

Annie Kilvington's Statement to Special Cabinet Meeting 25.1.17

The Placemaking Plan on which the right to build a 4th Park & Ride scheme depends, is still in draft. Officers want changes to it, and these are out to consultation. So I was alarmed at a number of statements in the Cabinet Report designed to persuade you that there are no placemaking objections to the development proceeding.

The worst of these is Paragraph 8.1 of the Report, which tells Cabinet that the Planning Inspector has accepted that need for P & R has been identified. This is simply untrue and the Placemaking Programme Officer has confirmed to me in writing that this is merely the Council's interpretation of events. The Planning Inspector will not pre-judge this, and she has made clear that, based on the representations she receives, may well issue further modifications to the plan herself. Paragraph 8.1 is a major conclusion of the Council report and is grossly misleading.

I attended the Placemaking hearings last year and heard B&NES' Transport Officer tell the Inspector that need for a 4th P & R had been established - way back in 2009. The Planning Inspector asked whether the Council therefore had no intention to re-test need. B&NES Planning Policy Officer was forced to clarify that need would indeed have to be tested. Future tense. The Inspector, at no time in those hearings or subsequently, expressed any view as to whether need had been established.

Meanwhile, Council officers have presented to you the results of their internal appraisal of a number of alternative sites, before concluding that they prefer F. None of these sites has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment or had the impact of national and local planning policy properly weighed (including against the emerging placemaking plan itself), in the public forum that placemaking requires. Indeed, as far as the Planning Inspector is concerned, the one site definitely not earmarked for development is Site F – since this is the site expressly dismissed from discussion in the 2013 Halcrow report.

Councillors, the seven pillars of duty which guide you in your decision taking - your duties of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, all point the same way, and require you to reject the proposals before you and demand that the placemaking process is respected, and that site selection is subjected to it.