36 Lower Bristol Road on its approach to Windsor Bridge Junction. The MetroWest rail improvement is also looking to deliver over £100m of investment in the local rail network over the next five to ten years. The proposals are a series of large and small projects that aim to introduce fast and frequent metro rail services across the local area, by making better use of

existing passenger and freight lines and reopening viable disused lines. This may include a station at Corsham. We are also still looking at options for a rail station at Saltford .

### **3.11 What is the Council doing with employers/schools to encourage sustainable travel alternatives?**

Since 2010, the Local Sustainable Transport Fund has been working with schools and other organisations to promote sustainable travel. This has included grant funding for extra facilities, active travel roadshows and free cycle surgeries. A number of our largest employers have worked with the Council to introduce travel to work plans within their organisations.

### **3.12 Are there plans to create High Occupancy Lanes in Bath?**

There are no current proposals to introduce high-occupancy lanes within Bath, but this is something that will be kept under review and if any suitable locations for high-occupancy lanes are identified then these will be assessed on their merits in terms of improving journeys and traffic flow.

### **3.13 Are there plans to impose a weight limit on Cleveland Bridge?**

The Council has previously brought forward proposals for weight restrictions on the A4/A36 corridor through Bath. However, past experience suggests that until an alternative route for HGVs is available, like an east of Bath link road, there it would not be possible to implement a weight limit on Cleveland Bridge as this route is deemed part of the national Primary Route Network.

## **Questions concerning the consultation process**

### **4.1 How can an important decision be taken on the basis of a consultation that was not rigorously controlled?**

A consultation is taken to capture the public's views on a particular subject and is used to inform the decision making process. It is not a referendum, where voting takes place to decide an outcome. The consultation generated a substantial level of response and has highlighted areas of concern that will be given due consideration.

### **4.2 The Council actively encouraged feedback from people who have an interest in supporting a park & ride. How does this make a fair consultation?**

This proposal has regional as well as local importance and the Council wanted the consultation to include as wide a range of views as possible. The opinions of residents adjacent to the Park & Ride must be considered with those who live within Bath, travel within Bath or live in other areas.

### **4.3 Why weren't people given the option to choose 'none of the above' or propose an alternative site?**

A significant number of people chose not to answer this question and this was noted. A comments field was included so that respondents could elaborate on their answer or propose alternatives.

### **4.4 How are people supposed to make a reasoned decision without detailed information for each of the sites?**

The Council believes that the information provided was sufficient for people participating to express a preference. When any site is taken forward to detailed design, a high level of information will be made available through the formal planning consultation process.

#### **4.5 Why were we only given three sites to choose from? How were these decided? Why was Charmy Down not included?**

The 2013 Halcrow report assessed the characteristics of all sites. A set of criteria was applied to this list to determine a shortlist of the most viable and deliverable options; these were:

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

The sites which we considered most closely met these criteria were put forward for the consultation. Charmy Down did not meet the appropriate criteria to be included as a shortlisted site.

#### **4.6 Have the views of stakeholders (eg the National Trust) been taken into consideration?**

We heard from a number of stakeholder organisations through the consultation process. Their views have been captured in the consultation report and will be taken into consideration.

#### **4.7 Will the comments made during the consultation be made publicly available?**

A post consultation report has been completed, which provides an overview of the comments received during the consultation process. This has been made available on the web page at [bathnes.gov.uk/eastpandr](http://bathnes.gov.uk/eastpandr).

## **Questions concerning the costs of an additional park & ride**

#### **5.1 How much will an eastern park & ride cost?**

We estimate between £6m and £10m (not including land costs), though final costs will be dependent on which site is chosen and the final design.

#### **5.2 Would it be necessary to raise the Council Tax?**

The cost of the P&R will depend on the choice of site and will be considered as part of the Council's budget setting process.

#### **5.3 Why not put the money towards public transport or cycling?**

Considerable investment in the public transport network has been made in recent years through the Bath Transportation Package. Likewise, over £1m of improvements have been carried out on the cycle network under LSTF funding. However, these measures alone will not bring the same outcome as the park & ride with regards to managing traffic demands.

#### **5.4 How much has been spent on these proposals to date?**

The November 2014 Cabinet approved a budget of £500,000 to develop solutions to improve access from the east into the city and remove through traffic.

#### **5.5 How much would it cost to develop a park and rail?**

An independent analysis by transport consultants Mott MacDonald estimated that the park and rail scheme for Bathampton junction would cost over £46m. Considerable work would be required to the rail line which makes this unaffordable. Alternative options are being considered in terms of potential linkages to the MetroWest rail scheme, in particular site B could enable a rail-stop to be added at a future date to link with the MetroWest project.

## **5.6 Why not invest the money from a park and ride towards a link road instead?**

We believe that the long term solution requires both – a Park & Ride to address the number of visitors and commuters driving into the city, and a link-road to address the issue of through-traffic; consequently the Council is also investigating possible options for a link road in partnership with Wiltshire Council and Highways England.

## **Questions concerning the way forward**

### **6.1 How has the outcome of the consultation changed the Council's plans? Given the level of opposition to the current proposals, will the Council continue?**

A Park and Ride site to the east of the city has been established in Council policy for many years and is part of the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy, which received cross-party support. The Council still considers that there is a need for a park and ride site on the east of Bath.

The consultation has demonstrated that people have strong feelings about the shortlisted sites and therefore we will be reviewing all options going forward to determine the best location. It has been agreed that a Cross Party Steering Group will look at all the options. In addition, the Scrutiny Panel will look at integrated transport solutions. This is compliant with the Council motion that was approved which is outlined below:

*To note the officer report, including the evidence of need and the results of the consultation.*

*To reaffirm its commitment to delivering an East of Bath Park & Ride as part of an integrated transport strategy which also includes improvements to local rail services through the MetroWest project, investment in safe walking and cycling routes, support for local bus services, and progress towards an East of Bath link-road.*

*To ask that the cross-party Local Development Framework Steering Group review all the options for the location of an East of Bath Park & Ride prior to Cabinet selecting a preferred site early next year, giving due consideration to the following:*

- *The responses received to the East of Bath Park& Ride consultation;*
- *The feasibility and deliverability of each site option;*
- *The costs associated with each site option;*
- *The transport benefits of each site option;*
- *The visual impact of each site option.*

*That, in addition, Cabinet and officers are also asked to give consideration to:*

- *Measures to reduce the number of high-polluting vehicles entering Bath, such as a Low Emission Zone, alongside the delivery of the Park & Ride;*
- *Measures to ensure the protection of bus services to the villages east of Bath alongside the delivery of the Park & Ride;*
- *Measures to mitigate any visual and environmental impacts of the Park & Ride, whichever site is ultimately selected, including looking at 'best practice' examples from elsewhere in the country and abroad.*
- *The potential of providing a shuttle-bus service from the new Park & Ride to the RUH.*



*To ask that Cabinet and officers continue to engage with the Parish Councils and communities on the East of Bath on the proposals for a Park& Ride, and that once a site has been selected and more detailed proposals produced, further public engagement is undertaken as part of the planning process.*

*That, alongside plans for an East of Bath Park & Ride, Cabinet is asked to develop a fully costed business case for an East of Bath link-road and continues efforts to work alongside our local MPs, neighbouring authorities, Highways England, the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership and the Department for Transport to lobby for the necessary funding to deliver this project; and*

*To call for the Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel to undertake an open and transparent public scrutiny, examining a wide range of integrated transport solutions for the East of Bath.*

**6.2 If the Council decides an east of Bath park & ride should go ahead, will further consultation take place?**

Any site taken forward by the Council would be subject to the established planning process, including formal consultation.