

Q&A: Getting around Bath – draft transport strategy

What's the big idea?

The vision is that:

Bath will enhance its unique status by adopting measures that promote sustainable transport and reduce the intrusion of vehicles, particularly in the historic core.

This will enable more economic activity and growth while enhancing Bath's special character and environment and improving the quality of life for local people.

What would this mean in reality?

Key proposals include:

- developing a walking/cycling strategy to make Bath the UK's most walkable city;
- better management of HGVs in the city;
- continued expansion of Park and Ride sites and;
- a new location for coaches to park after dropping off visitors in the centre.

Why do we need to change things?

It's crucial that we address traffic issues. Bath is an important World Heritage City; we must look after the environment of the city whilst ensuring it's a great place to live and work.

We have to reduce congestion and allow people to move around to make our long-term economic strategy for the area work.

We need to balance the needs of car users who live in the rural areas around Bath with the needs of the city itself. We want to reduce car dominance in the city centre.

What are the desired outcomes?

- Improved travel choices
- Better experiences for residents and visitors
- More business opportunities and higher productivity
- Fewer car journeys, healthier lifestyles
- Reduced carbon emissions, addressing climate change
- Better air quality, improved safety and health
- Sustainable development and delivery of the area's Core Strategy

Who has put together this strategy?

The strategy has been put together by an independent company Mott MacDonald, a global management, engineering and development consultancy which has taken an independent view based on the evidence available.

It has been scrutinised by the Bath Transport Commission an independent advisory body which has a remit to:

- develop the overall transport strategy for the city
- advise on how this strategy can:
 - support and facilitate sustainable economic growth,
 - reduce congestion
 - improve air quality and
 - improve sustainable access.
 - protect the heritage and improve the amenity of the City

The commission – chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE - advises the Council on the overall strategy to traffic management in the city and specifically on:

- Development of future major transport schemes.
- securing government support/funding for BTP;
- cross district HGV movements;
- a strategy for motorists;
- public transport
- role of cycling and
- a programme for the implementation of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy

What's the background to this?

At its meeting in April 2013 Bath & North East Somerset Council agreed that a new Transport Strategy should be prepared for the city of Bath in the light of the housing and economic growth proposed in the Council's agreed Draft Core Strategy and the emerging Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area.

The strategy is needed to support this growth agenda but also to improve the environment within the city itself which is damaged by the impact of traffic and congestion.

The Cabinet approved a budget of £140,000 for the development of the strategy and consultation around this.

The Council commissioned Mott MacDonald, to look at the evidence and come up with a draft strategy, scrutinised by Bath Transport Commission.

The draft was launched at the Bath City Conference on April 30, 2014.

What's the process for agreeing this vision?

We are holding a stakeholder workshop chaired by Sir Peter Hendy, at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute (BRLSI) on Queen Square at 2pm on June 26. We have invited representatives from 80 different organisations from the fields of business, tourism, sport, transport and health sectors and many more. The group of people invited were involved in the initial conference to discuss the need for a new transport strategy, held two years ago. Feedback from this will be used to inform further plans.

We want as many local people as possible to get involved and give us their views – not just people who live in the city, but those that work here and travel to Bath regularly. We are also organising two public events which will offer the opportunity to find out more and ask questions. They will take place as follows:

Monday June 30, BRLSI 6pm to 9pm.
Friday July 11, Guildhall 2pm to 5pm.

For those who can't attend but wish to make their views known, a questionnaire is available online at <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/parking-and-travel/transport-plans-and-policies/bath-transport-package>

Printed copies are also available by contacting 01225 394408 or emailing transportation@bathnes.gov.uk

The closing date for views on this high level strategy is July 25.

We will consider views and then take a revised strategy to the Council's Cabinet meeting on September 11.

What happens then? What's the timeline for all this?

This is a long-term vision. Following adoption of the strategy, the Council and all the other local stakeholders would have to work on the detail of individual projects and take them through a formal decision-making process.

How will this be paid for?

Implementation of this would draw on a number of funding sources and decisions on individual projects will be taken through the Council's annual budget process. In addition the development of individual sites within the Enterprise Area will be expected to contribute to the strategy by being part of a co-ordinated approach to reducing the impact of traffic on the city and, where appropriate, making financial contributions to particular infrastructure needs.

It will be delivered through a wide range of projects which will be funded from future budgets principally, but not exclusively, the Integrated Transport Capital funds (received annually from Government) and bids for additional monies from the Single Growth Fund managed by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership. In addition there may be opportunities to bid for funding from other sources. Projects will have to be subject to the Council's normal approval processes including its annual budget setting.

How does this link to other plans for Bath & North East Somerset Council?

It will support the growth proposed in the Council's agreed Draft Core Strategy and the emerging Master Plan work for the Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area.

The strategy builds upon existing initiatives including:

- the Joint Local Transport Plan
- the Bath Transport Package such as the expanded Park and Ride Sites and Variable Message Signs;
- the Better Bus Area funding by introducing further bus priority measures; and
- Network Rail Electrification.

It will also support the Council's Leisure and Health and Well Being strategies.