

Christine Boyd statement to Cabinet 19th July 2017

After 2 years of fighting I should be happy with today's report, and of course I am pleased the EOB P&R is not going ahead. But as a concerned citizen the experience has left me angry that this could have happened and with a determination that it should never happen again.

The council knew in 2013 that there was an access problem to site B – the Halcrow report said it would require a departure from normal safety standards that would need to be agreed with Highways England (*Accommodating an access junction with the bypass to the west of Mill Lane is thus likely to require a 'Departure' from standard with respect to TD22/06; which would need to be agreed with the Highways Agency as the bypass form part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN)*). So why was site B ever in the frame and how did it ever become the preferred site?

This is just one example of the failure to consider evidence before coming up with a solution. We now also know that the existing P&R sites are only half full and that the east P&R would not have helped the London Road to any significant degree.

Under these circumstances how could the council have got a P&R on the meadows through planning when the benefits would have to be weighed against harm? The benefits were so few and the harm so great.

And so now the council drops park and ride and pulls some new tricks from the hat, a tram here and a link road there. A response to those who say, 'something must be done!'

We of course 'something must be done' – but it must be the right thing, and finding the right thing begins with gathering empirical evidence.

We all know Bath has a traffic problem particularly at certain times of day and certain times of the year. What we don't know is the detail of where the traffic is going and why:

- Are people going to work, shopping, visiting or on the school run?
- Are HGVs and LGV's 'through traffic' or delivering in the city too?
- How much traffic is due to very short local journeys and do sustainable alternatives exist that meet people's need?

Until we understand what contributes to this problem we can't possibly know if a bypass or a tram is the best and most cost effective solution.

Our council has failed to answer, or even to ask these questions.

The BMA therefore joins the Bath Preservation Trust and others in calling for an independent study and assessment of evidenced-based patronage data so as to understand people's travel behaviour and needs. We look forward to talking to the Council further about assembling this information.