The Future of Park & Rides for Greenbelt consideration of the LPPU

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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Introduction

The Park and Ride sites within Bath and North East Somerset play an important role in reducing car traffic entering the urban areas. Park & Ride provision is proposed to be expanded in the Placemaking Plan, with opportunities to now be explored for the Park & Ride sites to act as a transport interchange where people can connect to wider areas through a variety of transport modes. In addition, the Park & Ride sites may also be able to play other beneficial roles by accommodating solar energy infrastructure and potentially household waste recycling facilities.

Due to the location of our Park & Ride sites within the Green Belt, the possible changes need to be considered against the tests for suitable greenbelt uses in NPPF.

The purpose of this note is to illustrate what the possible uses could be and the physical infrastructure that may be required to facilitate it. This note is not meant to be considered as a proposal, it has been prepared solely to assist with greenbelt assessment for the Local Plan Partial Update.

Regional and Local Policy

The possible changes to our Park and Ride sites align with our regional and local policies;

Joint Local Transport Plan 4 - The JLTP4 confirms P&R will play an important role in the region. In addition, it sets out aspirations for expanding the variety of uses for existing and new P&R sites including park & rail and park & share. It says:

Complementary uses for existing and new Park & Ride sites will be explored, with opportunities for sites to provide Park & Cycle or Park & Stride, overnight lorry parking, coach parking, freight consolidation functions, community uses, renewable energy generation, or even acting as bus depots. Any complementary uses would need to consider
potential impacts on local communities and the local environment. Operators would need to be involved, as some proposals may require a parking charge to be introduced.

In the longer-term, we will explore the potential of new and expanded Park & Ride sites linked to mass transit routes, as well as exploring the potential for sites to act as transport interchanges which could include improved links to public transport, substantial increases in cycle parking, cycle hire facilities, improved wayfinding infrastructure to facilitate walking, innovative last mile freight solutions and access to electric charging points.

West of England Bus Strategy – This strategy highlights that Park and Ride sites will be designed to fit the emerging strategic network and operate as transfer locations for connecting bus services and key interchanges between other transport modes.

Future Transport Zones - WECA was successful in receiving £28 million funding to create a West of England Future Transport Zone (FTZ). A key element of the FTZ will be the creation of new "Mobility Stations" which build on the aspirations of the JLTP4 to make better use of P&R sites. Mobility Stations are physical multi-modal interchange points, integrating multiple modes and service offerings for users. This scheme directly relates to the proposed delivery of an FMZ for the region.

Bath & North East Somerset Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan - Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 and pledged to provide the leadership to enable carbon neutrality in the district by 2030. Tackling the Climate Emergency means creating a different vision for all parts of Bath and North East Somerset, including the World Heritage Site of Bath itself. As part of this change in vision, a rapid and large-scale increase in local renewable energy generation is required to accomplish our targets. Park and Rides may be able to play a part in achieving this.

Placemaking Plan - Policy ST6: Park and Ride within the B&NES Placemaking Plan allows for the development of new or expansion of existing Park and Ride sites.

Bath Parking Strategy - Park and Ride facilities are key to providing access to the centre of Bath from rural parts of the authority area and beyond without resulting in large increases in traffic and air pollution in central Bath. The Parking Strategy promotes continued use of the existing sites around Bath and a review of the operation of existing sites.

Future Possibilities

WECA Future Mobility Zone

As part of the WECA Future Mobility Zone funding received from the DfT, Mobility Stations are being trialled. Mobility Stations are physical multi-modal interchange points, integrating multiple modes and service offerings for end-users. Figure 1 below shows an initial concept of a Mobility Station.

Figure 1: Initial Mobility Station concept

Mobility Stations will provide the First mile/Last mile connectivity to the major bus, MetroBus and Rail services to provide end-to-end journeys for those travelling less than 5 miles by car, dramatically increasing the catchment areas and sustainable transport opportunities for those living and working in the areas.

As part of the Future Mobility Zone bid, WECA are trialling two types of Mobility Station;

- Mobility Hubs – These will be larger Mobility Stations, with a range of services offered. This could be in a neighbourhood centre, linked to a train station, park and ride site or a major trip attractor (e.g. Royal United Hospital).
- Mobility Points – These will be smaller Mobility Stations, that serve local communities. These may just be a bus stop with appropriate branding and route information but could have additional services integrated such as cycle parking, freight consolidation and wayfinding.

Many of the facilities provided within a Mobility Station will be discussed further in this note.

Cycling opportunities

Cycle Hubs – Bicycles can serve as an appealing mode to access other services and stations especially if bike parking and other supportive facilities are available for use. Cycle hubs provide a safe and secure place for users to keep their bicycle whilst making their onward journey. With key fob entry, CCTV and enhanced lighting, they are an attractive for users storing their bikes for prolonged periods. Pictured below (Figure 1) is one recently installed at Walthamstow Station.

Figure 2: Walthamstow Station Cycle Hub

Recent Park & Ride planning applications have shown this to be suitable within the Green Belt. Yate Park and Change application, approved in November 2020, features a Cycle Hub pictured below as A in Figure 2. This is 6 x 5 x 2.7m (w x l x h) and will be able to store 40 bicycles.

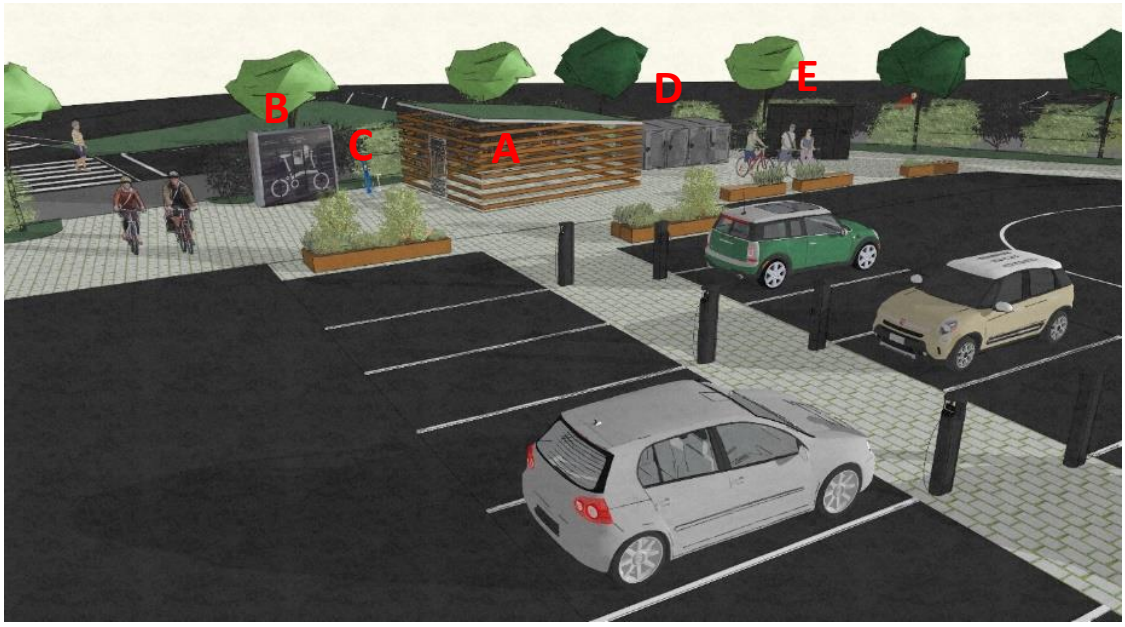

Figure 3: Yate Park & Change Cycle Hub

Bicycle Lockers – Similar to Cycle Hubs, lockers can be provided for users to safely store their bicycle away. Babraham Road P&R on the edge of Cambridge located within the Green Belt houses 60 lockers pictured in Figure 3 below. These type of lockers have recently been approved at Yate Park and Change and can be seen as D in Figure 2. The total footprint for 6 lockers is 5.4 x 1.9m.

Figure 4: Babraham Road P&R bicycle lockers

These two options for bicycle storage offer the opportunity to raise revenue for the authority. Prices differ by location but range from £30 per year for storage in a Cycle Hub to £10 a month for a dedicated locker.

Bicycle Rental – Bicycles stored at transport interchanges allows for users who arrive at the site the option to travel on to their destination by bike. It also allows for users without access to a vehicle to travel to the interchange and use the bicycle recreationally to explore the local environment. The facilities for this have been approved within the Green Belt at Yate Park and Change seen above as B in Figure 2. The total footprint for 8 bike rentals is 2 x 0.8 x 1.8m. An example is shown below in Figure 3 at Guildford Train Station.

Figure 5: Bicycle rental

Bicycle Facilities – Items such as pumps, spanners, hex keys and bike stands need to be considered to encourage and support users making the switch to cycling. These items have a small footprint and should be located near to the bicycle parking/storage facilities. Approval for this has been given at Yate Park & Ride and can be seen as item C in Figure 2.

E-Assistance

Micro-mobility – Electrically assisted micro-mobility modes (e-bikes, e-scooters, e-cargo bikes, etc) increase the range that people are prepared to travel micro-mobility modes, removing barriers posed by hilly terrain and personal fitness, opens up this mode as a serious option for many more people. Electronically assisted bicycles and scooters are able to provide First mile/Last mile connectivity to key destinations and services. Locating these modes at Park & Ride sites allows for "street clutter" to be managed for dockless or free-roaming micro-mobility services. Due to these modes being in early development, this has not been tested for suitability within a Park & Ride.

Freight opportunities

Freight Consolidation - Freight consolidation is where many suppliers have goods delivered directly to a place (consolidation centre or delivery hub) where it is stored and then when needed is combined into a single fuller load for the onward journey, for example into the city centre. This helps to create a sustainable, inclusive and growing economy.

Bristol City Council have successfully implemented a freight consolidation centre since 2004. At its peak, a 70% to 80% reduction in the number of onward trips was seen by the freight consolidation scheme. This meant that for every 10 vehicles that made a delivery to the consolidation centre, just 2 or 3 onward journeys to the central Bristol area were made, reducing noise, air pollution and congestion within the city centre.

These consolidation centres could form part of the mobility station as shown below in Figure 6. Deliveries would then be made via e-cargo bikes or alternative transport mode to the city centre.

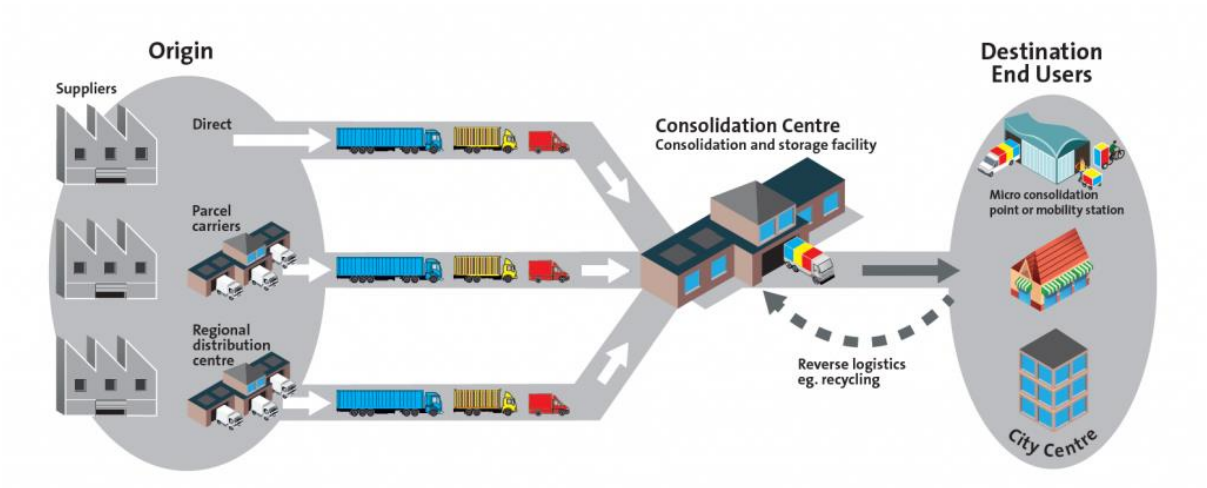

Figure 6: Freight consolidation

Parcel lockers – Delivery lockers can offer the opportunity for users of the site, residents and businesses the opportunity to pick up their deliveries at a convenient time and place for them. These lockers also reduce the amount of travel needed to make the deliveries. Yate Park and Change within the Green Belt has had these type of lockers approved for use and can be seen as E in Figure 2 above. The footprint for this locker is 4 x 1 x 2.2m.

Energy

Solar energy - The Local Plan Partial Update identifies the possibility that Park & Ride sites may be able to provide energy generation through the use of solar panels. This has been tried at other P&R sites within the UK. Babraham Road within the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge has recently

had an application accepted (CCC/20/046/FUL) for solar generation to cover the 1500 parking spaces provided at the site. The site plan can be found below in Figure 5.

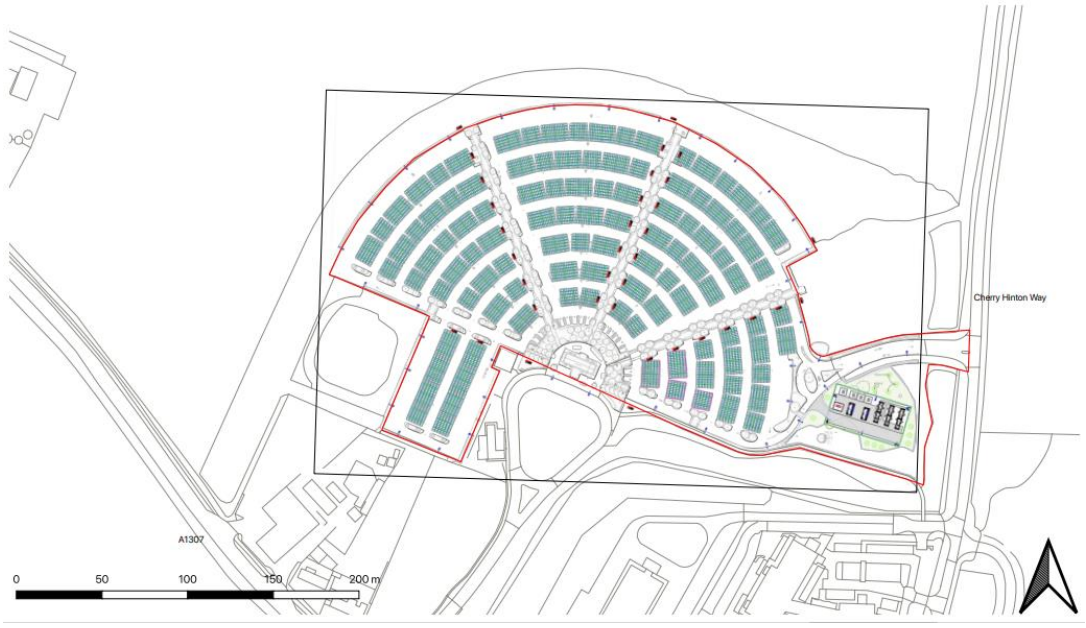

Figure 7: Babraham Road P&R Solar Canopies

Car opportunities

Electric Vehicle Charging – In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution the adoption of low-emissions vehicles should be encouraged by providing supportive infrastructure such as EV charging stations. York City Council have received planning permission (19/01754/GRG3) to install solar canopies to cover 109 parking spaces, similar to those in Cambridge, but the application also included 13 Electric Vehicle Charging points. The Poppleton Bar P&R in York is located within the Green Belt. The chargers will measure 0.6 x 0.3 x 2.4m in height and connect to a small electrical cabinet measuring 1.3 x 0.8 x 1.2m. Although the detailed design of the canopies have not been determined at this stage, they shall have a maximum height of 5.1m and the height of the lowest edge of the canopies would be 2.5m to allow safe access for parking. Alongside this, additional infrastructure is needed to provide support to the chargers and canopies. A battery storage unit (measuring 12 x 2.5 x 3m) with associated transformer and control unit (measuring 3 x 2.5 x 3m) will need to be constructed. An artistic impression of the solar canopies and chargers can be found below in Figure 6.

Figure 8: Poppleton Bar Solar Canopies and Electric Vehicle Charging

Car share/car clubs – Aligning with the JLTP4, uptake and expansion of a car club network of low emission vehicles should be promoted and encouraged. These dedicated spaces allow for users without access to a car to reach facilities that are often hard to reach by public transport or other modes. Car clubs can help to manage parking demand, encourage households to dispense of their second car and generally encourage alternatives to privately owned cars. These vehicles require the same footprint as a normal parking space (or electric vehicle space for an e-car club vehicle) however, the space is dedicated for this vehicle.

Other opportunities

Waste Facilities – Locating waste facilities at P&R sides has been tried within the UK such as in Norfolk County Council. They were granted planning permission (FUL/2020/0040) in October 2020 to create a new recycling centre, using available spare space on an underused part of the Harford P&R site. The application proposed to remove 216 car parking spaces, allowing for the recycling centre to process 15,000 tonnes of waste per year.

Whilst the P&R ride sites within B&NES remain popular, moving sites from central Bath to P&R sites in outer Bath may achieve their objective to reduce congestion within the city centre. It remains untested if this application would be suitable for the Green Belt locations our P&R sides are in.

Workspace – Covid-19 has changed the way people work, with quotes such as "Work is what you do, not somewhere you go" often referred to with this change in attitude. Park and Rides have the opportunity to offer convenient space to allow for flexible working when required. As sites often have the characteristics and amenities employees require such as toilets, parking and in a convenient location, they can offer alternatives to conventional office spaces. However, other facilities within the site will be needed to facilitate this change such as office space and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Open Air Events – Gatherings such as car boots and famers markets are often held in large, open spaces such as Park and Ride sites. Trumpington Park and Ride site within the Cambridge Green Belt has been operating since 2013 and is allowed to operate only between certain hours. Although this is one particular event, this Change of Use application may be suitable for other events depending on the impact it may have on the highway network.