

Bath Transportation Package  
Major Scheme Business Case

# Executive Summary



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background to the Bath Package

The Bath Transportation Package is a submission for major scheme funding to implement a 'package' of transport initiatives to improve transport opportunities and quality for all travellers and residents in the City of Bath and in the surrounding area. The scheme is promoted under the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) 2006 of the four authorities of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council.



Bath suffers from traffic congestion, poor air quality and unreliable public transport. There is already more traffic than the city streets can cope with, which stifles development and limits economic growth. The Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan,

which has been presented to UNESCO, commits Bath and North East Somerset Council to a series of actions based around themes that include conservation, physical access and visitor management.

During 2005 Bath and North East Somerset Council developed a 'Vision for Bath' and has achieved general consensus within the city and a momentum for change. A Business Plan for the Vision identifies that the principal infrastructure issues relate to transport and public realm. It considers that the road system in Bath is at full capacity, and at peak times car parking is also virtually at capacity with pressure on the Park and Ride facilities. It recognises that in order to carry out the scale of development required to fulfil the Vision, it will be necessary to make the transport infrastructure interventions put forward in the Bath Package major scheme, in particular the improved local bus network, a new dedicated Bus Rapid Transit system, and an increase in Park and Ride provision.

## **The Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Funding Allocations**

A draft Regional Spatial Strategy has been published by the South West Regional Assembly, proposing 7500 new homes and up to 20,000 jobs in the Bath travel to work area. In support of the strategy the Regional Assembly has also published “Developing the Regional Transport Strategy in the South West: Investment Priorities for the South West” (DRTS) which recognises that “a substantial increase in funding through the LTP system is required to address major congestion on the network” and the need for “development of a strategic public transport network to reduce reliance on the car and reduce congestion and pollution and improve safety”.

The Regional Funding Allocation process has prioritised the Bath Package as a regional priority for delivery in the short term. This prioritisation has now been accepted and endorsed by Department for Transport (DfT), reflecting its importance to local, regional and national objectives.

## **Aims of the Bath Package**

The Bath Package sets out to improve the alternatives to the use of the private car by providing a modern, integrated and easy-to-use public transport system. The overall aims of the Bath Package are:

- To create a high quality public transport system to ensure that attractive alternatives exist to the use of the private car
- To reduce congestion and improve air quality
- To improve accessibility
- To secure environmental improvements
- To create an effective and efficient transport system that will encourage the Bath Western Riverside regeneration project and other future developments

## **Summary of the Bath Package**

The scheme has been developed through technical assessment and stakeholder and public consultation and comprises the following:

- Showcase bus routes
- Bus-based Rapid Transit
- New and expanded Park and Ride sites

- City centre private vehicle access restrictions, bus priority, and pedestrian improvements
- Travel information systems

The package of measures identified is estimated to cost £41.5m. Investment by operators and contributions from development are expected to fund in excess of 10% of the overall cost, with the remainder being sought through this Major Scheme bid.

The Bath Package is bold and innovative. At its heart is a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that seeks to offer high quality public transport delivered through partnership with the bus operator. The Showcase bus and BRT network will bring benefits include improved journey time and cost savings for new and existing users of bus, rapid transit and Park and Ride. The package addresses congestion, and therefore brings journey time savings for other traffic on the highway network.

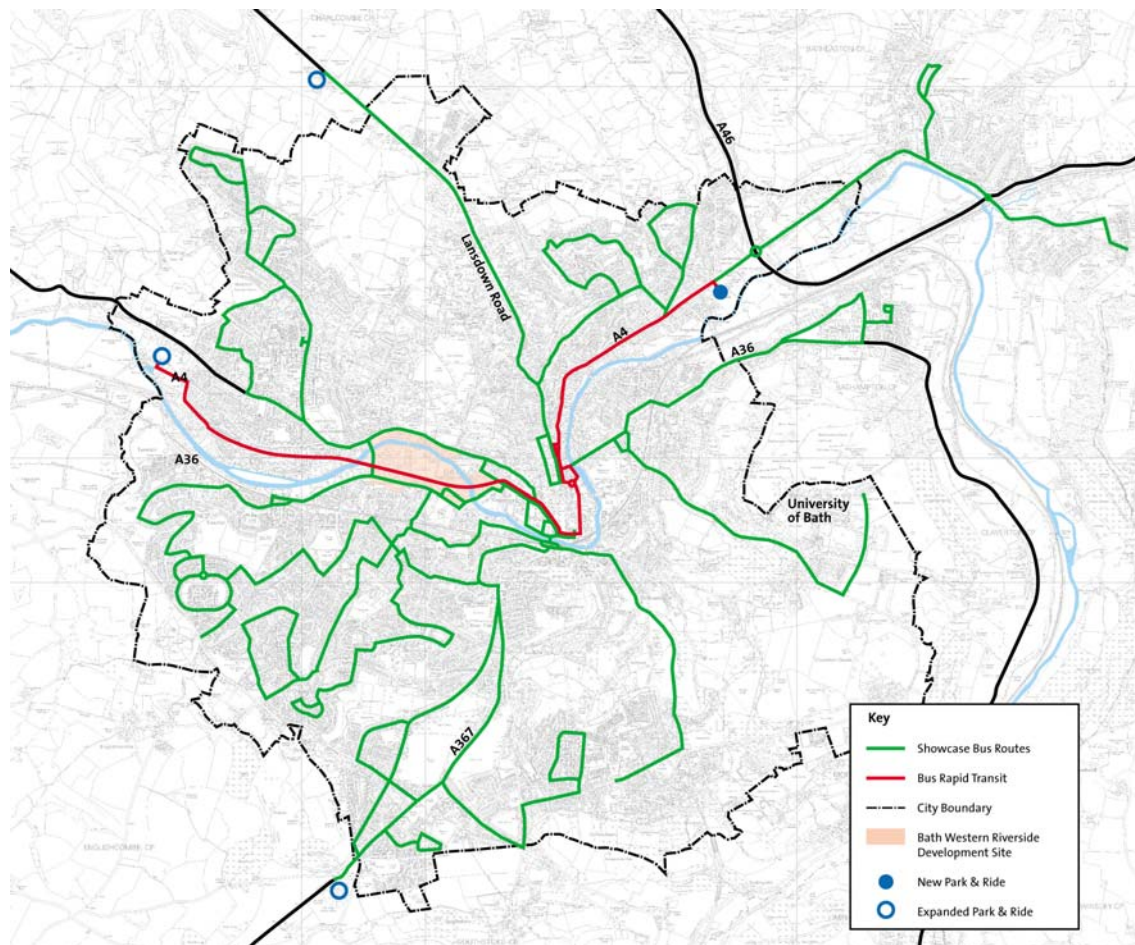


Figure 1 – The Bath Package Scheme

## Showcase Bus Routes

The scheme will include significant improvements to bus routes throughout the city, providing quicker and more reliable journeys and making buses an attractive alternative for more people.

Showcase bus routes will feature:

- Bus priority measures to improve bus journey time reliability
- Real time passenger information on bus stops with information available on the internet and potentially via mobile phones
- Enhanced bus stops to allow easy access and new shelters
- City centre changes to accommodate bus priority

The Bath Package public consultation responses indicate strong support (87%) for investment in the quality and reliability of bus services. 58% of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to use buses more, if such improvements were to be made.



## Bus Rapid Transit

This system will provide state-of-the-art public transport in Bath. It will replace conventional buses on the busiest routes with latest-technology vehicles featuring improved levels of comfort, ease of use, information and reliability. It will bring many of the benefits of modern tram systems, but at an affordable cost. The system will achieve a high degree of priority at traffic signals to ensure journey time reliability. It will also have the flexibility to allow for future expansion and will blaze the trail for the development of other bus rapid transit routes in the West of England area as part of the JLTP.

The construction of a busway along a disused railway line will provide a segregated route from expanded Park and Ride at Newbridge to the City centre, passing through the Bath Western Riverside regeneration area and Green Park. It will integrate with the new transport interchange at Southgate,



and continue to the historic core of the city. From here it will extend eastwards along the A4 London Road to the new Park and Ride site at Lambridge.

A Statutory Quality Partnership (SQP) is being developed with First, open to other operators

as required, which will provide a framework for provision of the Bus Rapid Transit system.

### **New and Expanded Park and Ride**

The scheme will provide a new 800-space park and ride site on the east of the city at Lambridge. This will serve traffic from the A46 and M4 motorway and the A4 and the west Wiltshire towns. Significant extra capacity will be provided at Newbridge. Capacity will also be increased at the existing sites at Lansdown to the north of Bath, and at Odd Down to the south. Almost 2000 additional Park and Ride spaces will be provided, providing the potential for significant mode shift.

### **City Centre Access Restrictions and Pedestrian Safety**

Changes are proposed which will reduce traffic delays in central Bath during the day, ensuring that public transport can be given the necessary priority to improve reliability. By its nature this element of the scheme will help to reduce vehicle emissions and improve the quality and safety of the pedestrian environment.

### **Appraisal of the Bath Package**

The Bath Package represents a holistic approach to the problems of accessibility and transport impact. Its objectives relate directly to both regional and local objectives of sustainable economic growth, quality of life

and social inclusion. Its actions are seamlessly linked with the regional spatial strategy in seeking to support residential development.

The measures in the bid are essential if we are to combat growing congestion and increasing traffic levels in Bath. Failure to take this opportunity will undermine the JLTP strategy and have an adverse impact on Bath and both the local and regional economy.

The bid addresses national, regional and local policy objectives. It delivers the necessary improvements for people living, working and visiting Bath to enjoy the City more thereby enhancing its economic viability.

The scheme has a capital cost of £41.5m. With local contributions of £4.5m, DfT are requested to fund £37.0m.

A full appraisal is presented in accordance with DfT guidance, and summarised in an Appraisal Summary Table for the preferred scheme. The Economic Appraisal shows that the preferred scheme has a positive Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.7 (including accident benefits) which categorises the scheme as “High Value for Money” according to DfT’s Value for Money (VfM) guidance.

## **Conclusions**

The Bath Package major scheme is a bold and innovative proposal to address existing traffic problems in the city, and provide a modern and efficient public transport solution to take the city forward. Investment in this package scheme will reduce congestion, reduce dependence on the private car and create the reliable transport infrastructure needed to encourage regeneration in the city and economic growth through the attraction of increased business and tourism to Bath.