

## **Transition Bath : Travel Public Meeting**

Cllr John Bull, BANES Labour Group Spokesperson on Transport and Environment said:

Travel and traffic are intertwined with two factors, which affect us all in BANES: housing and employment. High housing costs in Bath make living in the City impossible even for people on wages above the average and they are moving out to Radstock, Peasedown, Frome and other places since employment opportunities are limited in those towns their residents are forced to commute to jobs in the City; although Park and Ride does a good job in transporting these commuters into the City there is still congestion in peak travel time on roads such as the A4 and A367.

We therefore need to think about improving bus services and there is an opportunity for this in the new legislation for franchising in the Buses Act. Under this scheme Metro Mayors can set a strategy for the bus network in their area and ask operators such as First Bus but potentially new ones ) to bid for these , but also to comply with certain criteria regarding frequency, punctuality, disabled access and even fare levels. This scheme should give a much more customer-friendly and strategic bus service.

At present only Metro Mayors are to be given this power to franchise which makes sense in the case of BANES because our bus services are so interlinked in with those of Bristol and South Gloucestershire) but Labour policy is to extend this to there local authorities and also to return the right to councils to run their own service.

To complement better public bus provision we also need a review of school bus services, where they seem out of step with the current patterns of school attendance. There may be scope here for more dedicated school buses, as run elsewhere, an idea, which my Group on the council would like to explore further.

John Bull.