

B&NES Cabinet Meeting 7.2.18

The draft parking strategy has a “commitment to put residents first”. That includes me. I don’t live in the city centre, but just that bit further out. If I drive in, I will sit sandwiched between lorries on Cleveland Bridge, both the perpetrator and the victim of noxious emissions and my journey will take longer than by bike. Occasionally I *do* drive in. But I should be penalised for my choice, for creating traffic churn in inner city streets, not rewarded by a 10% discount. Increased local traffic is the inevitable result of a Strategy dedicated to increasing in availability and decreasing in price short term on-street parking.

This strategy has chosen *which* of its residents to put first; prioritising those who want to pop to the shops over those who want to breathe clean air. It’s a strategy completely schizophrenic about its duty to contribute to reducing air pollution. According to the CH2M Hill summary of consultation responses the most common concern was that the Strategy did not sufficiently address air quality. Yet respondents’ suggestions around car free centres, congestion charging, work place parking levies, school traffic, and public transport pricing were all deemed outside the remit of the Strategy. Finessing car park revenue it can do; contribute to a conversation around congestion it apparently cannot.

What would DEFRA make of this Strategy, and why haven’t you asked them? I have learned that you’ll include the Parking Strategy in the package of measures you hope will convince DEFRA you’re on course to eliminate illegal levels of pollution in the shortest possible timeframe. I also know the results of the ANPR survey conducted in the Autumn are imminent; you may already have the headlines. This dataset will give us a robust, objective, upto-date, insight into car volumes and movements /within the city. Census data tells us we, the *residents* of Bath, are the source of our traffic problem; the ANPR results should corroborate or deny this for us. If we are, then how can offering inexpensive short term parking to residents be part of the solution? If we are not, what else will the ANPR tell us which might inform the Strategy?

You don’t intend to revisit this Strategy for 5 years once implemented. It is reckless and irresponsible to finalise it without analysing the ANPR Data and ensuring that DEFRA agrees it will make a meaningful contribution to reducing air pollution.

Annie Kilvington