

Planning Application: MetroBus NFHP: Committee Meeting Statement: Belinda Faulkes

This statement specifically refers to the M32 bus only road system. **The required “golden thread” of “sustainable development” has 3 dimensions: environmental, economic and social.** *18-19. Environmentally this development would be damaging to the functions and qualities of Greenbelt, (Avon, & Frome Valley) Conservation area, wildlife corridor and habitat, high grade agricultural land (BMV soil) & Stoke Park Heritage site *1. **The application plays down the serious extent of potential long term environmental damage.**

The “need” argument for the road’s location concentrates only on the economic role, with weak and unsupported claims of “unlocking employment” and “economic growth” backed up with a *justification of a 3 ½ minute time saving* (...Additional journey time via Junction One significantly diminishes the attractiveness and potential of the Scheme.” Planning Statement Appdx 6 p.85.). **This does not show “special circumstances” for development on Greenbelt and is a clear example of conflicting with its openness and encroaching on the countryside. *11**

One negative social impact would be on the award winning wildlife & food growing project Feed Bristol and its partner Sims Hill CSA, In just 2 years **Feed Bristol has engaged with over 25.000 people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds**, Avon Wildlife Trust predicts that **this development would have a serious impact on the financial success and future of the project**, jeopardising its potential as an education, health and therapeutic destination.

The adverse impacts of this road development significantly outweighs the benefits (NPPF 1) undermining in many cases the Bristol Local plan, Core Strategy and the NPPF (see *1-19 referenced below). A 2011 government White paper states *“The natural world, its biodiversity and its ecosystems are critically important to our well-being and economic prosperity, but are consistently undervalued in conventional economic analyses and decision making. We need ...development... [that] enhance[s] natural networks for the benefit of people and the environment as part of sustainable development”*. *20. **This development, with a hugely damaging and costly road junction just 3.5 minutes from an existing junction, does not do this. Refusing this application is a great opportunity to ensure an integrated, widely beneficial and truly sustainable transport scheme, worthy of a European Green Capital 2015.**

*References: Key Contraventions of the NPPF, Government guidance, Local Plan and Strategy.

Environment:

- *1. *Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.” (NPPF 7 para 64.)*
- *2 *Countryside and other open land around the existing built-up areas of the city will be safeguarded by maintaining the current extent of the Green Belt. Land within the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development as set out in national planning policy (BCS 6).*
- *3 *“This policy reflects the very high value attached by the community of Bristol to the openness of the surrounding countryside (BCS 4.6.5)*
- *4 *“The Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan will be used to guide decisions on protection, enhancement and provision of additional green infrastructure relating to biological and geological conservation.” BCS9 GI,*
- *5 *“Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and ensuring best use is made of open spaces to meet the needs of residents and employees in the city”(BCS13)*
- *6 *“...the council will take special care to ensure the character and special interest of that area is protected and enhanced. ...will require new building work to preserve or enhance the existing character or appearance of the Conservation Area”. (Conservation areas FAQ P1)*
- *7 *Development should integrate existing wildlife corridors... (and where not possible the)...consideration of off-site mitigationwill be appropriate, provided the overall connectivity of the Bristol Wildlife Network is not harmed. BCS9 2.19.21*
- *8 *“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services: minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible....” NPPF 11- para 109 :*
- *10 This proposal does not “cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development” and the” residual cumulative impacts of development” would be “severe”. (NPPF 39)
- *11 Development on Greenbelt –*openness, not in conflict Purposes of Greenbelt: safeguarding countryside from encroachment. , demonstrates very special circumstances....when harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations... local transport demonstrates a requirement for Green belt location (NPPF 9: para 79,80,87,88,90)*
- *12 *“Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality”. (NPPF para 112, pp. 24)*

Social:

- *13 *Promoting Healthy Communities (NPPF 8 para 70, 73,74,76)*
- *14 *“involve all sections of the community...in planning decisions.” (DM14: Para. 69)*
- *15 *Some areas of open land will be brought forward for essential development, with local communities involved in making the choices. (BCS23*
- *16 *“Planning should Promote Healthy Communities – by protecting the local community facilities.” (DM14 Para. 70)*
- *17 *...deliver a safe and healthy city where development contributed to reducing the causes of ill health, improving the health and wellbeing of the local population and reducing health inequalities. This policy ensures the impact on health is taken into account from the outset in considering proposals and requires systematic health impact assessments to be undertaken for larger proposals. ”. (BCS 2.14.1).*

Sustainable development:

- *18 *“to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits” (NPPF Achieving Sustainable .Development 7, 9 , 10)*
- *19: Ensuring a sustainable future for Bristol (BCS Overarching issue)
- * 20 Natural Environment Government White paper: ‘The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature’ June 2011