

Dear Councillors

We understand from Jack Latkovic that you will be using the cancelled cabinet meeting slot on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May to consider all of the evidence on P&R from both the council and the community. I know you will wish to consider in detail the Alliance report to Scrutiny dated March, the Entrans emissions report submitted by the Alliance dated January and the response from the Alliance to the LDF and Scrutiny reports dated April.

However, evidence continues to emerge, which throws doubt on the level of demand for P&R to the East. This is not included in the reports you have to date or may not be presented in a way that is clear. Please therefore also consider the following;

- 1. Limitations of the new Mott MacDonald demand forecast**
- 2. New evidence that the school run accounts for a third of morning traffic**
- 3. Critical facts about demand from the RUH**

#### **1. Limitations of the new Mott MacDonald demand forecast**

The Bathampton Meadows Alliance has deep concern about the level of likely demand for a P&R to the east and has urged the council on many occasions to carry out a proper patronage study (as required by the Halcrow report) with up to date surveys asking real people how, when and why they travel and if they would use a P&R to the east. This has still not been done. Instead the council continues to rely on 'assumptions' fed into a transport model. Members should understand that the number that emerges from a model depends entirely upon the assumptions that are fed into it.

At scrutiny day, Mott McDonald were asked how many people had been involved in helping to shape their latest demand model. They replied 'you wouldn't believe the number of surveys we've done'. So we checked the documents and found out that the surveys of drivers were in fact carried out in 2009 and 2014 all over the city, not just to the east. These surveys asked where someone came from and where they were going to, they did not mention P&R. There were no behavioral questions about what motivated them to drive or what would make them switch out of driving. The surveys that have been done are therefore at best 2 years out of date and do not ask relevant questions that would indicate whether or not a person would use an east of Bath P&R.

Other data that has been fed into the model includes information from the 2011 census showing a pool of 4000 commuters coming from the east and before the closure of 3 MOD sites.

A forecast to 2029 has a high degree of uncertainty given that the level of traffic is closely linked to the state of the economy and that we have no idea how work patterns or vehicle technology might change. George Osborne and the treasury do not accept forecasts beyond 6 years, is Mott MacDonald better qualified to predict the future?

If you believe this forecast, you must also accept that it produces a figure of less than 5% of traffic being removed from the London Road in the morning rush hour by 2029. Even then Mott MacDonald have not factored in the effect of suppressed demand.

Drivers who currently pay 70p to use the toll bridge would likely switch to the London Road if spare capacity existed, meaning £10 million might have been spent for no traffic reduction at all on the London Road.

It might be helpful for you to ask officers how much demand there will be in 3 years or 5 years and consider if you are willing to build a large facility now that will not be fully utilised for 13 years. Bearing in mind still that no one has been asked if they would use one.

## **2. New evidence that the school run accounts for a third of morning traffic**

The Alliance has consistently argued that the school-run accounts for a very high proportion of traffic during the peak period. This has been dismissed by Peter Dawson, who said at the SID that this was 'around 10%' but with no source for this being offered.

The Alliance now has evidence that the school-run accounts for around a third of all traffic in Batheaston during the morning peak between 7am and 9am.

Transport Data Collection (a company used by B&NES) was commissioned by the Alliance to conduct a five-week automated road traffic count at 240 London Road (Batheaston High St) during March and April 2016 (05/03/2016 to 08/04/2016).

- This period covered three weeks of term time leading up to the Easter Holidays, the first week of the holidays when all independent and some state schools in the area were off, then the second week of the holidays when all local schools were off
- Results showed a 33% drop in traffic between term time weeks vs the all school holiday week in the 7am-9am period (see data table)
- For the afternoon peak there was a 9% drop during the holiday period

These figures are supported by information given to the Alliance by the owners of the Toll Bridge. During school holidays their volumes drop by around 40%.

The drop in traffic in the morning period during holiday time is larger than the drop in the afternoon period. The statement made by Fobra at the SID may explain this. They assert that during school holidays the traffic does not get better, but the peak moves to later in the day as families take day trips into Bath. Equally the proportion of school run trips is spread over a far longer period in the afternoon from 15:15 through to 18:00 and therefore it is less likely that there would be the same drop as seen in the morning.

This research shows that a third of vehicles recorded on Batheaston High Street between 7am and 9am during term time would not use P&R.

Some families may be attracted to P&R for day trips during the school holidays, but B&NES cannot know how many would do so without doing further research.

Please see Appendix 1 for the data table

### 3. Critical facts about demand from the RUH

Providing a service to the RUH was not included in the original proposal for a P&R to the east, nor does the council have a duty to provide such a service. The proposal appears to have been added to the equation as a way to inflate demand. Without the RUH service Mott Macdonald estimate that 977 spaces will be required by 2029 and they suggest that by extending the route to the RUH this would increase to between 1225 and 1411 spaces. Councillors need to understand the following.

- The RUH has not provided information to B&NES about the numbers of patients travelling from the east or their motivations for driving versus taking the bus (public or P&R). Once again this is a forecast derived from 'assumptions' with no base in reality.
- The RUH are currently expanding their parking by 300 spaces. People who have access to a car and are unwell prefer to be carried door to door, the current expansion meets this need.
- A third of people in Bath do not have access to a car, this proportion will be higher for those visiting hospital; the sick, elderly and people with disabilities. These patients cannot get to a P&R and it would be discriminatory to focus resources on services they can't access.
- All buses from Wiltshire go into the bus station and the number 14 leaves the bus station every 10 minutes to the RUH. People with access to a car drive there, those without already have a service.
- NHS strategy is about treating people closer to home and keeping them out of hospital, this suggests a declining demand for travel to the RUH over time.
- If the model is taken from the present service at Odd Down then demand could be calculated from the present usage of the RUH bus. Mini buses are every half hour, assuming they are 50% full that would be only 30 patients an hour, which does not justify a larger-scale P&R on the Meadows as set out by Mott.

In conclusion, we know that many vehicles travel in from the east each day, but we don't know how many stop to park or where they park, and essentially we don't know if they would use a P&R.

Before B&NES takes the very costly step of developing a large-scale P&R to the east with its stated aim of reducing congestion, and given that existing P&R are so underused when daily congestion is highest, it **must** do further research into the effect of the school run and the real demand for P&R. Money should be spent on something that will actually ease congestion when it is most needed.

Yours sincerely

Christine Boyd  
Bathampton Meadows Alliance

## Appendix 1: Batheaston High St Traffic Counts – AM peak

Source: Transport Data Collection ATC count 05/03/2016 to 08/04/2016

Volume of cars passing 240 London Road (Batheaston High St) 7am to 9am										
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Weekday total (excl bank holidays)	Weekday average (by week, excl bank holidays)	Average term time weekday	% decrease (average term time weekday vs respective average holiday weekday)	who was off?
05/03/2016 TO										
11/03/2016 (termtime 1)	1092	1054	1116	1027	1034	5323	1065			Nobody
12/03/2016 TO								1078		
18/03/2016 (termtime 2)	1138	1147	1128	1055	1072	5540	1108			Nobody
19/03/2016 TO										Nobody (inc Good Friday)
25/03/2016 (termtime 3)	1047	1074	1061	1061	119	4243	1061			Independent and some state (inc Easter Monday)
26/03/2016 TO										
01/04/2016 (week 4)	263	827	835	822	825	3309	827		23.2	
02/04/2016 TO										
08/04/2016 (week 5)	770	590	728	738	814	3640	728		32.5	All schools

**Appendix 1 continued: Batheaston High St Traffic Counts – PM peak**  
 Source: Transport Data Collection ATC count 05/03/2016 to 08/04/2016

Volume of cars passing 240 London Road (Batheaston High St) 3pm to 5pm										
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Weekday total (excl bank holidays)	Weekday average (by week, excl bank holidays)	Average term time weekday	% decrease (average term time weekday vs respective average holiday weekday)	who was off?
05/03/2016 TO	1100	1055	1111	1114	1156	5536	1107			Nobody
11/03/2016 (termtime 1)										
12/03/2016 TO	1099	1089	1138	1088	1203	5617	1123	1086		Nobody
18/03/2016 (termtime 2)										
19/03/2016 TO	1121	845	1029	1119	758	4114	1029			Nobody (inc Good Friday)
25/03/2016 (termtime 3)										Independent and some state (inc Easter Monday)
26/03/2016 TO										
01/04/2016 (week 4)	646	1027	1077	1073	1086	4263	1066			
02/04/2016 TO										
08/04/2016 (week 5)	1042	991	1004	1072	844	4953	991			8.8 All schools