

Statement on Park & Ride

July 10, 2017

B&NES Council has finally made the right decision in relation to a proposed Park and Ride on Bathampton Meadows. We regret that so much time, money and energy has been spent in developing a scheme which was so harmful and would have brought so few benefits, but the decision is better taken now, when no landscape harm has been imposed, than later.

We note that the reason given by the Council is to do with highways safety - facts that were known in February this year. This reasoning fails to take into account the substantial harm to the green belt and the setting of the World Heritage Site which Bath Preservation Trust, the National Trust, Historic England and others have consistently drawn to the Council's attention. These issues were also highlighted in the Planning Inspector's recent required amendments to the local plan which requires that any Park and Ride requires 'clear and convincing justification for any harm to the World Heritage Site, with the degree of public benefit weighted against the level of harm', and to demonstrate that there is 'a requirement for a green belt location and it preserves the openness of the Green belt'. In our view neither of these requirements could have been fulfilled by a site on the Meadows irrespective of highways safety.

While the Council has highlighted the ways in which they wish to plan for transport in the future, there is still no explicit commitment to commissioning independent evidence-based patronage data from primary sources to discover where people are travelling to and from and what would encourage them to get out of their cars. Without such data, any other major projects, including an A36/A46 link, cannot meaningfully be considered. We will be happy to work with the Council and others on schemes which focus on the outcome of car use reduction in and around Bath, in particular by improvements in public transport and use of other existing major roads such as the A350 and the A420, as the only way to reduce the congestion problems in the City Centre.