

# Address to B&NES Council Special Cabinet Meeting on East Bath Park and Ride

The Guildhall, Bath

25 January 2017

In 2004, this Council adopted conclusions of the Bristol, Bath to South Coast Study in its transport policies which included: *"There is scope for improving both bus and rail services to encourage a greater modal share for public transport."*...

5 years later in 2009 it decided to grow the numbers of car journeys instead, by permitting itself extensions of park and rides and a new fourth facility East of Bath...

A further 5 years later, in its 2014 Transport Strategy for Bath, Council re-stated its 2004 aims in identifying the need for its planned Enterprise Area to: *"...focus initially on office and related development at the eastern end of the site and have limited car parking. Subsequent housing development should also focus on accessibility by non-car modes."*...

A year later in 2015, in stark contrast to that mixed-use development vision, increasing car journeys were again proposed with: *"The Enterprise Area development is necessary to ensure future employment growth, new jobs and housing. Therefore, an additional Park & Ride to the east of Bath is essential."*

These short extracts are from an extensive history that records conflicts between claims of intent to establish sustainable strategies but in which there is clear evidence of intentional duplicity in carrying out transport theories and practices, policies and actions.

For example: *"Georgian architecture achieves its effect not through individual buildings alone, but by combining...with an intensive Green Infrastructure (GI) setting... The WHS designation makes it a top priority to protect and enhance this in terms not just of the immediate settings of listed buildings but in terms of long-range views within, into and out of the WHS.*

*...There is an opportunity here to make the point that the benefits from GI can be harmed not only by development on green areas, but by excessive traffic which impairs the enjoyment of them, and that it is therefore important that development not only avoids greenfield land, but is carried out in ways which will not lead to a demand for highway improvements which themselves will inhibit the benefits to be obtained from the GI."*

These words written in May 2012, as part of B&NES Council's own emerging Green Infrastructure and WHS policies, were not from opponents of Eastern park and ride but one of its most vocal supporting and lobbying organisations the Federation of Bath Residents Association.

As an expression of policy based on the dubious advice of a clique of Council officers your leader said of a 4th park and ride: *"This project has been discussed and debated for nearly thirty years."*

So not because of but despite history and an overwhelming weight of evidence against it over those 30 years, we were led into more bogus debate while those decades, of finding no proof of need for it, were inexplicably discounted.

This meeting therefore ignores both the majority "No" of public consultations and your Council's divisive attempts to subvert the clear democratic consensus.

You might want to carry on, trying to convince voters that modelling forecasts are evidence of need, as you did when faced with 71 qualified objections and 242 queries. Or downplay how in subsequent "scrutiny" your officers dishonestly presented one option as the work of Avon Wildlife Trust who had no knowledge of it whatsoever.

You might dismiss refusals to serve the public by not answering questions germane to proposals, providing evidence of the true nature of your openness and transparency claims. Or try to forget the repeated misleading in false claims of environmental benefits. Or deny that a 2016 meeting between a senior officer and media professional, discussing the possibilities of countering factual objections by creating a 'Post Truth' web site, ever took place.

You may even carry on as deniers of adverse impacts of and demand for park and ride usage, or the implications of October 2015 "Frequently Asked Questions" which contained at least 15 separate falsehoods - not including the fact they were not frequently asked questions.

You might decide to ignore that without independently verified traffic studies, to prove need, no robust Business Case citing benefits to outweigh harms can be made. Or choose to overlook how your officers are now resorting to gross misleading on mitigation and misrepresenting the initial findings of the Planning Inspector.

You have arrived at this meeting despite the truths of these examples, maybe in irresponsible hope that ensuing challenges might be restricted to, or managed as, simple planning matters.

I recommend you do not delegate any decision to officers responsible for what is stated here and only apply the viable alternatives to park and ride, to avoid another 30 years of damaging, adversarial, extremely expensive, unnecessary work.

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