

Park And Ride Contract: A missed opportunity

By September 2014 Walk Ride Bath, then Cycle Bath, had begun working with the council and First Group to develop a trial of carrying bikes on the front of buses as many countries do around the world. By September 2016, after working with Bath's ex-MP Ben Howlett, ex-cllr Matt Cochrane, and the Department for Transport, the proposed trial routes that were decided on were the Park & Ride routes given their simple origin/destination drop off points.

At the last hurdle the DVSA said the front racks were simply too dangerous and would not allow the trial to proceed. Further discussions to consider carrying bikes on buses stalled as the Park and Ride Service contract did not have a clause requiring the service provider to carry bikes. I was told, at the time, that any further progress on this could only be made the next time the council renegotiated the Park and Ride Services contract.

That time is now and my understanding is that the council has failed to include a clause to require the service provider to carry bikes on buses. This is extremely disappointing given the immense amount of work that previously went into this and a real opportunity to create a step change in cycle/bus integration for the city has been lost. Many noisy residents complain about the council's justified investment in active travel infrastructure arguing that Bath is simply too hilly to cycle. This was the solution we've all been waiting for.

I would ask this council to urgently engage with the new service provider and ask them to allow bikes on buses to be carried from the valley floor to the Park and Ride sites so that every bike journey in Bath is down hill.

A bus manufacturer sells a flexible in bus fold down double bike carrier that replaces one fold down seat. Triple rear bus bike racks are commercially readily available. Both carriers are being used by many bus service providers around the UK. Retrofitting a bus is a very simple task. Each Park & Ride route could theoretically carry 5 bikes up Bath's hills every 12 minutes. It should be noted that boarding priority for use of the space for wheelchairs and pushchairs can be given over cycles.

This is a singular moment in time when the council has the opportunity to address a major perceived problem with cycling in the city and it looks like it has failed. Will the council now urgently work with the newly selected provider and WECA to get an agreement in place to allow the council to retrofit internal and external rear bike racks on all Park and Ride Bus services so that Bath can have its own superior "Trondheim" Bike Lift?

Thank You
Adam Reynolds