

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	19 July 2017	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
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TITLE:	Park & Ride East of Bath	
WARD:	Bath Avon North, Lambridge and wards in Bath	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 – Our plan to get Bath moving		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

At a Special Cabinet meeting on 25 January 2017, Cabinet considered an extensive report on the need for a Park & Ride (P&R) to the east of Bath and authorised the Strategic Director, Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways to make all necessary arrangements to implement a P&R at either site B or site F, subject to certain conditions.

This report outlines the work undertaken since January 2017.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 Cease progressing site B as a possible location for a Park & Ride site to the east of Bath for access safety reasons and because it has not been possible to negotiate the purchase of the land within a reasonable timescale; and to cease progressing site F because of potential access safety issues.
- 1.2 Continue to implement new opportunities emerging from the Joint Transport Plan for the West of England and new mayoral transport powers associated with the

recently created West of England Combined Authority to address the transport issues facing Bath and North East Somerset to ensure that we sustain economic growth and support the provision of new homes.

- 1.3 To continue to investigate and implement approved schemes as identified in paragraph 4.13 of this report.

## **2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 2.1 The resource issues and potential costs of developing and delivering P&R have been set out in the 25 January 2017 Cabinet Report.
- 2.2 The balance of the additional £0.5m approved by Cabinet (25 January 2017) to develop the next steps for P&R could be reallocated to support the investigation into alternative options of addressing the traffic problems in the city, as specified in section 6 of this report but this would be subject to further scheme(s) definition and subsequent Council approval to accept this new scheme into the Capital Programme
- 2.3 The work to define the further scheme options can be delivered within existing staff and financial resources. There are potential funding streams currently available through Central Government, Department for Transport grants and the West of England Combined Authority that could be used to fund transport related strategies and projects.
- 2.4 It should also be noted that the expenditure undertaken so far has primarily been related to traffic modelling and feasibility studies which can therefore be used as evidence to support any alternative proposals that come forward related to addressing congestion, air quality and the economic benefits of reducing traffic entering the city from the east.
- 2.5 Should a scheme not be developed the expenditure to date would be at risk of revenue reversion, this is approximately £1.1m. The value attached to this risk is now significant, although some of this work may contribute to developing the alternative approach set out in 2.3 above. In the event that an alternative solutions cannot proceed the funding of the revenue reversion costs will need to be considered by Council.

## **3 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The decision taken by Cabinet on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 was called in on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017. The Monitoring Officer verified the call in request on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and the Communities, Transport and Environment PDS Panel met on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to hear the call in. The Panel dismissed the call in and the decision detail is recorded and available on the Council website.
- 3.2 As a result of Purdah applying to both the West of England Combined Authority Election of Mayor and the General Election, this is the first opportunity to bring forward this report for consideration.

## **4 THE REPORT**

- 4.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 25 January, Cabinet noted that both sites F and B could deliver the required outcomes for a P&R site to the east of Bath. The decision was subject to call in as indicated in 3.1 above.

- 4.2 However, Cabinet authorised that site F with 800 or 1,200 spaces should be promoted as the preferred site for a new P&R east of Bath if site B (with 800 spaces) was not deliverable within a reasonable timescale and subject to satisfactory arrangements for the purchase of the site and agreement from Highways England on access. Cabinet delegated authority to the Strategic Director Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, to make all reasonable arrangements to implement the decision.
- 4.3 The Cabinet also approved all necessary expenditure to enable the site to be secured and requested the development of a full business plan for appropriate executive approval.
- 4.4 Negotiations with the landowners/landowner's agent over a reasonable period have failed to reach a suitable agreement for the land purchase required for Site B.
- 4.5 Whilst Highways England support the principle of P&R they have indicated that any approval for a new access from the A4 would only be determined through a planning application process and submission of technical information to demonstrate that a new access would be safe. Demonstrating an access is safe would require a design to be compliant with nationally recognised design standards and have the capacity to cope with likely traffic volumes and the additional demand that may be created by events. For example, Christmas markets, university open days and other functions likely to attract an increase in the number of vehicles wanting to use the site.
- 4.6 At the time of writing the report in January 2017 officers believed that it would be possible to achieve an acceptable junction design as specified in the technical standards. However, as explained in the report, additional technical work would need to be undertaken with regards to road safety in order to be reassured that safety would not be compromised.
- 4.7 Having undertaken further design work officers consider that access into site B cannot be safely achieved due to the close proximity of the proposed access to the junction of the A46/A4. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges sets out the requirements in TD22/06 for a weave length between junctions. In simple terms this is the length of road required for traffic travelling between junctions to move into the correct lane and avoid side –swipe collisions. If the design requirements of the urban road standard is applied, the absolute minimum weave length requirement is 240m and the maximum weave length that can be achieved for site B is 258m. Given the likely high volume of usage which could then lead to queueing at the access point officers are not able to recommend that safe access can be achieved into the site.
- 4.8 Since the Cabinet Meeting in January 2017 officers, consultants and Highways England have given careful consideration to whether the access should be assessed against the urban or rural standard. Given the road layout, location and character of the A4 road at the point of the proposed access for either site it is highly likely that the road would be deemed a 'rural all purpose' road. As such there is a desirable minimum weave length of 1km.
- 4.9 Both accesses into sites B and F fall well short of this requirements. After much consideration officers therefore conclude that it will not be possible to achieve a suitably safe access for the travelling public and to satisfy the requirements of

the highway design standards set out in the Design Manual for roads and Bridges especially for site B under the current standards. Whilst site F provides a greater opportunity to design an acceptable access, it is not considered appropriate to invest further expenditure on the design of an access road without the certainty from Highways England that it will be supported.

4.10TD22/06 weaving length requirements are set out below. 'All-Purpose' relates of all road user types, as summarised in the table.

<i>Road Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Desirable Minimum Weaving Length</i>
Rural Motorways	70mph motorway in a rural area.	2km
Rural All-Purpose Roads	A road that is generally not subject to a local speed limit.	1km
Urban All-Purpose Roads	Within a built up area, either a single or dual carriageway with a speed limit of 40mph or a dual carriageway with a speed limit of 60mph or less.	Design flows are inserted into figure provided in Appendix A (minimum length of weaving section) then compare to the design speed related to the absolute minimum weaving length. The greater of the two values should be selected (provided signing requirements can be met).

4.11Although site F did achieve a planning consent previously, it has been made clear by Highways England to the council's officers that any submission to Highways England would be assessed as an entirely new application. As technical design standards have changed since the former access was approved in 2009 a new junction design for site F would be required. The close proximity of Mill Lane bridge provides a physical constraint on the amount of space to modify the proposed junction into site F and provide adequate safety for road users.

4.12Therefore, officers recommend that both site B and F are rejected on potential highway safety grounds. However, the technical work undertaken to support the report to Cabinet in January 2017 identified that the provision of a new P&R east of Bath would help to meet an identified need to reduce car journeys into the city as part of a wider transport strategy. Consequently, Cabinet should continue to explore opportunities to reduce the number of private vehicles entering the city. The creation of the West of England Combined Authority and the further work undertaken since the Cabinet decision in January 2017 provide an opportunity to consider whether other transport options could be brought forward as part of a package to support the delivery of the Council's policies and strategies. The review of options will also allow for the prioritisation of schemes across the West of England to take place in order to ensure that infrastructure is delivered in the most appropriate way to support communities. The work undertaken to-date (i.e. evidence and analysis gathering) can be used to support this. These are explored below.

4.13 Officers are continuing to deliver an integrated package of works including objectives within the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy Action Plan, for example the provision of variable messaging signs from the M4, and progressing the delivery of the Coach Parking and Parking Strategies. In addition, officers with the Cabinet Member will continue to:

- work with Highways England to deliver an A36-A46 link road.
- hold discussions with WECA and South Gloucestershire Council about improving the route to and from Lansdown P&R, particularly at the junction of Freezing Hill Lane and the A420, to make Lansdown a more attractive option for those travelling from the M4/A46
- improve access to Odd Down P&R (e.g. repositioning the bus lane and opening it up to cars accessing the P&R)
- hold further discussions with Wiltshire about potential opportunities further out from the city, potentially linked to an extended rail service
- undertake the scoping study for a light rail system (tram) in Bath and whether this could open up future opportunities to remove vehicles from the city
- continue a study of 'School Run' transport needs and solutions and consider any further opportunities to expand the existing 'safe routes to school' programme

4.14 It should be noted that the Council will be able to work with the new West of England Combined Authority so that the issues affecting Bath, and any possible solutions, can be considered on a sub-regional basis.

4.15 Therefore, it is recommended that Cabinet receive a further report on the alternative options available to reduce congestion, improve air quality and support economic growth by encouraging more alternative forms of transport to the car, restricting access to large vehicles, providing alternatives for through traffic and providing the right mix of parking in the centre and on the outskirts of the city.

4.16 'Our plan to get Bath moving' at appendix 1, highlights a package of joined up transport improvements and looks ahead to help meet rising demand and reduce the impact of traffic on local people.

## **5 RATIONALE**

5.1 Further work conducted by officers since January 2017 indicates that a suitably safe access for visitors, residents and other users of the P&R cannot be achieved and therefore sites B and F cannot be pursued further.

## **6 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 Members will be aware that 21 sites have been reviewed as part of the evaluation process to find a suitable site for an east of Bath P&R and 19 of these were discounted prior to the Cabinet meeting in January 2017. No additional sites for a P&R to the east of Bath have been identified beyond Sites B and F.

## 7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member for Transport, Head of Legal services and Section 151 Officer have been consulted on the report. This report is being taken under the General Exception rule of the Council's Constitution (Part 4B, Access to Information, Rule 15). The Chair of the Communities, Transport & Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel has been informed. The comments of the Chief Executive, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer were also obtained. The Strategic Director has been consulted. A decision taken under this notice cannot be called in.

## 8 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	Louise Fradd – Strategic Director Place Martin Shields – Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
<b>Background papers</b>	Cabinet Meeting reports and Minutes 4 May 2016 and 25 January 2017. Communities, Transport and Environment PDS Panel met on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to hear the call in. Papers available on the Council's website.
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	