

Statement to scrutiny 25th July 2016

I was very dejected indeed when I read Response 5.5 from Cabinet on page 48 of your papers. No response at all the scrutiny statement that 'the population has concerns around the meadows proposal' and, even worse, that they will be "considering how to meet the need for a P&R to the east of the city and this will be discussed at a future meeting".

There has to this day, never been a clear needs analysis/compelling case put forward to justify a P&R to the East and it is this Panel's job to have got to the bottom of that. The whole thrust of the getting About Bath Strategy was that evidence should be provided of the need for a park and ride to the east. Anecdotal evidence or urban myth that it is needed just will NOT suffice. The whole case has been based on wildly differing forecasts from a succession of external consultants presented to Councillors in a piecemeal way, rather than in a single compelling document.

At the time of the consultation last year, it was stated that the car park was required to improve congestion and pollution.

Then there was the CH2MHill report which showed that an Eastern park and ride would lead to a negligible improvement in pollution at times and a worsening of it at other times.

That complicated report appears to have been quietly shelved in favour of Mott McDonald (for a second time), presumably because it did not provide evidence of need. Their report showed an entirely different pattern to peoples' behaviour than that which we know to be the case. For example, it showed people staying late into the evening in car parks in a way which we know is not the case because the evidence collected from the barriers in the car parks does not support this. At one point we were very loosely told that the justification for this car park was all the new housing that Bath will have to provide, but not knowing as yet where that will be sited!!!

And let's not forget, not a single person has ever been asked about whether they would use an Eastern P&R. The surveys carried out in 2009 and 2014 were conducted right across the city and didn't include any specific P&R questions (just start point, destination and whether they paid for parking). BANES still do not, to this day, really know why people are in their cars and therefore cannot be sure of what problem they are

solving.

We do know for sure that the school run constitutes a third of Batheaston traffic. Who can challenge the fact that getting around the city at rush hour is a breeze currently compared to term time? And what about the lorries, each of which produces the emissions of 5 cars. Ditto for them.

We do in fact know however that park and rides aren't well used in Bath (on average 41% full daily) and that **planned overspill** is what is needed.

Equally if the devolution deal is accepted later this year, then there is a fresh new chance to look at buses, which were beyond the reach of the 2014 transport strategy. Until the impact of potential public bus solutions are understood then there should be no costly and irreversible decision taken on a large-scale P&R.

So there we have it. The Cabinet still desperately juggling sites on which to place a car park which will cost the public purse £10 million when we have no solid slate of evidence that a park and ride would address the issues. But even more meaningful for me is the fact that I, as ward member am accosted on this issue daily, not only where I live but as I travel around the City. I have yet to find ONE SINGLE PERSON who believes that putting a park and ride on the meadows is the right thing to do. Cabinet members – yes. Officers - yes. People living in Bath and beyond – not one. This is borne out by the fact that almost 12 and a half thousand people have signed the petition opposing the concreting of this green space to date. And that is because it flies in the face of common sense. So I would ask this panel to demand a body of evidence, carefully and accurately written regarding the case for a park and ride to the east – and the sooner the better.