

The Editor,
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A better system for freight delivery in Bath

You reported last week (Chronicle, 15 December) on the likely ending of B&NES's participation in the trial scheme of freight consolidation. This is disappointing but not surprising in view of the low take-up of the scheme by businesses in Bath. Nevertheless, the scheme has been useful in proving the concept of freight consolidation in Bath and Bristol.

The trial scheme itself was not ideal, with a depot far away at Avonmouth and a single lorry making deliveries, which did not offer businesses a sufficiently flexible service. A more flexible local scheme using a number of smaller electric vehicles would be more attractive, and it is good that Councillor Clarke intends to explore this. There are many examples of such schemes elsewhere, for instance in Gothenburg in Sweden.

The other reason for the low take-up was that there was no real incentive on Bath businesses to use the freight consolidation centre, as they could continue to receive deliveries to their premises at any time by HGVs and Light Goods Vehicles. The Federation of Bath Residents' Associations (FOBRA) would like to see direct action by B&NES Council to curtail HGVs in the city, for instance by introducing freight delivery windows which limit deliveries to less busy times of day. Such schemes are commonplace in comparable historic cities in Europe. A Clean Air Zone which limited access by older more polluting vehicles would also help.

Councillor Clarke says that the priority is to reduce HGVs which travel into *and through* the centre of Bath. There already is a ban on HGVs in central Bath unless they are making deliveries there. Unfortunately B&NES does not have the power to enforce this and Avon and Somerset Police, who do have the power, do not enforce the HGV weight limit. FOBRA calls on B&NES to take this lack of enforcement up with the Police, and in parallel to seek the necessary powers for themselves from central Government.

Yours sincerely,

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