

**STATEMENT OF DAVID REDGEWELL TO COUNCIL MEETING 20TH  
JANUARY 2011 ON BEHALF OF SOUTH WEST TRANSPORT NETWORK**

**1) Electrification Gains** : The proposed electrification of the SW Main Railway line would be key to enabling the Greater Bristol Metro improvements taking place. This to include new stations at Saltford, Corsham and Wootton Bassett, plus rolling stock and capacity improvements across the entire travel to work area - which most importantly includes parts of the adjacent counties of Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. It is for this reason that it is imperative that all LTP3 and Strategy Documents across the wider Greater Bristol area - from Swindon to Weston, Taunton to Gloucester, Warminster to Portishead, are synchronised and all make provision for such improvements to take place in the period to 2026.

**2) Guided Bus Threat**: The present suggestion by N.Somerset of a busway, in place of the popular Portishead rail link is a most sad and retrograde step. It should be remembered that Guided Bus schemes are extremely limited in their appeal, are environmentally more intrusive, and the costs of that undertaken at Cambridge have risen to £181 million - a staggering three times its original estimated cost.

**3. Move from MAA to ITA**: SW Transport Network's members, an amalgam of groups who have long lobbied for public transport improvements across the Greater Bristol area, remain committed to pressing the WoEP authorities to advance beyond the MMA to an ITA, which would enable them to gain greater control of both bus and rail timetables for the benefit of residents across the wider travel to work area.

**4. Balance of Commuter Flows**: In this connection, we would remind Members that the passenger flows tend to be at or near equilibrium. The long held view in the Wiltshire authority, that increased employment provision would cut out-commuting, has not been born out in practice. Indeed the numbers of those travelling from Bath into West Wiltshire for work are similar to those travelling from West Wiltshire into Bath.

**5) Wider benefit of TransWilts Rail Service**: Both Banes and the WoEP have long supported improved rail services within their Local Plans and Strategies, and it is heartening to find that the Swindon Authority is also supportive of proposed improvements, to include the TransWilts Line, linking as it could Swindon with both Westbury and Frome - (with its possibility of a link to Radstock), totally removing the necessity of travelling via Bath for a connection.

**6) Importance of Synergy between LTP & Strategies**: All local authorities across the wider travel area must work together to ensure the public transport travel experience is improved. Please note that unless money is made available before 31st March 2011 for the long planned station improvements at Keynsham and payment made to Network Rail/First Properties, funding for that long-awaited improvement will be lost.

**7) Comparative Length of Bus/Rail Journeys:** A copy of the map showing the discrepancy in journey times between rail and bus options, was drawn up for the Bath/Chippenham/Trowbridge triangle and has been supplied to the Cabinet Member. A similar exercise would indicate similar huge time savings in other peripheral areas. Which would any sane person opt for when considering their daily commute? The latest Sustainable Travel guidance issued by Norman Baker MP also advises a study of each town or village in order that direct and sustainable travel paths to their railway stations may be proposed and put forward to his Department for funding.

**8) The Bath Package; Transport Hub; Showcase Bus Route; BRT;** The new, but incomplete, transport interchange (Bus Station unheated; doors malfunctioning; lifts not in place; extension unbuilt) will have, radiating from the Interchange, nine showcase bus routes across the city, low floor, including real time information, bus lanes and new waiting shelters, eventually! This was the nub of the bid, along with a rapid transit route, envisaged with modern, clean-fuel, hybrid vehicles such as used in French cities (or Docklands light railway) to serve the regeneration site of Western Riverside. (It is our view that vehicles suitable for Showcase Bus Routes would not be suitable for a modern BRT system).

**9) Funding Unclaimed** : Money was granted by DfT to purchase electric hybrid vehicles (nine double-decker buses, eight for Ratala PLC and one for Banes). However, we are concerned that the funding for these vehicles has not yet been claimed. It would seem therefore, any review of the rapid transit link from Bathford to Newbridge, including looking at new technologies and different routing, will prove difficult to sustain. Arguments for clean-fuel vehicles, ultralight rail, electric buses, trams, could be scuppered if previous funding offered for vehicles has not been claimed in time.

**10) Newbridge Interchange:** To be used for both bus and rail access (as first recommended by Avon CC) together with an evaluation of Saltford Station and re-evaluation of the route of the Rapid Transit system along the Lower Bristol Road from Newbridge to Windsor Bridge. The scheme must be suitably modern and serve the regeneration zone of Western Riverside, threading through from Southern to Northern Quay, and ending at Bath Spa Interchange.

**11) Rail as Economic Driver:** Rail has always been the spine of the public transport network required for the Greater Bristol Travel to Work Area. However, a glance at the "pteg" website and their Report "Rail in the City Regions" provides evidence of the enormous increase in the percentage of commuter travel which can result from an electrification of a line - 75% of daily commuter traffic achieved. Just imagine the percentage of commuters (and car traffic reductions) which could result from the Greater Bristol Metro electrification improvements across our City Region. All Councils and all shades of MP should unite and work together to ensure residents do benefit at last from this long-awaited Scheme.

**STATEMENT OF AGNES MELLING TO COUNCIL MEETING**  
**20TH JANUARY 2011 IN SUPPORT OF PETITION TO REINSTATE THE**  
**BUS SERVICE OVER PULTENEY BRIDGE, BATH**

As Councillors you will be well used to receiving petitions from the public.

It is the usual practice to “note” a petition. I ask you to take note of this petition and actually do something about the present situation.

We are asking you to return to residents the bus service which without consultation you took away from them in September. As the bus companies refuse to offer a loop service around Laura Place, a solution would involve small buses going over the bridge.

In September Residents expressed their views that the bus service should be re-instated. Instead an embargo was announced. Nothing was to happen until April whilst the situation was assessed. - but we all know that politicians will be electioneering then .

In the mean time residents continue to endure inconvenience and difficulty. I give you one example.

Mary lives in Henrietta St. She is over 85 and has angina. A few years ago Mary was well enough to walk to her doctors’ surgery at the top of Great Pulteney St.(GPS ). Later she found that getting the bus from Laura Place to the doctor’s a big help in avoiding the long cold walk that is GPS.

**In September you took that bus away.** There was no replacement of any kind at Laura Place Mary has now to get a taxi in both directions at a cost of about £8. This situation is so unfair and unjust. Does it cost any of you £8 to visit the doctor?

But to be fair Cllr Gazzard did warn residents that this would happen.

“You can’t have a bus, you will have to get a taxi” was the message

The removal of the bus service was a deliberate move against vulnerable people.

**The re-instatement cannot wait** Residents have had enough.

In November the no 4 was re-routed to provide a bus service for the area, In actual fact it serves very little of the area.

It comes into GPS from the Holborne Museum, travels 100yds into Edward St to a bus stop. It goes nowhere near the Laura Fountain end of the street

The No4 takes you to the city centre and drops you off opposite the Sports Centre on North Parade Bridge, Not very convenient if you want shops, banks the P. O.

The present situation is totally unsatisfactory. It is a half hour service, that finishes around 6pm with no service on Sundays.

One fears that the whole problem has been forgotten and left on the back burner. This is just not acceptable. A significant improvement in the bus service is needed NOW . The present situation is an insult to older citizens We are asking you to immediate open up negotiations with the Bus companies. To keep the already open Bridge open and to acknowledge that the needs of older residents far outweigh the need for a very small open space that will always have emergency vehicles and taxis passing over it.

It is worth noting that the majority over 55% of signatories have come completely unsolicited from patients at the Pulteney Surgery.

**STATEMENT OF MANDA RIGBY TO COUNCIL MEETING 20TH JANUARY  
2011 IN SUPPORT OF PETITION TO REINSTATE THE BUS SERVICE  
OVER PULTENEY BRIDGE, BATH**

I am here to follow up from a public meeting held in September, and a subsequent appearance at Cabinet.

I won't take my whole 3 minutes, I just want to reiterate that the current situation with a lack of buses on Pulteney Bridge is causing real distress, specifically to older and more vulnerable residents.

We have presented a petition which came about fairly organically, and was not widely circulated, so I hope this shows the strength of unsolicited feeling about the issue.

There has to be a position which suits the majority of people and solves whatever problems the closure of the bridge is meant to solve.

I am asking council to do the full consultation which Cllr Haerberling promised, and working together, between us all, it must be possible to work out a solution

My starter for 10 is to model what would happen if the pavement on the bridge was widened, and a one way alternate system implemented. This would solve the perceived problem of danger to pedestrians on the bridge, slow down the traffic to minimise impact on the structure, whilst not depriving people of public transport.

Its a thought, it may not work, but can we have more of them please and in the interim restore some buses going over the bridge.

Thank you

**STATEMENT OF GEORGE BAILEY ON BEHALF OF RADSTOCK ACTION GROUP TO COUNCIL MEETING 20TH JANUARY 2011 ABOUT JOINT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (to be read by David Redgewell)**

**RAIL AND BUS IN THE GREATER BRISTOL AREA INCLUDING MENDIP, SEDGEMOOR, BATH, WILTSHIRE, AND DORSET**

**The Joint Local Transport Plan (B&NES)**

- Rail provides the best method of meeting the objectives of the JLTP.
- It contributes to economic growth for business access and tourism. Good transport links encourage regeneration.
- Climate Change can be offset by reducing dependence on private, inefficient transport.
- Again, taking traffic from roads reduces dangers and pollution.
- Older people find rail easy to use, with easy access.
- Disadvantaged young people can travel to centres of education with relative ease

**Rail**

- Electrification – This is much welcomed, but must include local services as well as main lines. Such upgrading of local services would improve both frequency and vehicles. It is important to lobby for services to continue through Bath to Bristol and Bristol Parkway to Cardiff.
- Suburban Services – Gap-fill electrification permits many local through services, such as through Henbury and the Chippenham / Melksham Trowbridge / Westbury line.
- Protection – Former routes should be protected for future use (e.g Frome - Radstock). It is apparent that private vehicle use will be more and more expensive and the public will want to use what should then be a cheaper form of transport: as it happens, it will also be more environmentally –friendly.
- Station Improvements – Better interchange with ‘bus services, CCTV, disabled ramps, etc. to simplify travelling and for passengers to feel safer. Money made available for improvements to Keynsham must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March, otherwise it will be lost. Bath and North East Somerset with South Gloucestershire should agree to pay the sum to NR / First Properties to protect it.

**Bus**

- Services are being dismantled, including the 20 in Bath and the 12 Bath / Haycombe. The X31, 173 Wells / Bath and the 376 Wells / Bristol are all candidates for reduction.
- If services are cut, or even routes removed, how do you get to work? Only by using the car, if one is available.

## **Other**

There is growing concern that funding for hybrid electric vehicles is being sent back to the Government. This is thought to give the wrong signals as there is then little chance of persuading the Government to “buy-in” to projects such as Ultra Light Rail (hoped for the Bristol Harbour)

## **Conclusions**

- Rail is the best form of mass – transit.
- Buses can readily fill gaps where it is not practical for rail to visit villages.
- Loss of staff will cause not only personal hardship, but also difficulty to rebuild a centre (e.g. the highly skilled department working for the future of transport)
- All services must be protected as far as possible, because, as has been found post-Beeching, it is far harder to reinstate any service when it has previously been removed.

Ensure that the West of England Partnership / Shadow LEP are fully prepared to take over all the transport powers of the RDA.

**STATEMENT OF AMANDA LEON ON BEHALF OF RADSTOCK ACTION GROUP TO COUNCIL MEETING 20TH JANUARY 2011 ABOUT JOINT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

The good news is that 'The JLTP3 is a living document and will be reviewed and updated throughout its life' (JLTP3 p.7:1.5.4). Regardless of what happens today, Radstock Action Group hopes that BANES will continue to input into the plan.

Unfortunately, comparing this with the Core Strategy Transport Modelling Technical Note, it is clear that BANES is prepared to take a less imaginative and active role in planning transport than is required. This is connected with the Bath-centric principles which are apparent in all aspects of BANES response. This package has to last till 2026 and includes working with other partners frequently referred to in the plan, not to mention the point made that we should remember 'that transport doesn't just stop at the border' (JLTP3 p.14:1.2.2).

We are very disappointed that BANES in the paper presented to this meeting has paid virtually no attention to the thrust of the RAG submission to the consultations on the JLTP, having failed to mention that rail must be part of the equation for the future and our suggestions on dealing with the current transport crisis in the area.

The BANES approach refers predominantly to impending higher levels of traffic congestion in Bath, and problems between Bath and Bristol. There is virtually no mention anywhere of the Somer Valley area, or rural areas, and we fail to understand how this can be justified, given the stated JLTP3 Corporate Priorities in the BANES Agenda paper – priorities which BANES hasn't challenged. The JLTP3 will not make 'Bath and North East Somerset a better place to live, work and visit' (Agenda Item 7, p.1:4.1) without the active commitment of the authority to promoting sustainable solutions for the entire area it covers.

BANES planning obsession with increased car use is not matched by any solutions which could encourage alternative means of transport. This is reflected in the Core Strategy Transport Modelling Technical Note which makes it clear that proposals considered by BANES had, in the view of the tests and modelling, in most cases only marginal impact on the central problems. Unfortunately, there has been very limited modelling and testing for Radstock and the wider Somer Valley area. The key driver for policy has been transformed to a drop in the number of homes built and jobs created. This fails to address is the fact that the transport and road infrastructure in Radstock and the surrounding area is no longer able to cope. Talk of change in highway delay and network speeds (Page 5 of unnumbered Technical Note document) is already hopelessly out of date and irrelevant as far as our area is concerned. Assertions suggesting that bus services are improving are untrue, they are getting worse. There simply has to be an imaginative leap forward to adopting rail as the most efficient and sustainable mass transit system available. BANES must include the reinstatement of the line between

Radstock and Frome, at the very least as an aspiration, and encourage the inclusion of a more detailed statement in the JLTP3.

Radstock Action Group recently spoke to the West of England Partnership and was encouraged that they recognise that the support from local people for the rail reinstatement is a good starting point for further discussions that we have requested. They identified such 'localism initiatives' as congruent with the objectives of the WEP and we hope that our discussions with them will continue to be received positively. We want BANES to add its voice to this dialogue, in support of our aims in connection with public transport.



**STATEMENT OF MARTIN BROADBENT ON BEHALF OF GREENWAY  
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION TO COUNCIL MEETING  
20TH JANUARY 2011 ABOUT STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND  
AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT IN CORE STRATEGY**

My name is Martin Broadbent, and I am Chairman of *Greenway!*, the residents' association for the area around Beechen Cliff in Bath. Residents in this area are fearful for the Beechen Cliff School Lower playing field.

A developer has been in pursuit of this playing field for about ten years. However, there are powerful reasons why it should stay as it is. It is not only needed by the school, but is used by the local community; it makes the setting for the Georgian terrace of Devonshire Buildings, and plays a key role in the green open spaces which give its character to our precious World Heritage City.

Hence, in the course of the Local Plan process of 2006 -7, the Council made decisions three separate times that this land should be retained as open space and as playing fields. There was no doubt about the Council's view on the matter. Residents were therefore astonished, when the draft Core Strategy was published last month, to find that a key evidence document prepared for it, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, had judged this land as suitable for early housing development. The reasoning in the Assessment ignores the evidence presented by the Council itself to the Local Plan Inquiry, and is plainly seriously in error.

We are told that the Assessment is not part of the formal Development Plan, but merely an evidence document. That is no reason to treat this document lightly. We are in an uncertain time for planning, with the old local plan system being replaced by something new. Housing land is valuable, and there are those who will not scruple to push hard at a gate which is only lightly latched. The Government's Chief Planner last year advised that, though regional planning was being abolished, the evidence documents behind it can still be material in decisions; that principle will surely apply to this Housing Assessment. If not, then why was it written in the first place? Faced with a developer arguing it as proof that the Council had considered this land anew, and judged it suitable for development, what is the Council, or an appeals Inspector, to do other than grant permission?

On behalf of the residents of Lyncombe and Widcombe, about 70 of whom came to a meeting on a dismal night last week, I ask the Council that Lyn6, the lower Field be removed from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Government for examination.

**STATEMENT OF LIN PATTERSON TO COUNCIL MEETING**  
**20TH JANUARY 2011 ABOUT SAVE OUR 6 & 7 BUSES CAMPAIGN**

We are here today to follow through on two issues. One is the revival of a Public Transport Liaison Panel (PTLP) which will be “a focus for the interchange of views between the Council, public transport operators and users.” This could make a valuable contribution to the Council’s work on climate change by being responsive to peoples’ need for public transport and enabling people to make better use of the bus service that’s available. The full Council needs to back its Executive Member for Services in this endeavour.

Regarding the PTLP, your Executive Member has stipulated one of the four preconditions<sup>1</sup> necessary is that it be adequately resourced. We are aware that the Cabinet Budget meeting is in 2 weeks’ time. We ask you to approve adequate funding for this Panel which will cover public transport for the whole of B&NES.

We question whether meeting the suggested twice a year will fulfil its consultative purpose and the needs of the public. It is to be hoped that once the PTLP is set up the frequency can be reviewed as to whether it can properly fulfil its function. For it to meet, say, 3 times a year, the administration of it must be streamlined. Please note that this question has been raised.

The second issue is the need for Council support to create a 30 minute service on the circular route connecting Larkhall and Fairfield Park in north east Bath with Bath centre. Residents can be left behind by full buses who pass them by full to capacity because of the poor 40 minute frequency.

We have been told by a First Bus Director that the bus company’s Halcrow report does not allow for an improvement to the 6-7 route and the only hope for improvement must come from Council support. We understand when the Executive Member explained he needed to wait until it becomes clear what other routes will be adversely affected by cuts before deciding how to allocate his budget. But we ask does this mean it is acceptable if other routes in Bath also are reduced to 40 minutes? Is this the coming standard? If not, why should the 6-7 densely populated area with many elderly continue to suffer the worst frequency and be asked to wait?

While we appreciate the difficulties involved in doing your job representing the whole of B&NES, our job is to keep this issue to the fore. We ask the Council to support a provisional amount to be negotiated and set aside in the new budget for a ‘de minimus’ arrangement with the bus operator for a trial period, only making up what minimal loss they incur with the additional bus. This should not be as large an amount as First quoted<sup>2</sup>, due to the apparent consistent ridership along the route, which will hopefully increase with a better service.

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<sup>1</sup> The other conditions: that it cover the whole of B&NES; that the bus operators support it; and that it does not duplicate any other meeting.

<sup>2</sup> various figures have been quoted by First, from £65,000 - 85,000, but this needs to be negotiated