

I read the council press release last week and was shocked by the lies and inaccuracies that it contained. It was suggested that the park and ride would reduce congestion and pollution. This is in fact untrue and the council have previously admitted that their consultant's report stated that any effect on congestion would be minimal in fact so minimal as to be considered negligible.

The press release talked about roads being at capacity at peak times and there being a need for action before the congestion worsened. Yes in term time the roads are congested at peak times but during the school holidays this is not the case. Does this not then suggest that a major part of the problem is school run traffic? How will a park and ride make any impact at all on this traffic? The council should spend some of the 16.5million it is intending to spend on this white elephant on improving public buses for our school children. Many children travel from Batheaston, Bathford, Bathampton, Larkhall and further out in Wiltshire every day to and from school. Very few of them catch school buses because there is no decent and affordable service provided to give access to the main central Bath secondary schools. This means parents get in their cars and they drive their children to school – they will never now or in the future be driving their children to a car park on Bathampton Meadows so how will the situation at peak times on the London Road be altered by this solution? The council are not giving any answers to these questions – they are merely stating that congestion and pollution levels will be eased without providing any evidence of this being the case.

The council do not know whether people travelling at peak times will use the park and ride because they have made no attempt to find out who these people are or whether a park and ride will be used by them. The very fact that London Road and Batheaston High Street are virtually clear at peak times in the school holidays should lead one to wonder whether the traffic congesting these roads is something to do with the schools – you would think they might have thought about this and taken this into account in their decision. But as congestion and pollution are truly not of any concern to the council this fact has passed them by. Why mention congestion and pollution in the press release when we all know that the facts show that a park and ride on the meadows will do nothing to impact on either of these problems. The council are making emotive statements without any evidence to back them up.

It was promised in the manifesto that a real difference would be made to residents in terms of congestion in the first 5 years. What does the council intend to do to achieve this promise? By their own admission a park and ride will not do this. What will the benefit be of this park and ride either now or in the future to the residents of Bath?

Tim Warren spoke about the future of Bath and the planned growth of the city in terms of housing and employment. Why would the people in these new houses use a park and ride to the east of the city? Where are all these houses intended to be built? Who are all these commuters who are supposedly going to be heading into Bath for all these new jobs. What evidence is there of their need for a park and ride? None of us can predict the future but the evidence of today shows that commuters are not using the existing park and rides so why would they in the future? We do not know how the car will be used in the future so how can spending this extortionate amount of our money on a possibility be justified?

This council needs to admit that they have got it wrong. To regroup, listen to the evidence and come up with a proper solution which will be sustainable and achievable both now and in the future allowing Bath to grow and survive without destroying the green setting which makes it so special.