

From Ken Forest

Submission for Theme 3

Infrastructure, Implementation and Monitoring

Matters 14      Transport

I have been a motorcyclist, car driver, cyclist and user of public transport for over 50 years. I have since voluntarily dispensed with all of those with the exception of public transport and walking. Taking account of my research and observational inclinations, I consider that as a lay person, living and moving about in Tamworth, that I am sufficiently experienced to comment on this important issue.

1. Tamworth is largely a commuter town which came about in the 1960s as a result of a Birmingham overspill programme.
2. I came to Tamworth in 1980 and brought my family with me. I commuted back to Birmingham every day, alongside many others, by car.
3. Birmingham has a good public transport system that is well used. Tamworth has an adequate public transport system that is principally used by oldies like me with a free bus pass. The bus routes radiate out from the town centre. To get from one part of the borough to another (which is not the town centre) one has to travel to the town centre and then back out again on a different route. This is time consuming and costly. I work on the basis of fares being around £1 per mile for fare paying passengers. Belgrave, where I live, has ten minute weekday services.
4. Other areas vary from 12 minutes to 15 minutes. To the north and west it is 30 minutes. Out of town to Lichfield is 30 minutes. The 110 service to Birmingham (via the local hospital) is every 20 minutes. To Birmingham via Dosthill is 30 minutes. Atherstone and Nuneaton services are hourly, as are Cannock and Burton services. These are normal daytime services.
5. Tamworth rail services are well used and popular from the town centre. But Wilnecote station on the Watling Street does not have a connecting bus service. I have attempted to raise this at the appropriate scrutiny meeting for action. Most, if not all, the public transport decision makers mostly use cars and therefore do not see the shortfalls and problems as I do.
6. I have attempted to encourage engagement via the local authority transport authorities and the public to improve the quality of service delivery; so far without success.
7. As a consequence the vast majority of movements are by car. Encouragement of the

alternative more sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling, is jeopardised in many areas by the lack of safe off road routes. Cyclists frequently ride on the pavements for safety reasons. And at night and often without lights.

8. The main problems resulting from all of this is that many households have several cars which are well used by individuals. Car sharing is rare due to the range and timing of destination and journey.

9. Sustainable travel packages, as put together by experts, are scrutinised by experts and as approved by experts - all of whom do not use local transport. In practice these packages have been found to be ineffective and dependent on the decisions of the end user. At the Fountain Junction, the Landau Forte case was a classic example of this type of failure.

10. The results being that most of the occupants of any new housing to be built in Tamworth will travel by car. This is not a sustainable approach.

Transport is a major concern for the town and I can see no easy solution to the problem, which is therefore unlikely to be resolved for the foreseeable future.