

Statement to the 13.7.16 Cabinet meeting of Bath and North East Somerset Council

Thank you chair.

At your 4.5.16 meeting (with supporting rationale and evidence in an annotated version of the statement emailed to Cabinet members, relevant PDS members and officers on 9.5.16),

I expressed concern about the way the P&R East decision is being taken, highlighting

- flaws in the consultative and scrutiny process;
- inadequate analysis of and evidence surrounding associated costs, benefits and risks;
- significant policy incoherence.

However item 10 on today's agenda (update on "work to identify an appropriate location for P&R East" and draft response to CTE PDS Members' recommendations), **provides little assurance that the Cabinet is addressing these concerns.**

Is this just a reflection of your not yet being in a position to respond, or of a party-political agenda taking precedence over the long-term interests of our locality? I'm here today to suggest ways you might demonstrate that it is more the former than the latter.

Although there is much consensus around the nature and severity of transport problems in and around Bath, this is less true of the role of P&R East in addressing them. The Bath Transport Strategy is unclear on the subject, transport policy experts are sceptical, and workshop participants at the 22.3.16 Scrutiny Inquiry saw it as a low priority. Yet the Cabinet continues to assert that P&R East is "critical" and "important". In this context the **lack of explanation as to how and why P&R East meets agreed transport objectives better than alternative infrastructure investments or measures** is a serious omission.

The need for a large P&R East facility was cogently challenged in detailed submissions made to the 22.3.16 Scrutiny Inquiry. Consequently, the Cabinet's response to PDS Members' number one recommendation **needs to demonstrate**, and especially to those who gave so generously of their time and expertise to that inquiry, **that the Cabinet has considered and will accordingly disclose and justify its position on the amount of P&R capacity required** rather than imply that you will tell us only when you have finalised the preferred location.

The update report makes scant reference to the risks associated with the P&R East project, (in fact just those associated with revenue reversion and site acquisition). Given what is at stake for the future wellbeing of our locality, this **exclusion of strategic, social and environmental risks is somewhat disturbing**. I say "somewhat" because you may have good reason for deferring this sort of assessment, such as awaiting the results of the West of England Joint Transport Study consultation, or **complying with the amendment you incorporated into your 29.6.16 devolution resolution**, namely that requiring

"equality and environmental considerations" to be "given meaningful weightings in the economic modelling, the criteria used for selecting projects and the metrics that determine whether the projects have been successful"

Indeed, I look forward to such compliance being evidenced, if not in the Cabinet response to PDS Members in 12 days time, well ahead of the announcement of the Cabinet's "final decision on site(s) selection" "later this year".

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