



Statement to B&NES Scrutiny Panel on East of Bath Park and Ride, 22 February 2017

My name is Tom Marshall: I am a Trustee of the Bath Preservation Trust and Chair the Trust's Architecture and Planning Committee.

The request to call-in the Park & Ride decision quoted a number of points from BPT's submission to Cabinet, so I shall not repeat them here, though we have recirculated them to the panel.

I should like to make four points.

First, it is highly regrettable that elements of the decision-making around the East of Bath P&R seem to have become embroiled in local party politics. I wish to emphasise that BPT is a charity and has no interest in any party political agendas in relation to this or any other issue. Moreover we believe that short term politics have no place in the issues of either transport or the management and protection of the World Heritage Site.

Secondly, we are extremely concerned that the Cabinet meeting was substantially misled in relation to the requirements of Historic England in relation to site selection. In a letter dated 23 September 2016 Historic England wrote to B&NES suggesting that it would be premature to undertake site selection before the Planning Inspector's judgement had been received. This letter also recommended formal consultation with themselves and DCMS about process. In a further letter dated 23rd January 2017, a short extract of which only was read to the Cabinet meeting, the points were re-emphasised. It was further stated that a robust Historic Impact Assessment should precede site selection.

Thirdly, we are concerned that, against Historic England advice, the Planning Inspector's response **was** pre-empted and, it appears, the intervention of the Inspector was misrepresented in the paper to Cabinet.

Fourthly, we are concerned that Cabinet members, in taking their decision, repeatedly used the word that they 'hoped' or 'believed' that the P&R was a necessary step in solving Bath's transport problems. We would encourage Cabinet members to take a decision based on evidence; that of their own consultants and others, which show that the eastern Park and Ride will not achieve their hoped-for benefits.

In taking its decision last month, was the Cabinet, despite being the responsible managing body for the World Heritage Site, explicitly choosing to ignore Historic England's strong advice about appropriate process? Were they explicitly choosing to pre-empt the conclusion of the Placemaking Examination? Had they been advised by officers to do so?

Bath Preservation Trust supports the need for reduction of pollution and congestion in Bath but we see no evidence that a P&R on this site will deliver these public benefits, while it will in turn significantly harm the green setting of the city. We believe that the Cabinet have taken a decision on a site for the East of Bath P&R without due consideration of the actual evidence and the actual responsibilities and requirements of their duty to the setting of Bath World Heritage Site as advised to them by Historic England. Investment in research and measures which actually get people out of their cars at the most congested times of day would be a rational response to Bath's traffic problems. We encourage the Cabinet to reconsider their flawed decision, this time with a transparent process approved by Historic England, taking fully into account the advice and evidence they have been offered.