

Democratic Services

Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1LA

Telephone: (01225) 477000 *main switchboard*

Direct Lines - Tel: 01225 394358 Fax: 01225 394439

Web-site - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk>

Date: 8 January 2014

E-mail: Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk

To: All Members of the Council

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers
Press and Public

Dear Member

Council: Thursday, 16th January, 2014

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Council** to be held on **Thursday, 16th January, 2014** at **6.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath.**

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Refreshments will be available for Councillors from 5pm in the Aix-en-Provence Room (next to the Banqueting Room) on Floor 1.

Yours sincerely



Jo Morrison
Democratic Services Manager
for Chief Executive

Please note the following arrangements for pre-group meetings:

Conservative	Brunswick Room, Ground Floor
Liberal Democrat	Kaposvar Room, Floor 1
Labour	Small Meeting Room, Floor 1
Independent	Independent Group room

If you need to access this agenda or any of the supporting reports in an alternative accessible format please contact Democratic Services or the relevant report author whose details are listed at the end of each report.

This Agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Jo Morrison who is available by telephoning Bath 01225 394358.
2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above. Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Public Access points – Guildhall – Bath, Riverside – Keynsham, Hollies – Midsomer Norton, and Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton Public Libraries.

For Councillors and officers, papers may be inspected via Political Group Research Assistants and Group Rooms/Members' Libraries.

3. **Webcasting at Meetings:-**

This meeting is being filmed for live and archived broadcast via the Council's website: www.bathnes.gov.uk/webcast

At the start of the meeting, the chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed.

The Council will broadcast the images and sound live via the internet. An archived recording of the proceedings will also be available for viewing after the meeting. The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we require the consent of parents or guardians before filming children or young people. For more information, please speak to the camera operator.

4. **Spokespersons:** The Political Group Spokespersons for the Council are the Group Leaders, who are Councillors Paul Crossley (Liberal Democrat Group), Tim Warren (Conservative Group), John Bull (Labour Group) and Bryan Chalker (Independent Group).
5. **Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register, which will be circulated at the meeting.
6. **Public Speaking at Meetings:** The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. They may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. **Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays, notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.** Further details of the scheme can be obtained by contacting Jo Morrison as above.
7. THE APPENDED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY AGENDA ITEM NUMBER.
8. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted.

Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

9. **Presentation of reports:** Officers of the Council will not normally introduce their reports unless requested by the meeting to do so. Officers may need to advise the meeting of new information arising since the agenda was sent out.

AGENDA

1. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 8.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to complete the green interest forms circulated to groups in their pre-meetings (which will be announced at the Council Meeting) to indicate:

(a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.

(b) The nature of their interest.

(c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** *or* **an other interest**, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

4. MINUTES - 14TH NOVEMBER 2013 (Pages 7 - 16)

To be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair(man)

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

These are matters of information for Members of the Council. No decisions will be required arising from the announcements.

6. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

If there is any urgent business arising since the formal agenda was published, the Chairman will announce this and give reasons why he has agreed to consider it at this meeting. In making his decision, the Chairman will, where practicable, have consulted with the Leaders of the Political Groups. Any documentation on urgent business will be circulated at the meeting, if not made available previously.

7. QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Democratic Services Manager will announce any submissions received under the arrangements set out in note 5 above. The Council will be invited to decide what action

it wishes to take, if any, on the matters raised in these submissions. As the questions received and the answers given will be circulated in written form there is no requirement for them to be read out at the meeting. The questions and answers will be published with the draft minutes.

8. PETITION FOR DEBATE - CHILDREN'S CENTRES (Pages 17 - 38)

An electronic and paper petition has been received regarding reductions in opening hours and the range of services provided at Children's Centres across Bath and North East Somerset, calling on the Council not to go ahead with these proposals. There are 880 signatures on the paper petition, 231 on the online one. According to the Council's petition scheme, if a petition with over 1000 signatures of people who live, work and study in Bath & North East Somerset is received and meets the criteria, it triggers a debate at Council.

9. MOTION FROM THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - DORCHESTER STREET BUS GATE TRIAL (Pages 39 - 40)

To be moved by Councillor Anthony Clarke, on behalf of the Conservative group.

10. MOTION FROM THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - A36 TEMPORARY CLOSURE AND HGV DISPLACEMENT (Pages 41 - 42)

To be moved by Councillor Martin Veal on behalf of the Conservative group.

11. MOTION FROM THE RIVER CHAMPION, CLLR DAVE LAMING - RIVER AVON FLOODING (Pages 43 - 44)

To be moved by Councillor Dave Laming.

12. QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The Democratic Services Manager will announce any submissions received. The Council will be invited to decide what action it wishes to take, if any, on the matters raised in these submissions. As the questions received and the answers given will be circulated in written form there is no requirement for them to be read out at the meeting. The questions and answers will be published with the draft minutes.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Jo Morrison who can be contacted on 01225 394358.

Protocol for Decision-making

Guidance for Members when making decisions

When making decisions, the Cabinet/Committee must ensure it has regard only to relevant considerations and disregards those that are not material.

The Cabinet/Committee must ensure that it bears in mind the following legal duties when making its decisions:

- Equalities considerations
- Risk Management considerations
- Crime and Disorder considerations
- Sustainability considerations
- Natural Environment considerations
- Planning Act 2008 considerations
- Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
- Children Act 2004 considerations
- Public Health & Inequalities considerations

Whilst it is the responsibility of the report author and the Council's Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer to assess the applicability of the legal requirements, decision makers should ensure they are satisfied that the information presented to them is consistent with and takes due regard of them.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 14th November, 2013

Present:- **Councillors** Simon Allen, Patrick Anketell-Jones, Rob Appleyard, Sharon Ball, Tim Ball, Colin Barrett, Cherry Beath, David Bellotti, Sarah Bevan, Mathew Blankley, Lisa Brett, John Bull, Neil Butters, Bryan Chalker, Anthony Clarke, Nicholas Coombes, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Sally Davis, David Dixon, Peter Edwards, Michael Evans, Paul Fox, Andrew Furse, Charles Gerrish, Ian Gilchrist, Francine Haerberling, Alan Hale, Katie Hall, Liz Hardman, Nathan Hartley, Steve Hedges, Eleanor Jackson, Dave Laming, Malcolm Lees, Marie Longstaff, Barry Macrae, David Martin, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE, Robin Moss, Douglas Nicol, Bryan Organ, June Player, Vic Pritchard, Liz Richardson, Manda Rigby, Caroline Roberts, Nigel Roberts, Dine Romero, Brian Simmons, Kate Simmons, Jeremy Sparks, Ben Stevens, David Veale, Martin Veal, Tim Warren, Chris Watt and Brian Webber

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Gabriel Batt, Douglas Deacon, Les Kew, Paul Myers, Will Sandry, Roger Symonds and Geoff Ward

38 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the agenda.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rob Appleyard declared an 'other' interest in item 9 – Citizens Advice Bureau – as a trustee of the organisation.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson declared an 'other' interest in item 9 – Citizens Advice Bureau – as having received advice services in the past.

Councillor Charles Gerrish declared an 'other' interest in item 9 – Citizens Advice Bureau – as a trustee of the SWAN Advice network

Councillor Michael Evans declared an 'other' interest in item 9 – Citizens Advice Bureau – as a trustee of the SWAN Advice network

40 MINUTES - 12TH SEPTEMBER 2013

On a motion from Councillor Eleanor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Bryan Organ, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of 12th September 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, once a minor textual amendment had been done.

41 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman made the customary announcements regarding mobile phones and a comfort break.

He passed the condolences of Council to Councillor Sally Davis following the recent death of her husband.

The Chairman also congratulated Councillor Francine Haeberling on her birthday.

42 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

43 REPORT OF URGENT DECISIONS

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Tim Warren, it was

RESOLVED to note the urgent decisions taken by the Chief Executive (in consultation with Group Leaders) since the last meeting of Council, in accordance with the Urgency rules within the Constitution (Part 4 (G), rule 3) which were;

1. To approve, for a period of six months from the date of this meeting, the non-attendance at meetings of Council and its Committees, due to illness, of Councillor Batt;
2. To authorise the acquisition of property potentially of use in connection with proposals for additional Park & Ride facilities; and
3. To approve capital expenditure of £80k in connection with the enhancement of leisure provisions at South Wansdyke Sports Centre.

44 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following people.

- David Redgewell made a statement about the duty to develop and maintain a Regional Transport Strategy and asked for the Cabinet Member's help in preserving regional partnerships. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Gareth Herincx made a statement on behalf of the South of Bath Alliance and presented a petition of 1305 signatures entitled "Protect South Stoke Plateau from 300 new homes". In response to a question from Councillor Paul

Crossley asking if Mr Herincx was aware that last year, Councillor Tim Ball had presented a housing strategy to Council which contained no extension into the green belt but which had been defeated by this Council, Gareth responded that he was aware of that, and was also aware of the significant pressure from central government to build houses. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning and the petition was referred to the Core Strategy Planning Inspector.

- Robert Hellard, Vice-Chair of South Stoke Parish Council, made a statement calling on the Council to recognise the statutory protections that exist on the South Stoke site. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Ball enquiring whether the Parish Council would consider part funding if consultants were brought in to expedite the South Stoke Conservation Area appraisal, Mr Hellard responded that although he couldn't answer definitively for the Parish Council without a meeting, it was possible that they'd be able to contribute to achieve a prompt resolution of the problem. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning.
- Leonie Robertson made a statement and presented a petition from parents, carers and staff of St Andrews Church of England Primary school highlighting the problems crossing Lansdown Road at the junction with Julian Road and Guinea Lane and calling for a zebra crossing to be installed as soon as possible. In response to a question from Councillor Caroline Roberts enquiring if Leonie was aware that the local Ward Councillors had been seriously lobbying for this and they hoped to include it in the budget, Ms Robertson responded that she was aware, but they'd had promises before so were really keen to see it being put into action. The statement and petition were referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.

Concerning item 9 on the agenda

- Lin Patterson made a statement as an independent former user of the CAB, concluding with a song! A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Dr Michelle Farr from the University of Bath spoke on behalf of a research team that had spent 2 years looking into the impact of the CAB in B&NES. In response to a question from Councillor Eleanor Jackson about whether the research could be made available to Members, Dr Farr responded that it had only recently been submitted to the funders for a peer review and she hoped it would be available at the beginning of January. She invited Members to contact her directly with any specific queries. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.

- Jillian Tempo, a volunteer advisor for 9 years, made a statement in support of the CAB. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Lin Patterson read a statement from Emily Aseri about the support she had received from the CAB. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Philip Knowles, a Bath resident for over 20 years and volunteer advisor and supervisor at CAB, spoke in support of the free impartial service that it provides. He said that clients go to the CAB as they have nowhere else to go and he couldn't envisage how it would work for clients to visit different agencies for each issue they faced. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Warren about how many people volunteered for the CAB, Mr Knowles responded that it was more than 120 but he wasn't the right person to have the exact figure. *[This was subsequently confirmed by Richard Samuel as being 150.]*
- Joe Scofield made a statement in support of the CAB, expressing concern as to whether the level of service provided by the CAB could be replicated via other agencies. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- John James, a volunteer advisor at the CAB for 13 years, made a statement highlighting that, in addition to the invaluable advice services provided by the CAB, they also played a key role in improving policies that affect people's lives – an area of work that needed to continue.
- Shelagh James spoke as a private citizen of Bath for 40 years who had witnessed the help and support the CAB had provided, particularly with the staff and students of Bath College.
- Thomasin Gillow made a statement describing various difficult times in her life when she had called upon the CAB to help her through traumatic experiences. Due to this support, her situation had improved considerably and she was now working and things were generally much better. She called on the Council to continue funding the CAB.
- A statement from Victoria Creeghan-Davies was read by Gillian Whitehead. The statement described how her life had changed beyond recognition in the last 2 years through becoming disabled and a series of extremely challenging experiences. She had received conflicting advice from the agencies she had approached and had had lots of problems with benefits which were not resolved until she went to the CAB who sorted it all out.

The Chairman indicated the above statements would be taken into account during the subsequent debate.

The Council noted the questions and responses from members of the public that had been circulated at the meeting.

45 PETITION FOR DEBATE - CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Council had received a petition with sufficient signatures (over 4500) to trigger a debate at Council. The title of the petition reads - 'Please reconsider the plan to reduce the budget for advice services currently provided by CAB-BANES by 60% from next April.'

Richard Samuel, lead petitioner, spoke in support of the petition. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Ball asking by how much volunteer numbers would reduce if the cuts were implemented, Richard Samuel responded that the relationship between employed staff and volunteers was an absolute so there was no question that a reduction in staff would lead to a dramatic reduction in volunteers. In a response to a question from Councillor John Bull about the tendering process, Mr Samuel responded that he was aware that the Council had to make difficult financial decisions and he had been working with the Council examining why the continuation of the service was being reviewed; however, he didn't think that information was in the public domain. In response to a query from Councillor Bryan Chalker as to whether the Bath CAB branch was the first to be established in the country in 1939, Mr Samuel responded that it was certainly one of the first. A copy of the statement is attached to the Minute book and linked electronically to the minutes.

On a motion from Councillor Simon Allen, (seconded by Councillor David Bellotti) and then amended by Councillor Vic Pritchard, (seconded by Council Tim Warren), it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) as set out below;

This Council:

- Recognises and supports the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau and other organisations within Bath and North East Somerset who provide invaluable advice services to residents throughout the B&NES area, particularly during times of financial hardship.
- Recognises the importance of high-profile generalist advice services which are easily accessible to people from all backgrounds from across the area and can act as a 'triage' service as necessary.
- Is concerned that the level of proposed budget reductions to the Council's tendered advice services puts at risk the generalist service currently available to residents.
- Is concerned at the fragmented nature of advice services available to residents and at the potential for duplication within the advice services currently offered and supported by the Council.

- Is concerned at the lack of a published strategy by the Council in relation to advice and information services.

Council resolves:

1. To request that Cabinet ask officers to produce and publish an Advice and Information Services Strategy which details the Council's approach, including its aims and objectives, to the provision of both general and specialist advice and information services over the coming years.
2. To request that the Advice and Information Services Strategy addresses any issues with duplication and overlap of Council commissioned advice services and details the resource requirements necessary to deliver the Strategy.
3. To request that the recommendations of the Advice and Information Services Strategy are taken into account in the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2014/15, with consideration given to providing additional resources to deliver the Advice and Information Services Strategy if necessary.
4. To request that Cabinet therefore pause the current tender process until an Advice and Information Services Strategy has been produced and reviews the proposed budget for the advice services contract once the new Strategy has been published and its resource requirements known.

[Notes:

1. *Councillor Simon Allen had moved a motion, seconded by Councillor David Bellotti, to the effect of noting the work thus far on the advice and information service review but resolving that any change to proposals be dealt with as part of the budget setting process and to continue the proposed procurement exercise in the interim. The motion was replaced by the successful amendment.*
2. *Voting on Councillor Vic Pritchard's amendment was 55 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions.*
3. *Voting on the substantive motion was unanimous.*
4. *During debate, a motion to call for a recess before going to the vote was moved by Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor David Dixon, but lost].*

46 HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Council considered a report seeking approval for the final Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

On a motion from Councillor Simon Allen, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. To approve the Bath and North East Somerset Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, subject to the addition of the following words (italicised) into Theme 2, page 5 section entitled 'Improved Services which support and encourage independent living and dying well' - "*Community Transport plays a key role in reducing health inequalities of communities*"; and

2. To note the Equality Impact Assessment carried out on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

[Note; The underlined wording in resolution 1. above was proposed as a minor adjustment by Councillor Vic Pritchard and accepted by the mover and seconder of the motion.]

47 THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (LCTS) 2014-15

The Council considered a report regarding the Local Council Tax Support scheme and its continuation into its second year.

On a motion from Councillor David Bellotti, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

RESOLVED (50 for, 6 against)

1. To agree that the existing Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out in appendix 1 to the report, is approved for 2014/15 with adjustments made to reflect national uprating and other necessary technical changes; and
2. That these adjustments be delegated to the S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Resources.

48 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2013

The Council considered a report giving details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Plan 2013/14 for the first six months of 2013/14.

On a motion from Councillor David Bellotti, seconded by Councillor Nigel Roberts, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. To note the Treasury Management report to 30th September 2013, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice; and
2. To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2013.

49 MOTION FROM LABOUR GROUP - THE LIVING WAGE

The Council considered a motion from the Labour group.

On a motion from Councillor John Bull, (seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman), and then amended following a proposal by Councillor David Bellotti, (seconded by Councillor Andy Furse), it was

RESOLVED

That Council:

1. Recognises that paying the Living Wage can have benefits but believes that it is a 'LIVING INCOME' that is most important for every individual and family;
2. Notes that since the last general election the minimum wage has risen from £5.80 per hour to £6.31 per hour;
3. Notes that no council employee receives less than £6.45 per hour;
4. Notes that since the last general election the tax threshold has risen and will stand at £10,000 p.a. in 2014 making everyone in work £700 p.a. better off;
5. Notes that both political parties in Government are considering their manifestos for 2015 including raising the tax threshold to the minimum wage;
6. Notes that it is the Government's view that employers should be encouraged to pay above the minimum wage providing they are profitable and when it is not at the expense of jobs;
7. Notes that the cost of implementing a living wage would be around £320K. Further budget savings would be needed to be made to cover this cost and that would probably lead to some job losses and service cuts.

Therefore Council resolves:

1. Not to implement the Living Wage at this time, but to work towards it as and when the Council can afford it;
2. To support the Government policy of raising the tax threshold;
3. To remove spinal points 4, 5 and 6 of our pay scales putting the staff on those spinal points onto spinal point 7 as this would help our lowest paid, subject to consultation and agreement with staff and unions including how it is implemented and subject to the 2014/15 budget procedure;
4. To keep low pay under annual review during each future budget round.

[Notes;

1. *The original Labour motion, which was subsequently amended, asked the Council to agree in principle that all employees should be paid the Living Wage, to refer this to the Employment Committee, to consider any financial implications in the MTSRP process, to sign up for accreditation as a LW employer, to use its influence to urge other local employers to follow suit and, in the meantime, to remove spinal points 4, 5 and 6 and transfer any staff on those grades onto spinal point 7.*

2. *Voting on the amendment from Councillor David Bellotti was carried with 34 for, 5 against and 11 abstentions.*
3. *Voting on the substantive motion was 48 for, 2 against.]*

50 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

One question was submitted by Councillor Nicholas Coombes to Councillor Dine Romero. A response was circulated, placed on the Minute book and has been linked to the electronic record.

The meeting ended at 10.10 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Council	
MEETING DATE	16th January 2013	
TITLE:	Children's Centres – petition for debate	
WARD:	All wards	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Factual briefing note plus appendices 1 - 6		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 An electronic and paper petition has been received regarding reductions in opening hours and the range of services provided at Children's Centres across Bath and North East Somerset, calling on the Council not to go ahead with these proposals. According to the Council's petition scheme, if a petition with over 1000 signatures of people who live, work and study in Bath & North East Somerset is received and meets the criteria, it triggers a debate at Council.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That a debate takes place.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The text of the petition reads as follows; "B&NES Council are planning to cut almost 40% from the Children's Services budget over the next two years, forcing drastic reductions in opening hours and the range of services at Children's Centres across Bath and North East Somerset. We, the undersigned, call on B&NES to protect our Children's Centres, and not to go ahead with its planned 38% cut to Children's Services".

3.2 There are 880 signatures on the paper petition and 231 on the online petition.

3.3 A briefing note setting out relevant issues is attached for information.

3.4 Council, if it wishes, can make recommendations to Cabinet but cannot amend executive policy. Decisions on the amount of money to be allocated to particular uses or proposals are matters for full Council to decide. How any money allocated is spent is a matter for Cabinet, not full Council, to decide.

3.5 The lead petitioner will address Council at the start of the item.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Covered within the attached briefing paper.

Contact person	<i>Jo Morrison, Democratic Services Manager (ext 4358)</i>
Background papers	<i>Set out in the attached briefing paper.</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Early Years and Children's Centres
Background briefing for the Council debate on the petition 'Protect our Children's Centres and not go ahead with the planned 38% cuts to Children's Service'

Council Meeting 16th January 2014

1. Introduction and background

1.2 The Council has a duty to improve the well-being of young children in its area; to reduce inequalities between them; and to make arrangements to ensure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of these services to young children and their parents. This includes ensuring that there are sufficient accessible children's centres, to meet local needs as well as having a process to moderate the assessment of children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception class in school. The Council provides and commissions a range of Early Years and Children Centre services to support children aged 0-11 and their families and to fulfil these duties. These are:

- Eleven locally delivered Children's Centres, which includes nine centres run by the Council and two commissioned from First Steps (a local charity)
- Support and challenge to early years and childcare settings from the Early Years Foundation Stage Team.
- Commissioned Community Play services from Bath Area Play Project and Wansdyke Play Association and specialist Family Support from Southside Family Centre.
- Commissioned pre-school provision for children with disabilities (Bath Opportunity Pre-School).
- Funding to support vulnerable children 0-4 (children with additional needs and children known to be vulnerable through their home environment) to access their entitlement to early years education.
- Council managed Parent Support Advisers for targeted primary schools.
- Some funding support to commissioned health related services including Infant Mental Health; occupational health; Theraplay and Speech and Language.

1.3 The current budget for these services is £4.9 million.

1.4 As part of the Council's financial planning to address the on-going reductions to local authority spending through the development of the Medium Term Service and Resource Plan (MTSRP) 2013-2016, the Department was tasked with identifying service areas where either efficiencies or budget reductions could be made. Within Children's Services, the Early Years and Children's Centre Services area was identified for savings as profiled below:

2013 – 14	£ 273,000
2014 – 15	£ 228,000
2015 – 16	£1,834,000
Total	£2,335,000

1.5 The recommendation that the Early Years services be reviewed and reduced was made following considerable deliberation. This decision was informed by the need for the Council to meet minimum statutory responsibilities across all of Children's

Services; the fact that the Early Years services had not been subject to any substantial budget reductions in the same way as other Children's services had been in previous years, and by bench marking work indicating our 'per head' costs are relatively high compared to our comparator authorities. Many local authorities have already (or are proposing) to remodel their services and reduced their costs as follows:

Advertised proposed cuts across the country have included:

- Portsmouth £1 million from children centres
- Kent proposing to close 28 out of 97 centres
- Warwickshire proposed £2.3 million cuts to children's centres
- Sheffield proposing to reorganise 36 early years centres into 17 children's centre 'areas' in order to save £3.5 million
- Possible changes to Swindon's 14 children's centres and cuts of £390,000 from the budget
- South Gloucestershire have already re-structured into Hub and Spoke models and reduced their budgets.

The summary above indicates a theme within Children's Services across the country, where budget pressures are similarly being felt in early years Council funding.

- 1.6 The Council agreed the MTSRP 2013 – 2016 at its meeting on 16th February 2013, with an amendment which deferred the implementation of budget reductions in Early Years and Children's Centre Services until 2014 – 15. The revised savings profile is set out below:

2013 – 14	£0
2014 – 15	£501,000
2015 – 16	£1,834,000
Total	£2,335,000

- 1.7 The Council, whilst agreeing the Medium Term Service and Resource Plan, also agreed that the Early Years and Children's Centre savings were still subject to a detailed plan and would require a Budget vote in future years. It instructed officers to provide a report to the Early Years Children's and Youth PDS Panel to allow for further consideration of the implications of these savings and for potential alternative options to be reviewed. The Council resolution is shown in *Appendix 1*.

2. The Review Process

- 2.1 The Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDS Panel) undertook this review at the request of the Council following the budget meeting. Terms of Reference were drafted by the Strategic Director to support the role of the PDS panel to undertake the review, develop and evaluate 3 possible models of delivery, and make recommendations to Cabinet for consideration and implementation. These were consulted upon and agreed by the panel – see *Appendix 2*.
- 2.2 Two presentations and briefings were provided to the PDS panel by officers as follows:

- May 2013: Members received a briefing which outlined the current scale of need across Bath & North East Somerset for children aged 0-11 years. This included both national and local data sets; the national and local drivers (including statutory duties for the local authority); data illustrating who is currently reached through services; current staffing levels and the buildings used to provide services and finally the proposed budget reductions.
- June 2013: the briefing outlined the evidence base used to deliver all early years services, including those delivered in or through Children's Centres and by the Early Years Foundation Stage Team. This included evidence from families of the outcomes achieved; national evidence of need including increases in poor communication skills in very young children, increases in numbers of children with complex special needs, emergent neurological research into the brain development in babies and evidence of impact through the home learning programme. The service also provided evidence of reach and impact from all Children's Centres, Parent Support Advisers, Southside Family Project and Family and Play Inclusion work.

- 2.3 Following the briefings, a Task & Finish Group was established comprising 5 Councillors from the PDS Panel. This group was supported by Officers. Three Task & Finish Group meetings were held between July and the October PDS panel meeting to consider three options for delivering the Early Year services. These options were all based on a 'hub and spoke' model of delivery. Option One was to reduce all budgets as proposed with existing services scaled back accordingly, offering targeted services only; Option Two was a model that reduced budgets and considered a health provider to run an even more integrated model of delivery of all services and Option Three was a model to reduce budgets and outsource all services to the third sector. All models considered a small commissioning team remaining in the Council. Models were tested throughout the process.
- 2.4 Information was provided on what a more targeted and reduced "hub and spoke" Community Children's Centres model would provide. In investigating this model it was proposed that partners such as relevant schools would be asked to consider running some of the buildings on behalf of Children's Services, so that they could be sub-let back to Children's Centres for part-time delivery. This would ensure that services could still run in local communities, albeit at a reduced timetable and without requiring the permanent presence of Children's Centres staff. Where building partners have been consulted on this proposal the response has been positive.
- 2.5 Information was sought and provided about whether other providers in the wider market, both national and local, would consider tendering for 0-11 Preventative Services. This was done through a soft market testing exercise and 12 organisations expressed an interest.
- 2.6 A set of design principles were considered, alongside the 'hub and spoke' model proposed for Children's Centres, for the future design and commissioning of the Early Years services.
- 2.7 Over August and September the views of over 80 parents were sought about their experience of Early Childhood services they received and what impact they had had

on their lives. Responses were largely very positive and services were valued, whether they were run by the voluntary sector or the Council.

- 2.8 A series of meetings were held with the 5 Children's Centre Boards; the voluntary Play and Specialist Family Support Services and the 0-11 Multi-Agency Group that reports to the Children's Trust Board. These meetings were attended by members from the Task & Finish Group who asked questions relating to the impact of reduced budgets; how this could be delivered better or differently and whether income could be sought from elsewhere to support delivery. These visits and consultations gave the group a clear understanding of the role the services play in children's and families' lives.
- 2.9 A final meeting of the Task & Finish Group was held in early October and reviewed all the information and views provided over the 5 months of the review. The meeting considered the recommendations to put forward to the PDS Panel on 14th October 2013.
- 2.10 The list of information provided to panel is shown in *Appendix 3*.

3. Panel Recommendations/Outcomes

- 3.1 A full report detailing the review, findings and recommendations was considered at the PDS Panel meeting on 14th October 2013. The panel heard a number of speakers from the public including parents who used the current services. There was considerable debate and discussion around the recommendations to be made to Cabinet which resulted in a number of amendments to the recommendations.
- 3.2 In its resolution, the Panel noted that there remain a number of questions over what services will be provided at the Children's Centres under the proposed new model, who will run the various Children's Centres, and to whom these services will be available. Noting these continued uncertainties, the Panel agreed the following recommendations (amended at the meeting) to go to Cabinet.
- i. That the design and commissioning principles are adopted and applied to any future model of service delivery – see *Appendix 4*.
 - ii. That the approach to Play, Specialist Family Support and the Early Years Foundations Stage are dealt with separately from Children's Centres.
 - iii. That any funding reductions for these services are considered separately in line with service models.
 - iv. To recommend a hub and spoke model as the basis for delivery of Children's Centre Services, whilst recognising that the number of hubs, and the level of service at the non-hub Children's Centres, will be dependent upon the scale of budget reductions ultimately agreed by Council in February 2014.
 - v. To retain all existing Children's Centre buildings.
 - vi. To further explore the potential of a commissioned model and/or an integrated model with health services, acknowledging the need for further market testing of the potential providers.
 - vii. To fully undertake a cost benefit analysis of any service changes.
 - viii. To propose that Cabinet reconsiders the overall Council budget to determine if alternative areas of saving can be identified. The reasons being:
 - a) Information gained by the Task & Finish Group shows that early support to vulnerable people can lead to savings overall. There is concern that such

significant cuts could lead to more costly interventions by statutory services of the council at a later stage.

b) A commitment by the Panel to recommend some changes to services to meet part of the potential savings if the Cabinet are prepared to do likewise.

4. Cabinet Consideration

- 4.1 The Cabinet received a report at its meeting on 13th November 2013 setting out the recommendations of the PDS Panel following its meeting on the 14th October, together with the Minority Report from one Panel member (Councillor Liz Hardman Labour – Paulton). The minority report was based on concerns about the process adopted by the PDS Panel. It recommended that the Cabinet ask the PDS panel to consider the implications of the savings and review alternative options reporting back to December's Cabinet identifying:
- i The implications of the proposed savings for frontline services under the proposed 38% cut to the budget of Children's Centres.
 - ii The potential for management and efficiency savings that would have no effect on front line services.
 - iii A recommended model for the future of Children's Centre services based on management and efficiency savings; and
 - iv In light of iii), a request to Cabinet that, should the recommended model be undeliverable within the proposed budget for Early Years and Children's Centres, resources are identified from elsewhere in order to offset the proposed savings target.
- 4.2 The Cabinet agreed to note that the PDS Panel had a number of questions relating to how the restructured services would be delivered; to note the issues raised in the Minority Report and formulate their response to the Panel's recommendations and those of the Minority Report.
- 4.3 A Call-In request relating to this decision was received and validated on the 23rd November 2013. The basis of the Call-In was that the Cabinet failed to respond adequately to either the recommendations of the PDS Panel or those contained in the Minority Report. The Call-In reasons are detailed in *Appendix 5*. The Call-In was subsequently heard at the PDS panel at its meeting on 25th November 2013. The PDS panel agreed to uphold the Call-In and ask that the Cabinet decision be reconsidered at its next meeting.
- 4.3 The Cabinet considered the Call-In recommendations on 4th December. It resolved to note the outcome of the call-in by the PDS Panel, and agreed the response to each of the recommendations of the Panel Report and the Minority Report. The first 7 recommendations made by the PDS panel in relation to the restructuring of the Early Years and Children's centre services (3.2 of this paper) were agreed. The proposal to reconsider the overall Council budget and alternative strategies to alleviate part of the planned reduction was agreed but as part of the wider Council budget setting process. The recommendations in the Minority Report were rejected. Cabinet also agreed a consultation and decision timeline and a request that the PDS Panel receive a presentation from Officers on the developing model at its meeting in January 2014.

5. Current Position and Next Steps

- 5.1 Proposals to achieve the £501K saving in 2014/15 are being finalised. These reductions are being made as follows:
- i. 5% cuts have been applied across the 11 Children's Centres £105,183
 - ii. The Early Years Team has been reduced by £83,000 (30.6%)
 - iii. Play contracts reduced by £50,000 (22%)
 - iv. Children's Centre & Early Years commissioned services £83,700 (13%)
 - v. Central costs (including crèche costs for parenting programmes) £182,185 (34%)

These cuts have been managed within the services by re-organisation, reduction in hours for some staff or through freezing posts. There have been no redundancies in any Council staff for 2014-15.

- 5.2 The detail of the hub and spoke model for the future delivery of Children's Centre services is being developed, along with the commissioning and delivery models for the other services areas within this review. Data is being collected to complete the impact assessment and cost benefit analysis.
- 5.3 A presentation will be made to the PDS Panel at its meeting on 27th January about the emerging commissioning and delivery models for all the services affected by this review, including the hub and spoke model for Children's Centre services.
- 5.4 A report is on the forward plan for Cabinet on the 12th February. This will provide more detail on the delivery and commissioning models, a cost/benefit analysis and the impact of the reduction of funding across the different service areas.
- 5.5 It is proposed that formal consultation about the models of delivery takes place during March and April 2014 and a report on the outcome of the consultation process is reported back to Cabinet at its meeting in May 2014. Timeline for next steps is detailed in *Appendix 6*.

Appendices:-

1. *Council Resolution*
2. *PDS Review ToR*
3. *List of Information provided to Panel*
4. *Design and Commissioning Principles*
5. *Call In of November 2013 Cabinet decision*
6. *Timeline for next steps*

Background papers

MEDIUM TERM SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2013/14 - 2015/16 & BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2013/14' (Council paper 19.02.13)

Council Resolution in relation to Early Years and Children's Centres

Extract from the minutes of the Council Meeting 19th February 2013

RESOLVED

1. To approve:

a. The General Fund net revenue budget for 2013/14 of £123.632m with no increase in Council Tax, and the savings proposals in Annex 2, Appendix 5, with the exception of the proposed savings in Early Years and Children's centres of £273k and the substitution to balance the budget of funds received in the final settlement as a result of the redistribution of unallocated funding from the New 20

12. To agree that the Early Years and Children's Centre savings in Years 2 and 3 are still subject to a detailed plan and would require a Budget vote in future years and that officers be instructed to provide a report to the Early Years Children and Youth PDS Panel to allow further consideration of the implications of these savings and for potential alternative options to be reviewed.

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Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Proposal and Terms of Reference

Re-structuring of the Early Years, Children's Centre and Early Help (0 – 11 years) Services 2014 – 2016

1. Background and Introduction

- i. This review flows from the development of the Medium Term Service Resource Plan 2013 – 2016 for the Children's Service. Each Department was tasked with identifying a range of areas of activity where either efficiencies or service reductions could be made. Within Children's Services the Early Years and Children's Centre Services area was identified for savings as profiled below:

2013 – 14	£ 273,000
2014 – 15	£ 228,000
2015 – 16	£1,834,000

- ii. At the meeting of Council on 19th February 2013 which agreed the budget 2013 – 2016 an amendment was agreed which deferred the implementation of budget reductions in Early Years and Children's Centre Services until 2014 – 15. The revised savings profile is set out below:

2013 – 14	£ 0
2014 – 15	£ 501,000
2015 – 16	£1,834,000

- iii. The amendment is shown as Appendix A and included an instruction to 'provide a report to the Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to allow further consideration of implications of these savings and for potential alternative options to be reviewed.' This paper is the start of that process as agreed at the Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 25th March 2013 (Item covered in Strategic Directors' Briefing).

2. The issue

- i. During the MTSRP process the service was clear that no definitive proposals had been developed to deliver the total saving of £2,335k. It was stated that detailed proposals would have to be brought forward to fully re-structure the Early Years and Children's

Centre Service area with that work beginning in 2013 ready for complete implementation by April 2015.

- ii. This timescale was identified because of the scale of the reduction to be made; the need to ensure a continuing focus on the most vulnerable young children and their families; the critical interface between Early Years and Children's Centre Services and the statutory social care services and the range of community, voluntary and private sector partners, along with statutory partners with which the Council works to deliver its Early Years, Children's Centre and Early Help Services/offer.
- iii. Given the above, the issue is: How to develop a range of service delivery models for Early Years and Children's Centre Services which recognise and accommodate
 - The reduced financial envelope available over 2014 – 2016.
 - A focus of council resources on those young children and their families in need of effective early help and support
 - The role and 'value added' of community, voluntary and private providers in the wider Early Years and Children's Centre landscape.
 - A clarified role for statutory partners particularly Health Services around early identification, help and support.
 - The 'threshold' for referral/access to statutory social care services for children deemed 'in need'.
 - A clear policy/strategy for 'Early Help' as defined in the Munro Review and the role of Early Years and Children's Centre Services in that policy.

3. Outcomes

- i. 3 possible models of operation based upon an evaluation of each against Section 2 and taking into account any relevant statutory guidance from the DfE for Early Years Services and Children's Centres.
- ii. Recommended option for re-structure of service to Cabinet for consideration and future implementation.
- iii. Children's Service in a position to make initial changes from April 2014 in order to make savings of £501k in 2014 – 15 in alignment with final service model which will be consulted upon and implemented from 1st April 2015.

Ashley Ayre
Strategic Director: People and Communities

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List of Information Provided to PDSP Panel in relation to the Restructuring of the Early Years, Children's Centre & Early Help (0-11 years) Services

- Terms of Reference for the Early Years, Development & Policy Panel
- Presentation on background to services and levels of need in Early Years, Children's Centre & Early Help portfolio, including base budgets – May 2013
- Presentation on how services are delivered, including national and local evidence base (including brief case studies/impact) – June 2013
- Maps of the local authority with Children's Centre buildings listed
- Three options to re-design services 0-11 with cost savings/risks and benefits
- Design principles
- Brief results of consultation from summer 2013 with 80 parent users
- Details of Children's Centre Advisory Board meetings to undertake consultation
- Proposed Children's Centre Hub model
- Proposed staffing structure for the Children's Centre Hub model
- Proposed budgets for all preventative services 0-11 years
- Outcome of a soft market testing exercise

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Service Design & Commissioning Principles for:

1. Together with our partners, to assess and respond early to the needs of individual children, families and communities in order to keep them safe and help them thrive and avoid their needs escalating to specialist (costly) services
2. Using evidence based approaches to reduce inequalities for targeted groups, through tracking individual children's progress
3. Providing a mixed economy of provision that ensures strong integrated working across agencies and settings
4. The voice of the child is heard and listened to
5. Support children to develop secure attachments and emotional resilience
6. Supports children and families to have healthy lifestyles
7. Supports parents to have positive parenting aspirations and parenting skills
8. Supports children across all early years settings to develop well and be ready for school

Model Ensures

9. We meet Statutory Guidance to reach a "Good" Ofsted judgement at Children's Centre Inspections and ensure children develop well and are ready for school
10. Families and communities are enabled to participate fully in their community
11. We focus resources on reducing inequalities and narrowing the gap for those most in need

12. We are able to respond to the emerging “Local Offer” as part of the SEND Reforms for children with additional needs
13. We strengthen the integration and information sharing with health partners
14. There is a linked Social Worker in each Children’s Centre Hub to ensure robust arrangement for the safeguarding and protection of children
15. There is a linked Health Visitor in each Children’s Centre Hub, and where possible, premises remained shared with Health Visitors
16. Value for money by ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of services by targeting 75% of the spend on front facing service delivery and less than 15% on overheads. The model should ensure back office functions are delivered as efficiently as possible

Resolution of the Early Years, Children & Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel in relation to the Call-in of Cabinet Decision E2593: Re-structuring of the Early Years, Children's Centre and Early Help (0 - 11 years) Services 2014 - 2016

The Early Years, Children & Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held a public meeting on Monday 25th November 2013 to debate this decision following the request of 21 Councillors for it to be reviewed (or called in). They raised concerns about how they felt the Cabinet had failed to respond adequately to either the recommendations of the EYCY PDS Panel or the recommendations contained in the Minority Report.

Specifically:

- The Cabinet had not answered the questions raised by the EYCY PDS Panel including which services would be provided under the proposed new model, who will run the various Children's Centres and to whom these services will be available;
- The Cabinet had not formulated any response either to the recommendations of the Early Years, Children and Youth PDS Panel or to the Minority Report
- The Cabinet had provided no timetable for formulating such a response; and
- The Cabinet had given no indication about whether it is prepared to reconsider its overall budget to identify alternative areas of saving, as recommended by both the EYCY PDS Panel and the Minority Report.

The Panel received verbal statements from Councillor Liz Hardman (Lead Call-In Councillor), Councillor Dine Romero (Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Youth), Councillor Tim Warren (Conservative Group Leader) and Councillor John Bull (Labour Group Leader).

Having considered the evidence, a majority of the Panel voted to uphold the Call-In for the reasons stated above and asked for the Cabinet decision to be reconsidered at its meeting on Wednesday December 4th 2013.

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Proposed timeline for decision making and consultation

1. Report to Cabinet 12th February. Report to provide more detail on the model, cost / benefit analysis, and an Equality Impact Assessment.
2. Undertake wider public consultation on service changes and informal consultation internally with staff affected during March/April 2014.
3. Report on outcome of consultations to Cabinet at its meeting in May 2014.
4. New model of service implemented and fully operational from April 2015.

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Motion to Council – Dorchester Street Bus Gate trial

To be moved by Cllr Anthony Clarke on behalf of the Conservative Group

This Council:

- Notes that the Council has announced that it is due to implement an experimental bus lane running eastbound on Dorchester Street from the 20th January which will be operational seven days a week from 10am to 6pm each day for a period of up to 18 months, with a view to this experimental order becoming permanent.
- Notes the concerns of residents over the Dorchester Street bus gate and the likely impact of displaced traffic on nearby roads.
- Notes that the Council's traffic assessment suggests that up to 160 vehicles an hour could be displaced onto the A36 Pulteney Road at peak times, with up to 130 displaced onto North Parade.
- Is concerned by the lack of clearly defined objectives in relation to the Dorchester Street bus gate by which the success of the trial can be judged, as well as the lack of clarity over what monitoring of traffic movements and journey times will take place during the trial period.
- Is concerned that the Dorchester Street bus gate trial is not being implemented as part of a wider traffic management strategy and prior to the publication of the draft Transport Strategy by Mott Macdonald.
- Is concerned that the Dorchester Street bus gate trial is taking place at the same time as a number of other traffic projects are due to take place, including the three month closure by the Highways Agency of the A36 as well as the Rossiter Road/Widcombe Parade works.

Council resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet instruct Officers to limit the trial period for the Dorchester Street bus lane to a maximum of six months, with the trial to be paused during the period of the Rossiter Road/Widcombe Parade road works if this work commences before the end of the trial period.
2. To request that Cabinet publish a set of measurable objectives against which the success or otherwise of the Dorchester Street bus lane trial can be judged.
3. To request that Cabinet instruct Officers to undertake detailed monitoring of the impact of the Dorchester Street bus lane on nearby roads during the trial period, including the amount of displaced traffic,

pollution levels and journey times on nearby roads.

4. To request that at the end of the trial period the Cabinet report back to Full Council the findings of the experimental bus lane, including its impact on displaced traffic and its success or otherwise when measured against the objectives mentioned in (2) above, before deciding whether to make the bus lane permanent.

Motion to Council – A36 temporary closure and HGV movements

To be moved by Cllr Martin Veal on behalf of the Conservative Group

This council:

- Notes that the Highways Agency has announced plans to close the A36 between Hantone Hill in Bathampton and the centre of Brassknocker Hill in the Spring due to essential maintenance work for a period of up to three months.
- Notes that the Council was unsuccessful in its recent attempt to implement a weight restriction on the A36 due to objections from Wiltshire and Somerset Councils, as a result of concerns over the displacement of HGV traffic.
- Maintains its ambition to find ways of reducing the number of HGVs travelling into and through Bath.

Council resolves:

1. To request that Cabinet instruct Officers to work with Wiltshire and Somerset Councils to closely monitor the impact of the planned A36 closure on the displacement of traffic, with particular attention paid to the alternative routes used by HGVs during the closure period, with a view to building an evidence base to support the Council's position in relation to the need to reduce HGV numbers within Bath.
2. To request that Cabinet instruct Officers to monitor the impact on visitors numbers within the city and its attractions, as well as the revenue implications to parking and heritage services during the closure period.

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Motion - River Avon Flooding

To be moved by Councillor Dave Laming
B&NES Canal & River Champion

This Council:-

- Note and recognise the seriousness of flooding throughout the District.
- Recognise that the people look to this council to take action to minimise the risk from flood waters and debris.
- Recognise that homes and businesses have been damaged and in some instances destroyed due to these flood waters and debris.
- Note that on Christmas Eve the City of Bath came very close to a serious flooding incident and other areas of the District have also been subjected to very serious flooding. This is becoming more frequent and is considered the highest category of flood risk by the Environment Agency.

Council resolves:

1. To recommend that the Cabinet sets up a Working Group/Committee who can take control when a flood emergency is imminent or occurs.
2. To ask the Cabinet to urgently create a Working Group with The River Regeneration Trust as the facilitator and joined by Canal & River Trust, Wessex Water the Environment Agency and Senior Officers to bring forward a co-ordinated approach to flood risk, flood defence, flood conveyance and flood prevention.
3. To draw up a Flood Strategy that is future proofed and aligned with existing and planned regeneration, flood defence and flood conveyance measures.
4. To ensure that the Flood Strategy is a vital component of the B&NES River Strategy and can support B&NES in its role as Lead Local Flood Authority.
5. To urge Cabinet, as part of the 2014/15 budget and the MTSRP, to bring forward sufficient funds to establish the Working Group/Committee and provide them with resources to prepare the Flood Strategy and facilitate powers and duties to help control and manage flooding.

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