

Bath Transport Manifesto

UPDATED February 2023

Bath Alliance for Transport and the Public Realm

A coalition of Bath stakeholders to achieve excellence in transport and public spaces

Aviva Investors | Bath and Bristol Area Trams Association | Bath BID | Bath Bridge | Bath City Football Club | Bath Festivals | Bath Independent Hospitality Association | Bath Preservation Trust | Bath Spa University | Bath Rugby | British Land | Curo | First West of England | Kaleidoscope Collection | NHS B&NES, Swindon & Wilts ICB | NHS RUH | St John's Foundation | Sustrans | SU Bath | University of Bath | Wessex Water

Introduction

1. The Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm is an association of 21 major employers, institutions, businesses, housing providers, residents, public transport providers, universities and custodians of Bath representing a spectrum of transport interests across the city. Our members share a common goal of helping to resolve the city's transport problems.
2. The people living in, working in, and responsible for Bath today have inherited a glorious legacy from our predecessors, which is reflected in the city's designation as a World Heritage Site. As Bath's custodians, we all have a duty to make it one of the great small cities. This means working with aspiration and confidence to make it prosperous, cohesive and functional. Excellent transport and an outstanding public realm lie at the heart of realising Bath's full potential as a city.
3. Bath suffers from high levels of traffic congestion, which prevents free movement of pedestrians, deters cyclists, blocks buses, imposes economic costs and spoils the city experience for residents, workers and visitors. High levels of air pollution, largely caused by vehicles, harm the health of residents, workers and visitors, and damage the historic buildings. Vehicles in Bath cause a significant amount of the city's carbon emissions, contributing to the Climate Emergency. The city's public realm suffers from long term neglect, degrading the urban environment and impeding the enjoyment of public spaces. Bath has a dysfunctional transport system, with over-reliance on private cars, inadequate public transport alternatives, and a free-for-all for commercial vehicles.
4. Bath is falling far short of its potential. A bold initiative is needed to address the problems of traffic congestion, air pollution and carbon emissions and degraded public realm, whilst reducing car-dependency. This will transform Bath into a place that is truly worthy of its World Heritage Site designation. Many cities elsewhere have shown what can be achieved.
5. The starting point is to have a vision for the city which is specific and concrete in terms of transport and the public realm – how the city should actually look, feel and function in five or ten years' time. This vision applies to all of Bath but should start

with the city centre, which contains most of the city's economic and social activity as well as the cultural and historic places that visitors come to see.

6. The Alliance *Vision* is of Bath as: "A beautiful city in a green setting, with vibrant public spaces, a historic centre free of all but essential traffic*, clean air, good mobility and excellent transport infrastructure."
7. The policy framework for Bath's transport delivery plan already exists in the Bath Transport Strategy, approved by B&NES Council with all-party support in 2014. B&NES has now adopted a Transport Action Plan called the Journey to NetZero (JNZ) to implement the Bath Transport Strategy. The WECA Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) serves as Bath's policy for Public Transport. A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) was introduced on 15th March 2021 which has made a good start in moderating harmful Nitrogen Oxides in Bath's air (see para 3 above).
8. This Manifesto proposes a set of essential transport initiatives, grouped within eight broad themes in the Annex, to be included within JNZ and BSIP. These are interconnected and mutually supportive. Although these initiatives must be planned now as a package they will be delivered over an extended period of time. Some of these initiatives require significant funding but many of them do not. Some actually provide revenue to fund other transport initiatives. Sources of funding must be proactively identified and developed in partnership with WECA. Funding is challenging but there are several new potential sources that should be pursued.
9. This comprehensive set of initiatives is necessary to meet the objectives of JNZ and BSIP. We commend the Alliance Bath Transport Manifesto as a contribution to the development and delivery of JNZ and BSIP.

*e.g. Deliveries, cleansing, buses, taxis, key business needs, the disabled, and residents for access to their homes.

Public Realm: Deliver the excellent 2010 Public Realm and Movement Strategy

- Rebalance the Movement Hierarchy towards walking & cycling
- Refresh the Public Realm
- Create a Coherent Street Lattice in the centre
- Reclaim Public Spaces in the centre for people
- Follow the PRMS Pattern Book for consistent, high-quality design

Traffic Movement: Design and deliver a new movement system that excludes most traffic from the centre.

- Redesign integrated traffic flow throughout Bath for all modes
- Exclude through traffic from centre with radial-only entry and exit
- Hierarchy of roads: Through | Radial | Access | Neighbourhood
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods ('Liveable Neighbourhoods') throughout Bath, including the centre, respecting the need to avoid increasing traffic outside these areas.
- Road User Charging scheme as successor to the CAZ.

Air Quality and CO²: Deliver the Bath Clean Air Plan (CAP) and reduce CO² emissions

- Use the CAZ to meet air quality targets immediately.
- Meet climate emergency target for reduced CO² emissions from transport.

Parking: Deliver a new Parking Plan that reduces congestion

- Controlled parking zones over all of Bath.
- Plan parking capacity by year and by location with no aggregate increase from 2020.
- Shift parking capacity from centre to P&Rs over time.
- Deliver east of Bath parking solution and expand existing P&Rs.
- Use parking pricing policy to keep P&Rs full, discourage car ownership and increase revenue

Public Transport: Make buses a competitive alternative to cars

- WECA use of powers available under the Bus Service Act 2017
- Redesigned bus network and frequencies to compete with car journeys
- Bus priority on all corridors, reallocating some kerbside parking space
- Operating subsidy to allow dynamic, demand-responsive fares that fill the buses
- Real time passenger information and contactless payments
- All green buses

- MetroBus (or 'MetroTram') on Bath-Bristol corridor

Walking & cycling: Deliver comprehensive Walking and Cycling Plans

- Redesign the Bath components of the WECA Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Secure better provision for walking by adding to Local Plan proposals to improve segregated footpaths network over the years, as sites come up for redevelopment.
- Make the networks relevant, functional and safe
- Reallocate some kerbside parking space to dedicated cycle lanes
- eBike and eScooter sharing, rental and purchase schemes

Commercial Vehicles: Minimise the impact of commercial vehicles on the city

- Coaches, inter-city buses and through HGVs excluded from centre
- Coach drop off at periphery of centre
- Coach parking at all P&Rs
- Deliveries scheme in centre with time and vehicle size restrictions

Travel Plans: Link institutional travel plans with JNZ.

- Bath Enterprise Area
- RUH
- Universities
- Schools
- B&NES Council.