

## **Bath Rugby stadium parking proposals**

Whatever the merits - or otherwise - of Bath Rugby's planned new stadium, the proposed 700 space underground car park would have a huge impact on traffic in Bath, and lead to a substantial loss of parking revenue to B&NES taxpayers.

The creation of 700 extra parking spaces in central Bath would be contrary to the 2014 Bath Transport Strategy, which calls for a reduction of off-street parking in the central area, and to the 2018 Bath Parking Strategy, which calls for no increase. It would generate extra traffic and severe congestion. This could throw into question the effectiveness of the B&NES's Clean Air Zone and the Council's ability to meet its clean air targets.

700 extra parking spaces in the central area would very likely attract extra traffic into the centre. Some who currently use the Park-and-Ride would be tempted to drive right past and head for the Rec car park, which would lead to reduced income for the P&Rs and might even call their viability into question. To the extent that drivers used the Rec car park instead of on or off street parking in the centre, B&NES would lose further parking revenue which it can ill afford. In effect, B&NES taxpayers would be subsidising the stadium.

The only way it could work is if B&NES were to remove an equivalent amount of visitor parking elsewhere in the centre, with compensation by Bath Rugby for the loss of revenue. Eliminating all on-street visitor parking (other than residents' visitors) in the Central CPZ would reduce the effective parking by only 100 or so spaces – the rest are always taken by residents. Removing visitor parking from Zone 1 might produce another 100. So, in order for the effect on traffic to be neutral, B&NES would need to take out around another 500 spaces from its off-street car parks.

Moreover, the proposed underground car park would increase the height and add to the visual impact of the stadium.

Bath Rugby maintains that the proposed car park would actually lead to reduced traffic congestion, and that all will be explained in their Planning Application. However, it is difficult to see how this could happen, particularly with a net increase in traffic. Credible answers are needed.

Patrick Rotheram

Transport Lead, Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

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