
Getting Around Bath

'Getting Around Bath' – A Transport Strategy for Bath

Getting around is important to most of us. The Council needs your views about an important new transport strategy for Bath.

'Getting Around Bath' is designed to establish a long term vision for Transport which has broad and enduring agreement. It will cover the period up to 2029, in line with the Council Core Strategy. Recent years have seen significant investment in transport improvements for Bath, including expanded Park & Ride sites, improvements at Bath Spa Rail Station, a new Bus Station and better bus facilities, variable message signs, an Urban Freight Consolidation Project and new and improved cycle routes.

Demand for travel in and round Bath is however predicted to continue increasing, as a result of the redevelopment of parts of the city alongside the river and the provision of more housing. Further changes to the transport system will therefore be required to ensure that traffic levels and congestion are appropriately managed.

The Vision

The following vision sets the scene for the proposed strategy and will underpin decisions on changes to transport provision in the future:

“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 its special character and environment and improving the quality of life for local people”.

The strategy has also been driven by the Public Service Board Vision which is:

“Bath and North East Somerset will be internationally renowned as a beautifully inventive and entrepreneurial 21st Century place with a strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing, where everyone is invited to think big – a ‘connected’ area ready to create an extraordinary legacy for future generations.”



Based on discussions with Stakeholders and building on existing policies, the following objectives for the Strategy have been developed to ensure that the vision is achieved:

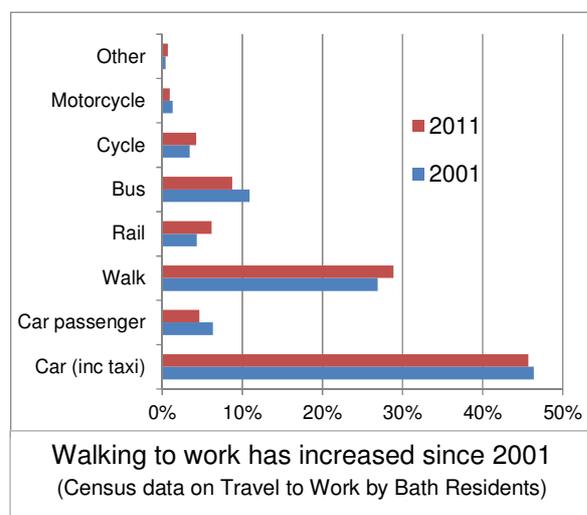
- Supporting and enabling economic growth, competitiveness and jobs;
- Promoting sustainable mobility;
- Widening travel choice;
- Widening access to opportunities: jobs/learning/training;
- Improving air quality & health, reducing vehicle carbon emissions;
- Safeguarding and enhancing the unique historic environment and World Heritage Site status; and
- Improving the quality of life in the city.

This leaflet outlines the key elements of the Strategy that will be required to meet these objectives.

Getting Around Bath

Reducing the Impact of Vehicles

Bath has a unique environment of World Heritage status that attracts substantial numbers of visitors and boosts the local economy. However, the historic city centre constrains the capacity of the road network and as a result there is too much traffic entering and passing through the central area. This had led to air quality problems and traffic congestion, making the city centre a less attractive place for residents, workers and tourists alike. The strategy will aim to reduce the impact of vehicle movements through a combination of measures which are detailed in this leaflet.



A Walkable City

Bath is a compact city that lends itself to walking for many trips, particularly in the city centre. Whilst there are some pedestrianised areas and public realm improvements have been made in other areas recently, there is much that could be done to make walking more attractive.

If further increases in walking are to be achieved, the walking infrastructure will need to be improved including better footways, crossings, public spaces. The scope for daytime pedestrian priority can be considered, in line with reducing traffic levels in the centre, with vehicle access retained at other times where necessary.

Walking routes could also be improved both within the city centre and on its main radial routes, with particular emphasis on ensuring new development sites have good links to the city centre and the rail and bus stations. The need to improve accessibility for those with mobility impairments will be an important part of any schemes.



Getting Around Bath

A More Cycle-Friendly City

Cycling will be promoted through better cycling routes, building a cycling culture for people of all abilities. Although there are some existing routes, these need to be expanded and coordinated to form a coherent network, ironing out conflicts with vehicular traffic and attracting new cyclists. A continuous off-road route alongside the river and linking into new development sites could form a key part of the network.

Access

It is intended to create an 'Access Forum', with representatives from walking, cycling and disability groups, to help develop the schemes that should be taken forward to improve walking and cycling and to make the city as accessible as possible to all users. Linking to the Council's Leisure and Health and Well Being Strategies will maximise the benefits that investment in improvements will bring.

Appropriate Levels of Car Parking in the City Centre

Some reductions in parking capacity will occur as a result of flood alleviation work but parking will remain an essential element of delivering both the Transport Strategy and Enterprise Area development proposals. More parking will be required to support economic growth but the city centre is not considered the appropriate location for increases in long stay spaces.

The existing policy of providing long stay parking capacity at the edge of the city through Park & Ride should be strengthened and extended.

Greater Use of Buses and Rail to Reduce the Number of Cars Entering the City

Network Rail are progressing the electrification of the Great Western Main Line from London to Bristol and beyond which will free up capacity in the local area. Bath will retain two trains per hour to London but the trains will be larger and there will also be two trains per hour from Bristol Temple Meads to London via Bristol Parkway, so there will be more seats available from Bath. In addition, the proposed MetroWest network envisages the upgrading of services across a wide area with more frequent trains between Bath and the Bristol area, calling at the local stations en route.

Improved access to Bath Spa and Oldfield Park stations will ensure that the benefits of improved services are maximised.

Better Management of Heavy Goods Vehicles

The creation of a freight consolidation centre has reduced the number of large vehicles entering the city centre but many more businesses need to sign up to the scheme to make it more effective. This scheme should be promoted and other new ideas should be considered, such as cycle deliveries. Loading/unloading arrangements in the centre should also be reviewed to determine if there is scope to reduce vehicle movements over the working day, including as part of pedestrian priority schemes.



Getting Around Bath

Tourism and Coaches

Coaches bring in huge numbers of tourists and visitors, with over 350,000 visitors to the Roman Baths alone arriving by coach each year. As part of a potential flood alleviation scheme, the existing Avon Street Coach Park will be lost. It is therefore important that a new coach park is provided with associated drop off points within the city centre. This will provide an opportunity to improve facilities for both coach drivers and passengers.

It is recognised that, whilst coach parking need not necessarily be located in the immediate city centre, set down and pick up must be retained there to provide a good level of service to coach passengers.

How can you be involved in the discussion?

Local community and stakeholder engagement:

Following the launch of the strategy at the Bath City Conference on the 30th April, the Council's Cabinet will be asked to consider a draft of the strategy at its meeting on 14th May. There will then be opportunities to hear more, to engage in debate and contribute to the strategy over the summer. Details of those opportunities can be found at:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/gettingaroundbath

Given the importance that Bath has within the whole of the wider district of Bath and North East Somerset, the Council will also be including Parish and Town Councils in this consultation process. We will also engage with other key stakeholders and adjoining local authorities

Feedback

Following Cabinet on 14th May you will be able to give your views and suggestions via an online questionnaire at:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/gettingaroundbath

Feedback forms will also be available at Council outlets and at the events.

Next Steps

Following the summer engagement, comments received will be considered and the Council's Cabinet will decide upon the strategy in the autumn.

