

Draft South West Regional Spatial StrategySOUTH BRISTOL RING ROAD

1. These supplementary notes update the comments¹ we made about para 4.2.13. in the first wave of consultation, in August 2006, putting a case against the inclusion of a South Bristol Ring Road in the Regional Spatial Strategy.
2. Nothing has occurred since our initial submission that might lead anyone to find the SBRR a more attractive proposition. All four of the key themes of our objection still stand, viz:
 - It is not a strategic issue, and has no place in the RSS
 - No case has been made for it
 - Its negative impacts (at every level) far exceed any benefits
 - The aspiration for regeneration in South Bristol is achievable (and already becoming a reality) by other means
3. We have, since August, been attempting to find out how the purpose of the SBRR has been defined, so that we might test it against alternative ways of achieving the same ends. This has been in the form of a series of formal public questions² put at Cabinet and Council meetings of Bristol City Council. These exchanges culminated in the acknowledgement from the council on January 23rd that

“There is no definite list of benefits potentially arising from this project”

Perhaps the Panel will have better luck than we had, but as things stand we have to say that a major road scheme with no purpose that has been defined, let alone tested, has no place in the RSS

4. Given that the proposed road is far more significant for Bristol than for any of the other ‘West of England’ authorities, it is important to note that a substantial minority of the council members – perhaps even a majority – have grave doubts about it. The council at present has a minority LibDem administration, by a Cabinet drawn from that political group, who have so far endorsed the SBRR. However, all nine of the LibDem councillors from wards in the south of the city, including two Cabinet members, have gone so far as to issue a statement³ expressing their

“concerns and doubts about the route and even the need for stage three of the South Bristol Ring Road.”

Add to that the opposition of the second biggest party group (Labour) and the one Green Party member, and it is clear that there is far from being any consensus within the council. As you know, the two MPs whose constituencies are most directly affected have already informed the Panel of their concerns. They are Dawn Primorolo (751) and Kerry McCarthy (535) .

You are already aware of the massive response from residents in opposition to the SBRR. You should know, too, that whatever formal submissions come from the political leaders of the city, in practice there is widespread political opposition to the scheme as well

¹ Full text at http://www.bristolgreenparty.org.uk/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=3&Itemid=173

² Full text on our web pages at <http://www.bristolgreenparty.org.uk/south/ringroadqanda.htm>, or in the council's own minutes.

³ Full statement is included in the meeting minutes at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/item/committeecontent.html?ref=ta&code=ta000&year=2006&month=12&day=05&hour=14&minute=00>

5. We also draw attention to the effect of a South Bristol Ring Road on the sustainability of the new settlements proposed along its length and along the existing (North Bristol) Ring Road, also of the South Bristol regeneration area.

A South Bristol Ring Road will undermine whatever efforts are made to make these places sustainable, simply because it will emphasise their attractions as settlements with 'connectivity' – meaning in this case better than average access to the road system by car and lorry. It is not hard to imagine the developers' descriptions of the benefits of living or setting up businesses in these communities; they will certainly be mentioning access to airport and motorway before they say anything about there being a local Post Office, pub, or swimming pool, or a local workforce!

We believe this is a very practical illustration of the way a South Bristol Ring Road conflicts with the 'sustainability' principles and policies of the RSS.

Submitted on behalf of Bristol Green Party

to the Examination in Public into the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy

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