

STATEMENT FROM RAILFUTURE SEVERN SIDE (197)

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET CORE STRATEGY

Issue 2

Bath Transport

The strategy with regards to transport is to 'make the most of existing public transport' . We think aspirations should be set much higher. Thus we would like to see the text of paragraph 10 of the 'Strategy' (see below) changed to reflect a much deeper commitment to a high quality and multi-modal system of public transport in the future. With the recently awarded Bath package there is the possibility of coupling much improved buses with better rail but the Core Strategy does not make the need for top-quality and very much improved public transport explicit.

10 Congestion on the main radial routes, the city's air quality management areas and climate change require that the spatial strategy makes the most of existing public transport infrastructure and planned investment. In this way growth can enable people to travel to and around the city with less environmental impact and greater efficiency.

The text of Policy B1 merely says: *Support the development strategy for Bath with the implementation of necessary transport and other infrastructure to improve movement, accessibility to employment and community facilities throughout Bath.*

This again is far from aspirational in terms of objectives. It fails to understand or reference the transportation needs for Bath in terms of:

1. The need for improved local rail for the Bath City Region and Travel To Work Area which includes West and North Wiltshire and Mendip. These are to experience very large growth in housing and the arterial roads coming in from these places to Bath are extremely congested. Park and Ride will do something to address these matters but the demand for rail is very high and increasing. See enclosed TravelWatch SouthWest document.
2. The need for the above in the context of Bath as an important shopping centre.
3. The need for continuous bus priority measures on all main routes into Bath and the importance of a high quality fleet of buses.
4. The coordination of bus provision with rail improvements so that buses meet trains and give seamless travel.
5. The need to provide walking routes and cycling routes to the main and suburban railway stations.

6. The need for better bus information and a coherent system with an emphasis on good interchanges and bus hubs.

Policy B2 Central Area does not address transport issues sufficiently – it fails to address the importance of a step change public transport required.

Better Local Services as a result of Electrification- not mentioned

Paragraph 2.46 hardly engages with the future of the railways in this area at all and fails to mention that electrification will bring more passengers to Bath by train, and that local electrification has possibilities with regards to new stopping services, which could include Salford Station. All that is said in the Draft Core Strategy is as follows:

2.46 The Greater Bristol Metro Project will allow for increased train frequencies serving Bath and Oldfield Park rail stations.

We would like to see at a minimum reference to the great opportunities offered by electrification of the railways and the importance of local rail in serving Bath, as well as the importance of safeguarding land where it might be possible to open up small railway stations in the future (Saltford, Newbridge Parkway etc.). Also, the need for better services into Bath from North and West Wiltshire.

B1.1 'essential transport links and improvements' - what are these?

Paragraph B1.4 'Improvements to Bath Train Station and Enhanced Service Frequency from Bath and Oldfield Park to Bristol' could add 'and serving new stations for example at Saltford,

Cross-border travel by rail

Nothing is mentioned on the importance on rail connectivity with other names places outside of BANES across the border into other authorities. This is an omission. Bath is an important visitor centre and a place that people commute from elsewhere to work. What is the rail strategy on these counts? We cannot find it in the draft Core Strategy.

Keynsham

For Keynsham: *Provide for improvements to public transport and enhance connectivity between walking, cycling and public transport routes.* This needs to be coupled with commitments from the Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.

Somer Valley

We would like mention of the importance of bus priority measures into Bath and of the future of a rail-based connection to Radstock.