

Andrew Mercer Statement to Cabinet 14.11.2016 (presented by Christine Boyd)

Willful Blindness: Why we ignore the obvious at our peril

Last week Andrew Mercer promised to give you a book; *Willful Blindness: Why we ignore the obvious at our peril*, by Bath author, Margaret Heffernan.

Willful blindness is where a person seeks to avoid liability for a wrongful act by intentionally keeping himself unaware of the facts. Is this going on in Bath?

The evidence you thought you had to support a park and ride to the east has evaporated with the publication of new reports for the planning inspector.

A large park and ride can no longer be justified

And yet you ignore these facts and carry on with a plan that is irrational and therefore potentially unlawful.

You risk a planning application being refused by your own planning committee, or else certain judicial review.

You end up in a place where the Enterprise Area is at risk, because development on this scale must be supported by a credible transport plan and you have not sought an alternative to P&R

And finally you risk your administration being marred by failure and the pendulum of control swinging back to the Liberal Democrats, as has happened at every other election since BANES was created.

You promised to stop Bath stalling; but now the evidence shows that P&R won't solve the congestion problem.

Are you going to continue with the unworkable Transport Strategy; or are you going to keep your word and demand officers find a viable alternative?

The clock is ticking. You don't have a policy or a site and so can't make a Cabinet decision this year. It will then take three to four months to get a planning decision and at least six months before a judicial review can be heard. It may be 2018 before you have the answer – and by that time it will be too late to find an alternative plan if it all goes wrong.

Why risk a park and ride plan failing again, when you could break the mold and go for something that is achievable and effective?